

# Obituaries



**Samuel T. "Sam" Sirmons**  
Samuel T. "Sam" Sirmons, 74, of Climax, GA, passed away Tuesday, February 9, 2021.

The graveside funeral service was held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, February 12 at Cedar Grove Cemetery with Rev. Wayne McDonald and Rev. Lynn Hurley officiating. Stacey Smith, Joe Salter, Gene Mills, Steve Stewart, Jeff Heard and Jacob Hiers served as active pallbearers. Due to the ongoing concerns regarding the CO-

VID-19 pandemic, those attending were asked to maintain the recommended safe social distancing of six feet and/or wear protective masks in accordance with the State of Georgia guidelines.

Online visitors may sign the guest register at [www.iveyfuneral.com](http://www.iveyfuneral.com). In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to: Shriners Hospitals for Children, Processing Center, PO Box 863765, Orlando, FL 32886 or Lighthouse Children's Home, 7771 Mahan Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32309.

Samuel Thomas Sirmons was born November 3, 1946 in Donalsonville, GA, the son of William T. and Emmie McDonald Sirmons. He was a graduate of West Bainbridge High School, Class of 1964. He married his high school sweetheart, Sandra Cleveland, just a few months after graduation and they made their home

in Southwest Georgia. Sam proudly served his country in the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam War and later served as a member of Seminole Lodge No. 83 F&AM where he was past Worshipful Master, the Donalsonville American Legion, and VFW Post 8433 in Cairo. He was a founding member of Hymasters Quartet in 1972. Sam was a faithful member of Climax United Methodist Church where he served as lay leader, worship leader, and adult Sunday School teacher.

Sam was a man of integrity, high morals and standards, and strong faith. He did not compromise on issues he felt strongly about even in his business dealings over five decades at Sirmons Alignment. Sam was generous and compassionate, doing things for others, expecting nothing in return. (He was known to attend a dance recital even

when he didn't feel well.) Sam was up front, honest, and gave you his best effort. He ministered to others in many ways, but the best example was how he lived his life every day as a devoted husband, father, grandfather, Christian and patriotic American.

Survivors include his wife of 56 years, Sandra Sirmons; his children, Lynn Sirmons Branch and her husband, Doug, of Cairo, GA and Rick Sirmons and his wife, Kellie, of Tallahassee, FL; his grandchildren, Mary Catherine and Jacob and Ryleigh Sirmons; and his siblings, Don (Sheila) Sirmons of Bristol, FL and Jeannie (Jerry) Heard of Climax, GA.

In addition to his parents, Sam was preceded in death by his infant son, John William Sirmons; his brothers, Bill, Johnny and Larry; and his sister, Elinor Stewart.

## Answering questions you may have once you get the COVID-19 vaccine

Have you received the COVID-19 vaccine? If so, congratulations on taking a huge step in protecting both you and others, and helping to get the pandemic under control. However, you might still have questions. Below we offer common questions you might have that have been answered and supported by medical experts.

### What if the COVID-19 vaccine gives me side effects?

Side effects generally are only mild and temporary, like headache, fatigue, mild fever and possible pain at the injection site — which may be similar to other vaccines you've taken in the past. Side effects typically last only a day or two. Very few people are expected to experience serious side effects and it is impossible to get the COVID-19 virus from the vaccine.

"Symptoms like these are a result of the body's immune response and show that your body is working to build immunity," said David Basel, MD, Vice President of Avera Medical Group Quality.

### What if I don't have any side effects?

Not everyone will experience side effects. If you don't have any, it means you are one of the lucky ones. Not having symptoms does not mean that the vaccine is not working.

### Can I expect any long-term side effects from the vaccine?

The way the vaccine is designed means that there will be very low risk for long-term side effects. The RNA protein quickly leaves your cells after it does its work of alerting your immune system. It does not enter the cell nucleus or affect your DNA.

### Why do I need to have a second dose?

The first vaccines will be two-dose vaccines. Getting both doses is very important. The first dose is a "priming" dose giving you about 50% immunity while the second dose sets in immunity to around 95%. You will not develop sufficient immunity to COVID-19 without both doses.

### How soon will I become immune to COVID-19?

You will start to have some immunity seven days after your first dose. Your immunity will continue to build and will reach a peak about two weeks after the second dose.

### Can I get other vaccines, like a flu or shingles shot?

You should wait at least 14 days before getting a different vaccine.

### Should I still get the flu shot?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine will not protect you from getting the flu. Like COVID-19, influenza can result in serious complications and lost time from work.

If you haven't gotten your flu shot yet this season, there's still time to benefit from one as the flu season extends into the spring months. You should separate the different vaccines by at least 14 days.

### I got the COVID-19 vaccine - now what?

It's still unknown how long immunity lasts after getting the vaccine. Future findings will show us whether or not people will need booster shots at a later date.

### Will it be safe for me to gather with friends and family again?

After you, your family members and friends are vaccinated, it will be much safer to gather together. However, it's important to remember that children won't be protected until a vaccine is

approved for them. It will still be important to take precautions and keep watching for updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### Do I still need to wear a mask and social distance?

We are counting on the COVID-19 vaccine to be the most effective measure against the spread of the virus. Different populations are being vaccinated at a time — starting with long-term care staff and residents, frontline health care workers and those with compromised immune systems, such as cancer patients. Although the vaccine does a good job giving you personal immunity, it is unclear whether you might still be able to pass on COVID-19 to others.

Even as more people become vaccinated, it's important to remain vigilant with the preventive measures you've incorporated into your life:

- Wear your mask
- Practice social distancing
- Maintain good hand hygiene

You can expect hospitals and clinics to continue to follow these guidelines, too. Staff will still wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and visitation will be limited in some health care facilities.

