

# Dr. Blair E. Batson, first pediatrics chair at UMMC, dies at age 98

By Ruth Cummins UMMC

Dr. Blair E. Batson, the first chair of pediatrics at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, died Nov. 26. He was 98.

Dr. LouAnn Woodward, UMMC vice chancellor for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine, said Batson's importance to the health of children in the state "cannot be underestimated."

"He truly is the father of organized pediatrics in Mississippi," she said, "and the lives of countless children in our state have been touched through his work."

"What a wonderful legacy."

Batson's successor as chair, Dr. Owen B. Evans, called him "a living archive

of pediatric diseases and experiences."

"And he was a role model for me in how to be a gentleman," Evans said.

Born Oct. 24, 1920, Batson grew up in Pearl River County in the sawmill town of Orvisburg, where his grandfather, Ran Batson, owned the mill and his grandmother, Mary Bryan, was principal of the three-room, eight-grade school.

For three years of his childhood, at the start of the Great Depression, Batson and his family lived in West Point, where the local librarian, Lucy Heard, cultivated his lifelong love of books and learning.

He earned his B.A. and M.D. at Vanderbilt University, where he completed a residency in pediatrics.

While an undergraduate, he was president of the student council and of his fraternity, Sigma Chi. He served as chief resident at Vanderbilt from 1949-50 and had a faculty appointment there from 1949-1952.

He completed a one-year residency at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and was on the faculty of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine from 1952-55. He also received a Master of Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins University.

He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and in the U.S. Army Medical Corps from 1946-48 in Giessen, Germany, as ward officer for contagious diseases and pediatrics for the

388th Station Hospital.

At 34, he was named chair of the Department of Pediatrics at UMMC just two months after the Medical Center opened its doors to patients in 1955. He officially retired in 1989, although he still taught for years afterward. During his long career, he taught more than 3,500 medical students and 240 pediatric residents. Among those was the late Dr. Aaron Shirley, who, under Batson's leadership, in 1965 became the first African-American learner in any program at UMMC.

Dr. Joe Donaldson, a former member of the pediatrics faculty, said Batson was "superbly trained" and read all the time.

"He had seen virtually ev-

ery interesting pediatric case in Mississippi since 1955," Donaldson said.

Another faculty member, Dr. Will Sorey, said Batson was "a wonderful teacher" who "knew infectious diseases, not from lab reports that we rely on now, but from clinical presentation."

Batson was honored often for his contributions to the health of children in Mississippi. He was the recipient of the 2000 Humanitarian of the Year tribute from the Epilepsy Foundation of Mississippi. In 1996, he was selected Vanderbilt's Distinguished School of Medicine Alumnus of the Year. In 1995, he was inducted into the University of Mississippi Alumni Hall of Fame.

He also received awards for outstanding service from the March of Dimes, the National Easter Seal Society and the American Academy of Pediatrics District VII. He received an award for leadership and devotion to child health care from the Mississippi Academy of Pediatrics.

Batson was an examiner for the American Board of Pediatrics from 1963-90, a member of the executive board of the American Academy of Pediatrics from 1974-80 and president of the pediatric section of the Southern Medical Association.

In 1997, the new children's hospital was named the Blair E. Batson Hospital for Children in recognition of his lifetime contributions to the health of children in Mississippi. A new addition to the hospital is currently under construction.

He was married twice, first to Dr. Margaret Batson, a distinguished pediatrician in her own right and mem-

ber of the original pediatric faculty, and then to Blanche Batson, a well-known artist, both of whom are deceased.

Survivors include Batson's only brother, John O. Batson II; six nieces and nephews: John O. Batson III of Lake Oswego, Oregon; Molly Batson Smith of Atlanta, Georgia; Blair Batson of Portland, Oregon; Bryan Batson Jauregui of Todos Santos, Mexico; Andrew Graves Batson of Seattle Washington; and Virginia Batson of Collingswood, New Jersey; and four great nieces and nephews: Bryan Smith of Athens, Georgia; Annie Smith of San Francisco, California; and Griffin Batson Grant and Tristan Batson Grant of Collingswood, New Jersey.

