



Mr. Cliff Hickman

October 11, 1943 - November 28, 2025

Cliff Hickman passed from this life on November 28th, 2025 in Tyler, Texas; he was eighty-two years old.

Cliff was born on October 11, 1943, in Harvey, IL. He spent his childhood years living on the Southside of Chicago, in the Roseland and Fernwood neighborhoods. About the time he was ready to enter high school, he moved to Berwyn, Illinois, a suburb on the Westside of Chicago. He graduated from J. Sterling Morton (West) High School in 1961.

After graduating from high school, Cliff attended Morton Junior College (MJC) in Cicero, IL for two years, after which time he transferred to Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale, IL. While at SIU he earned a B.S. Degree in Forestry in 1966; and an M.S. Degree in Economics in 1968. While at SIU, he was also elected to membership in Xi Sigma Pi – the international honor society for Forestry and related sciences. Additionally, before receiving his forestry degree, he spent two summers working on the Downieville Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest in California; the first summer he worked in Fire Control, the second summer in Timber Management.

After completing his studies at SIU, Cliff was awarded a Fellowship by the Edward Hines Lumber Company, then headquartered in Chicago, IL, to pursue a Ph.D. Degree in Forestry Economics, at the State University of New

York (SUNY) College of Forestry in Syracuse, NY. The Edward Hines Lumber Company wanted him to focus his doctoral dissertation on the following topic: How forest product companies that were heavily dependent on National Forest timber for their log supply, were being impacted by the U.S. Forest Service's timber appraisal and sale policies. All requirements for the Ph.D. were completed by August 1971.

Upon completing his graduate studies, Cliff accepted a position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Forest Science at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX. While at A&M, Cliff taught classes in Forest Economics, Forest Policy, and Quantitative Methods in Forestry. It was during this time that Cliff met the love of his life – Maribeth Hickman, and the two of them were married on August 3, 1974 at the FBC of Henderson, TX. At the time Cliff and Maribeth were married, he was not yet a Christian; however, while they were dating they often attended Church together – and after they were married, they regularly attended Worship Services at the FBC of Bryan, TX. It was during a Revival that was being held at the FBC of Bryan, that the Holy Spirit finally led Cliff to step out and ask Jesus to become his Lord and Savior. Pastor Bailey Stone baptized him a few days later.

In the fall of 1979, Cliff and Maribeth moved from Bryan, TX to Metairie, LA because he had accepted a GS-12 Research Forester position in the Forest Resource Law and Taxation Research Work Unit (RWU) of the Southern Forest Experiment Station which was then headquartered in New Orleans, LA. During his tenure at the Southern Station, Cliff's research, which was national in scope, focused on examining how different state and local tax policies – e.g., ad valorem property taxes, current use property taxes, yield taxes, severance taxes, and exemptions or rebates – influenced the taxes paid by private forest owners as well as the revenues received by state and local governments.

During the time they lived in Metairie, Cliff and Maribeth regularly attended Metairie Baptist Church – and became activity involved in various Church activities. Also, it was at this time that both of their daughters were born: Marilee Ann in 1986, and Kathryn Evaline in 1988. Toward the end of his tenure at the Southern Station, Cliff was promoted to a GS-14 Research Forester. This action was taken based on the recommendation of a peer review panel following a critical examination of the work he had completed while at the Southern Station.

In the fall of 1991, Cliff and his family moved from Metairie, LA to Fairfax, VA – because he was chosen to fill a position on the Policy Analysis Staff in the USDA Forest Service’s National Headquarters in Washington, DC. While serving in this position, much of his time was spent dealing with policy issues relating to the Forest Service’s timber sale program – so he was eventually transferred to the Agency’s Timber Management Staff. While working in Timber Management, his primary responsibility was to prepare an annual report called the TSPIRS (Timber Sales Program Information Reporting System) Report. Each year the Forest Service was required to send this report to the Congressional Committees that were responsible for overseeing its activities. After serving in this capacity for a few years, Cliff chose to move back into Research by accepting a position on the Forest Economics and Inventory Research Staff in the Washington Office. In this capacity, he helped Forest Service Research to plan and implement its very first “Customer Satisfaction Survey.”

In the summer of 2007, Cliff retired from the Forest Service and his family moved from Fairfax, VA to Henderson, TX so they could be close to Maribeth’s parents – Wayne and Mary Rogers. During the first few years after his retirement, Cliff continued to do some work for the Forest Service’s Policy Analysis Staff on a volunteer basis, and occasionally he would travel back to

Washington DC to brief Agency personnel on the results of the work he had been doing.

