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## Hazel Lee Gill dies Thursday

By GARY STEWART  
 Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain this week is mourning the death of one of its outstanding community and business leaders.

Hazel Lee Gill, 81, owner of J.W. Gill & Sons Funeral Home, died Thursday at his home.

Along with his brother-in-law, Raleigh Brown, Gill was the first Black funeral home owner in Kings Mountain.

He was a hard worker and friend to everyone he met.

As a youngster growing up on the farm

in Kings Creek, SC, he learned the value of hard work. Throughout his life he maintained his love for gardening, working a six-acre field and giving away most of the vegetables he raised.

He began his professional career working in a hardware store. He saved his money and purchased a couple of dump trucks. He was employed by Kerns Trucking for awhile and started Hazel Lee Gill Trucking in 1948.

Six years later he bought a 1936 Packard and he and Brown started Gill & Brown Funeral Home. In 1969 he founded J.W. Gill See Gill, 3A



HAZEL LEE GILL

## KM's Tube Enterprises expanding

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER  
 Staff Writer

Tube Industries is expanding and expects to add four to five employees in late September and more if the operation is successful.

The plant, located on Industrial Drive, has moved much of its Pelham, Tenn. work to Kings Mountain. Three Tennessee employees made the move with the company and two local workers were hired. While the company plans to hire a handful more in September, if the market cooperates that number could climb.

"We're at the mercy of the retail cycle," said human resource director Tracy Baker.

Like most U.S. companies, Tube has been hurt by imports. According to plant manager John Stockman, the loss is at 20 percent. To keep that number from getting any bigger, Tube is holding merchandise for clients and has moved into fabricating for use in wheelchairs, antenna, conveyors and high grade furniture.

It has also added what Stockman describes as an innovative paint curing process using radiation. Tube is in the process of patenting the procedure which uses radiation similar to x-rays to cure paint on tubes.

"Nobody in the industry is doing that," he said. "For people familiar with our industry, this is radical."

Most of Tube's new employees are secured through Workforce Staffing, a move that Baker calls a "moral struggle."

Baker says the company prefers to have employees be fully part of the company, receiving the same employment package as everyone else.

"These folks work so hard for us," Baker said. "The only way I can engage it (temporary status) is to put pressure on sales."

As sales rise, temps will be made permanent, she said.

Baker and Stockman say the company culture is different from what many workers are accustomed to. Criticism is accepted and even encouraged. Stockman says these folks are often the most innovative. Workers in the plant are kept up to date on sales figures. Regular meetings are held to encourage suggestions from workers.

Members of a venture team use their own time to brainstorm and to visit retail outlets looking for products that their company can help produce.

Worker participation is rewarded with gift certificates and a sense of having been heard.

"They (workers) have a lot to say in what we do," Baker said.

Tube is a division of Commonwealth Aluminum, the third largest industry of its kind in North America.

### OLDER WORKERS

## Mister Sidney

Dixon, 81, has no plans to quit working

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER  
 Staff Writer

Sidney Dixon, 81, tried to retire 20 years ago. It didn't work.

"The walls closed in on me," he said. "I feel more comfortable working than loafing. I love to work."

Dixon, a barber, works two days each week in his Bethlehem Road shop.

The Kings Mountain native first picked up the clippers at age 14. Both his parents cut hair and he followed their example.

While serving in the Navy from 1942 to 1948, Dixon took a break from hair, sort of. The barbershop was only a parttime duty while he was enlisted.

Once out of the Navy, he entered Durham Barber College on the GI Bill. The government cancelled the program two weeks before he graduated but that didn't stop Dixon.

He finished school and has cut hair ever since. From the late 1950s to the early 1970s, he styled women's hair. Along with that work comes the requisite hair shows. After years of being away from home on weekends, Dixon returned to barbering.

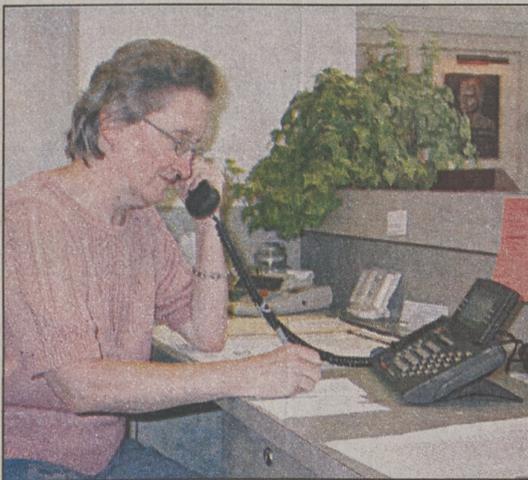
The 1970s ushered in long hair for men. While many barbers refused to trim the long locks and lost business, Dixon kept an open See Sidney, 3A



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD

Sidney Dixon cuts Steve Sanders hair. Dixon, 81, opens his shop two days each week.

## Center serves, and hires, seniors



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD

Ginger Gower answers the phone, one of her duties at the Patrick Senior Center.

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER  
 Staff Writer

At the Patrick Senior Center, Virgie Farris, 84, rings up sales in the gift shop. Bill Adams, 79, keeps the building in shape and Ginger Gower, 57, answers the phones.

The center is staying true to its mission of serving seniors by hiring a few. The three are employed through the Title V Older Americans Employment Program.

This federal program pays participant's salaries while they get on the job training. The goal after training is to help older workers find unsubsidized employment. The program serves people age 55 and up.

Farris runs the center's gift shop where seniors sell their handmade items. This job comes after a lifetime of working in the textile industry. After she retired from that job,

Farris took care of her grandchildren. Initially she was reluctant to handle money.

"I told them I couldn't do that. I had no experience. They talked me into it," she said.

Today, Farris is confident in her position behind the sales counter. The best parts are meeting customers and having good coworkers. Farris says the senior center staff are always patient, not getting angry over any mistakes.

"They're good people to work for. Monty, Sharon and the whole staff, they're always nice to me. That means so much," Farris said.

Bill Adams says his job as center handyman keeps him healthy.

"If we just sit down and give it up, we wouldn't last long," he said.

Like Farris, he enjoys the on the job friendships.

"I like to be amongst the people." See Center, 3A



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD

Adrien Dyer unloads products at Tube Industries' Kings Mountain plant.



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