A memorial service will take place in early 2019. In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial contributions be made to the Blair E. Batson Hospital for Children, c/o the UMMC Office of Development, 2500 N. State St., Jackson, MS 39216 or Friends of Children's Hospital, 3900 Lakeland Dr., Suite 205, Flowood, MS 39232.

## 29th November

### ACROSS

- 1 Minnie, to the Marx Brothers
- 4 U-shaped pipe
- 8 Fruit salad orb
- 13 Jaw projection
- 17 She raised Cain
- 18 Cattle call prize
- 19 Po, e.g.
- 20 Deadly dull routine
- 21 Saviors
- 23 Moreno and Bradley
- 24 Director Parker
- 25 Hunter and Holm
- 26 Movie rentals
- 28 Begin, as a romance
- 30 Kiosk
- 32 Enfants
- 33 Church of Scotland, with "The"
- 34 Little bit
- 35 Message carriers
- 36 Bird's ancestor, possibly
- 40 Number of

- stars for a brigadier general
- 41 Heads
- 42 Paris's kidnap victim
- 43 Genetic messenger: abbr.
- 44 Motioned expressively
- 46 Acts of derring-do
- 47 Roman 1052
- 48 Mars, to Plato
- 49 Newcastle's excess
- 50 Responds derisively
- 51 Secret motives
- 54 Serves tea
- 55 Hair goop
- 56 "Good Times" actress
- 57 Elbow or knee
- 58 "Someday My Prince Will \_\_\_"
- 59 Fuller's earth
- 60 Visit habitually
- 61 Massages gently
- 65 List ender
- 66 Marriage precursor
- 67 Desiccates

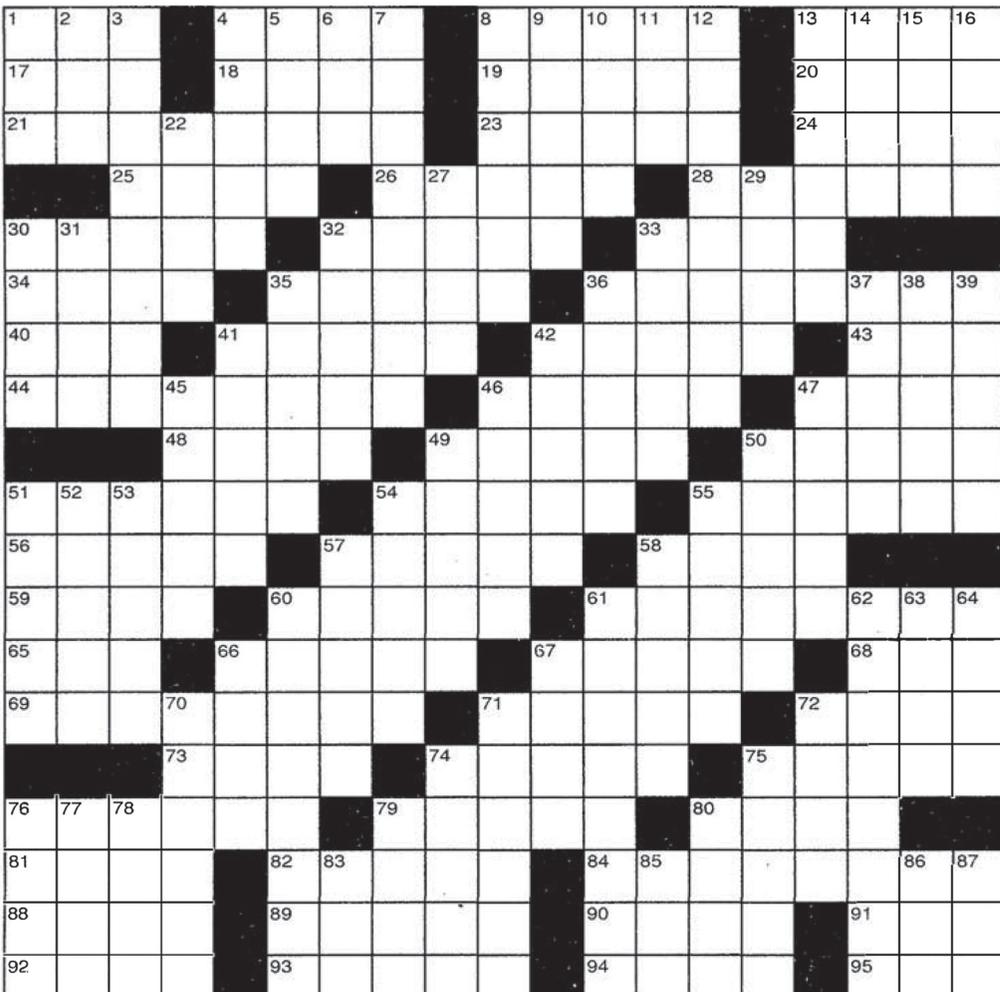
- 68 Man with a salty wife
- 69 Excavated
- 71 Demeanors
- 72 Superboy's crush Lang
- 73 Beatty film of 1981
- 74 Soft velvet
- 75 Dogpatch matriarch
- 76 Armadas
- 79 Orifices
- 80 Voiced
- 81 Actor Auberjonois
- 82 Treat for Piglet
- 84 Kindergarten classroom critters
- 88 Eventually
- 89 Hazardous \_\_\_
- 90 Neighbor
- 91 Popstar Carly \_\_\_ Jepsen
- 92 Do a bouncer's job
- 93 Drive
- 94 Conduct, as war
- 95 Consecrated French woman: abbr.