Once they were settled in Henderson, Cliff and Maribeth quickly got connected to the First Baptist Church of Henderson – the Church that Maribeth’s parents attended, and also the Church in which they were married. In early 2013, a neighbor, Al Whitehead, talked with Cliff about joining the Gideons International; after praying about the matter, he submitted an application and officially became a Gideon that same year. Cliff found that he greatly enjoyed working with other member’s of the Henderson Camp to place and distribute Bibles and New Testaments at key points along the traffic lanes of life; he especially liked to go into a jail or prison, where many recipients had likely reached a low point in their lives and were looking for a new path forward; or into a school or college where the recipients were mostly young people with virtually their whole lives still ahead of them. Although some members of the Henderson Camp encouraged Cliff to become a Church Speaker, as such men help to raise the funds needed to print more Scriptures for placement and distribution, but initially he declined. A few years later, he changed his mind on this matter – went through the required training – and became qualified to be a Church Speaker. He never regretted this decision; he found this to be a personally rewarding ministry within a ministry – and came to believe that it was one of the most worthwhile things he had ever done during his life. Indeed, Cliff’s only regret about becoming a Gideon is that he wished he had joined earlier – so he could have served for a longer period of time before the infirmities associated with growing older greatly limited his ability to serve. He couldn’t help but think about what King Solomon, considered by many to be the wisest man who ever lived, wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:1 (ESV):

“ 1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, ‘I have no pleasure

in them;’ ...”

Cliff was preceded in death by his stepfather, Warren L. Koch, and his mother, Vivian E. Koch, both of who were born and raised in Chicago, IL and are now buried in the Cedar Park Cemetery, which is located south of Chicago in Calumet City, IL.

Cliff is survived by his wife of fifty-one years, Maribeth Rogers Hickman of Henderson, TX; his older daughter, Marilee A. Vachon and husband Alain Vachon of League City, TX; his younger daughter, Kathryn E. Hickman of Henderson, TX; four granddaughters: Melody Belle, Addison Beth, Ella Claire, and Layla Brooke; and one grandson, Silas Lucien Wayne.

A graveside service will be held at the Rusk County Memorial Gardens Cemetery, under the direction of the Crawford- A. Crim Funeral Home, on December 2nd, 2025, starting at eleven o’clock. Dr. David Higgs will officiate. The family will receive friends following the service from 12:00 - 1:00 PM in the Parlor of First Baptist Church located in the Family Life Center.

Honorary Pallbearers will be the Henderson Camp Gideons. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to either: the Gideons International Henderson Camp or the First Baptist Church of Henderson’s fund to pay off the remaining debt on its new Children’s Building.

The Gideons International Henderson Camp:

P.O. Box 1741

Henderson, TX 75653

First Baptist Church of Henderson: <https://fbchenderson.org/give>

Words of comfort may be shared with the family at www.crawfordacrim.com.

Cemetery Details

Rusk County Memorial Gardens

5013 US Hwy 259
Henderson, TX 75652

Previous Events

Graveside

DEC 2. 11:00 AM (CT)

Rusk County Memorial Gardens
5013 US Hwy 259
Henderson, TX 75652

Visitation

DEC 2. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Family Life Center Parlor at First Baptist Church
207 W. Main St.
Henderson, TX 75652

Tribute Wall

MH

“ We enjoyed knowing Cliff and being his friend. He was an inspiration to us all for his devotion in serving Jesus Christ. Cliff definitely achieved his goal of finishing strong for Jesus Christ.

Mike and Beth Holland

Mike Holland - December 02, 2025 at 09:47 AM

NR

“ Nelwyn Richardson lit a candle in memory of Mr. Cliff Hickman



Nelwyn Richardson - December 01, 2025 at 10:49 PM

MG

“ Missy Hacker & Steve Green lit a candle in memory of Mr. Cliff Hickman



Missy Hacker & Steve Green - December 01, 2025 at 05:31 PM

KH

“ Maribeth, your loss is great as Cliff was a role model of what a Christian should be. He will be severely missed in our Gideon Camp, having served as our leader for several years and always a driving force to put Bibles in as many hands as we could. Thank you for sharing him with us. Ken and Mollie Hale



Ken Hale - December 01, 2025 at 09:11 AM

CS

“ Maribeth, I am so sorry! Love and prayers for you and your family

christy Stanearth - November 30, 2025 at 08:38 AM

DA

“ Maribeth and family my thoughts and prayers are with you during this time.
Hugs, Donna



Donna Aaron - November 30, 2025 at 08:12 AM