### When will COVID-19 end?

"The more people who get the vaccine, the closer we get to 'back to normal.' As a result, we'll see reduced illness and hospitalizations due to this virus," said Basel.

While masking and social distancing are important, vaccinating a large number of people is the only way this virus will get under control. The ultimate goal in ending this pandemic is by vaccinating as many individuals as possible against COVID-19.

## Financial Focus

### What can investors learn from 2020?

Now that we're a few weeks removed from 2020, it's a good time to reflect on such a momentous year. We can think about developments in the social and political spheres, but we also learned — or perhaps re-learned — some valuable lessons about investing.

Here are four of them:

- A long-term perspective is essential. Volatility in the financial markets is nothing new, but even so, 2020 was one for the books. Of course, the COVID-19 outbreak was the driving force behind most of the wild price swings. Soon after the pandemic's effects were first felt, the S&P 500, a common index of U.S. large-cap stocks, fell 34% but gained 67% by the end of the year. Consequently, investors who stuck with their investment portfolios and kept their eyes on their long-term goals, rather than on shocking headlines, ended up doing well. And while 2020 was obviously an unusual year, the long-term approach will always be valuable to investors.

- Investment opportunities are always available. The pandemic drove down the prices of many stocks — but it didn't necessarily harm the long-term fundamentals of these companies. In other words, they may still have had strong management, still produced desirable products and services, and still had good prospects for growth. In short, they may still have been good

investment opportunities — and when their prices were depressed, they may also have been "bargains" for smart investors. And this is the case with virtually any market downturn — some high-quality stocks will be available at favorable prices.

- Diversification pays off. Bond prices often move in a different direction from stocks. So, during a period of



**Emily Yent**  
Edward Jones Financial Advisor  
[emily.yent@edwardjones.com](mailto:emily.yent@edwardjones.com)  
(229) 246-6400

volatility when stock prices are falling, such as we saw in the weeks after the pandemic hit in March, the presence of bonds in your portfolio can lessen the impact of the downturn and stabilize your overall returns. And this, in essence, is the value of maintaining a balanced and diversified portfolio. (Keep in mind, though, that diversification can't guarantee profits or prevent all losses.)

- The market looks ahead. The pandemic-driven market plunge may have been stunning, but it made a kind of intrinsic sense — after all, the sudden arrival of a pandemic that threatened lives, closed businesses and cost millions of jobs doesn't sound like a positive event for the financial markets. But the strong rally that followed the initial drop and continued into 2021 has surprised many people. After all, the pandemic's effects were felt throughout the rest of 2020, and are still being felt now, so why did stock prices rise? The answer is pretty straightforward: The financial markets always look ahead, not behind. And for a variety of reasons — including widespread vaccinations, anticipated economic stimulus measures from Congress and the Biden administration, and the Federal Reserve's continued steps to keep interest rates low — the markets are anticipating much stronger economic growth, possibly starting in the second half of 2021.

All of us are probably glad to have 2020 behind us. Yet, the year taught us some investment lessons that we can put to work in 2021 — and beyond.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.*  
Edward Jones, Member SIPC

## Support the upkeep of your local cemeteries

### Cedar Springs Cemetery

Cedar Springs Cemetery is seeking donations for upkeep of the cemetery. Please make your donations payable to Cedar Springs Cemetery and mail to Martin Evans, 1245 Mayhaw Rd., Blakely, Georgia 39823.

### Corinth Freewill Baptist Cemetery

Due to the need for year round care of the cemetery, the funds for cemetery maintenance are low and donations are needed now. Anyone with cemetery lots or those who have friends or family buried at Corinth Freewill Baptist Church Cemetery may send your contributions for the upkeep of the cemetery to: Corinth Church; Attn.: Herbert Golden, P.O. Box 447, Iron City, Georgia 39859. If you have questions or need more information, please call 254-9893.

### Friendship Cemetery

Contributions for the upkeep of the Friendship Cemetery to Friendship Cemetery, P.O. Box 155, Donalsonville, GA 39845. For more information, contact William Bramlett at 229-254-2694.

### Olive Grove Cemetery

Olive Grove Primitive Baptist Church (Rock Pond) Cemetery is in need of help with the cemetery funds. We only have a few members left and it is hard to maintain all the upkeep for the church and cemetery.

If you would like to make a donation, you can do so by mailing a check to: Olive Grove Church, c/o Brenda Hunter, 5924 John Emory Trawick Road, Iron City, Georgia 39859. Contributions can also be deposited directly into the church's banking account at the First State Bank of Donalsonville.

# You.

Here at

Bush Retirement & Wealth Strategies,

**WE FOCUS ON ONE THING.**

Call us at

**229-524-2404**

**BUSH** RETIREMENT & WEALTH STRATEGIES

Providing Financial Strategies Since 1986.

Advisory services offered through  
Tucker Asset Management, LLC  
Bush Retirement & Wealth Strategies

## Invest in your retirement.



**Emily A. Yent, AAMS®**  
Financial Advisor  
102 E Broughton Street  
Bainbridge, GA 39817  
229-246-6400

**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING  
[edwardjones.com](http://edwardjones.com)

Member SIPC

## Obituary Policy

Obituaries published in the *Donalsonville News* are accepted only through established funeral homes, crematories and verifiable out-of-town sources. Death notices, not to exceed three column inches, are published free of charge.

Standard obituaries of no more than 300 words are published along with a one-column photograph for \$30. Expanded obituaries will be charged \$30 plus \$5.50 per column inch for space used to accommodate additional words over 300.

The *Donalsonville News* is a weekly, Thursday publication. The deadline for submission is 5 p.m. on Monday.