### DOWN

- 1 Alcott character
- 2 \_\_\_-lacto diet
- 3 Effects an agreement
- 4 John Naisbitt's megasubject
- 5 Howard and Ely
- 6 City official: abbr.
- 7 Bothered
- 8 Feels blindly
- 9 Frosts
- 10 "\_\_\_ Man" (Rick Bragg memoir)
- 11 \_\_\_ se
- 12 Novelist Caldwell et al.
- 13 Starts an old car
- 14 Grasp
- 15 Type of type: abbr.
- 16 Real Housewife Leakes
- 22 Sensible
- 27 Actor Vigoda et al.
- 29 Smooth
- 30 City haze
- 31 Prong
- 32 "Man \_\_\_ dog"

- 33 Some school uniforms
- 35 Items for sale
- 36 Transactions
- 37 Singer Guthrie et al.
- 38 Apartments, to a property manager
- 39 Elevate
- 41 Prepare baby food
- 42 Courage
- 45 Bean counter's bottom line
- 46 Source
- 47 Missish grimaces
- 49 Piggy bank fillers
- 50 Great Lakes mnemonic
- 51 Like a pendulum's path
- 52 Actor Nick of "Weeds"
- 53 Iced
- 54 Poet Ezra
- 55 Habits
- 57 Seymour and Curtin

- 58 Michael of "The Prestige"
- 60 Cutting tools
- 61 Casabalike melon
- 62 Maligns
- 63 Long periods
- 64 Last-minute reprieve
- 66 Root plant
- 67 Chow down, to the refined
- 70 Fusses at the looking glass
- 71 Eliot's miserly Silas
- 72 Café au \_\_\_
- 74 Maison entrance
- 75 Tiffany imitations
- 76 Sigma Chi, e.g.
- 77 2014 TV Hall of Fame inductee
- 78 Book of Mormon book
- 79 Sit for Seurat
- 80 Cocksure
- 83 "\_\_\_ Ballou"
- 85 League where Dr. J got his start
- 86 Scoundrel
- 87 "What did I tell you?"



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| Soybeans G'wood      | Jan 19     | 2019 Jan        | 9.06          | -0.49     | 8.57      | 0.11   |
| Soybeans G'wood      | Nov 19     | 2019 Aug-Sep    | 9.50          | -0.37     | 9.13      | 0.11   |
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