



A “Master Fly Tyer” of the Southern Appalachian Mountains!



Blazer

Bennie Joe Craig

1931-2005

Allen’s Creek – Waynesville, North Carolina

Benny was born July 5, 1931, the oldest son of Gene and Susie Burch Craig. Born and raised in Haywood County, North Carolina in the community of Allen’s Creek. He attended Allen’s Creek and Hazelwood schools, Waynesville Junior High and Waynesville High School where he graduated in 1949.

During his boyhood he spent his time mostly on the creek bank but loved to play softball. During the winter my brother Wayne and Bennie would trap for animals and sell their hides.

Bennie learned to tie fishing flies also. My dad taught him to use a pair of pliers to hold the fish hook. So the pliers became his vice. Later on, fly tying became his hobby.

He was drafted into the Army and spent some time in Germany. It didn't take him long to find some streams where he could fish in his free time. He wrote home to his parents and asked them to send his fly tying and fly fishing gear to him. He was discharged in May 1953. After retiring from Dayco Southern in 1990, he spent many hours at his vise tying flies. Truly, he was a master fly tyer.

We both grew up in the same community and attended the same church, Allen's Creek Baptist Church where we were married June 27, 1953. We have three sons - Kevin, born November 23, 1954; Carrol, born October 10, 1956; and, our Jason, born October 9, 1967. All three sons are expert fishermen.

Bennie was a man of faith and served as a deacon for many years. He was a firm believer in honoring Sunday as a day of rest and he never fished on the Lord's day. On March 21, 2005, Bennie died suddenly on a treadmill during a Stress Test, among three doctors. He was a loving and devoted husband, a wonderful dad to his sons, and his grandchildren adored their "Pawie," and he loved them too!

- **written by Bennie's wife, Joyce Craig**



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