

Obituary announcements

Sally Blaich

Mrs. Sally Faye Byars Blaich, 92, passed away Sunday, April 19, 2026, at her home. Born on July 14, 1933, in Rock Hill, South Carolina, she was the widow of Charles Allen Blaich, Jr., and the daughter of the late Robert Harrison Byars and Dovie Raines Byars. She was a devoted member of South Main Baptist Church. Mrs. Blaich was a graduate of Kershaw High School and retired from Lockheed Martin after more than 26 years of dedicated service. She held the distinction of being the company's first salaried female employee. She is survived by her three daughters:



Kathryn (Ray) Lewis, Anita (Tommy) Watkins, and Rebecca (Doug) Smith, all of Greenwood; six grandchildren: Ray Lewis, Lindsey Williams, Brynna Watkins, Christina McDaniel, Justin Smith, and Kyle Smith; and 17 great-grandchildren. In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by her granddaughter, Stephanie Lewis Fries; her great-grandson, Charles Everett Smith; three brothers; and four sisters. She was the last surviving member of

her immediate family. Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 25, 2026, at the Blyth Funeral Home Chapel, with Dr. Toby Frost officiating. Burial will follow at 4:00 p.m. at Kershaw Memorial City Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Saturday morning at the funeral home prior to the service. Memorials may be made to South Main Baptist Church, Blyth Funeral Home & Cremation Services is assisting the family.

Week Fourteen: Legislative Update

WEEK 14 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Income Tax Cuts, Protecting Communities, and Supporting Families

Last week at the State House, we cut taxes, advanced public safety measures, and passed legislation to protect our communities, support families, and strengthen key South Carolina industries. From putting more money back in your pocket to standing up for our shrimpers and improving school safety, we're focused on practical solutions that make a real difference in your day-to-day life. Here's what you need to know.

Income Tax Cut Signed into Law

Last week, H.4216 was officially signed into law, delivering meaningful, immediate tax relief for hardworking South Carolina families. This legislation provides over \$308 million in relief, lowers the top income tax rate from 6% to 5.21%, and puts more money back into your paycheck—where it belongs, not in the hands of Columbia bureaucrats.

Just as importantly, this bill puts South Carolina on a responsible path toward a simpler, flatter tax system, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the state income tax altogether. As our economy continues to grow and key financial benchmarks are met, income tax rates will continue to drop, moving us closer to zero in a way that is both sustainable



Cody Mitchell

and fiscally responsible. This is not a tax swap like we've seen in other states. We are cutting taxes without shifting the burden elsewhere, focused on real relief today while building a stronger, more competitive future for South Carolina.

Protecting Our Communities & Local Industries

We also made strong progress on legislation aimed at protecting South Carolinians and standing up for our local industries. The Truth in Labeling Bill (H.4248) passed the House unanimously! This is a major win for our coastal communities and local shrimpers. By requiring clear country-of-origin labeling, this bill ensures consumers know exactly what they're buying, prevents imported seafood from being passed off as local, and gives South Carolina shrimpers a fair shot to compete and thrive in their own market.

We also passed H.3408 out of the House Judiciary Committee to protect South Carolina land

and critical resources from foreign adversaries. This bill restricts foreign ownership of agricultural land and property near sensitive military and infrastructure sites, helping safeguard our farmland, strengthen national security, and ensure South Carolina's future stays in the hands of Americans, not hostile foreign actors.

Next, H.4641 advanced out of the House Judiciary Committee, building on existing state law to crack down on highly concentrated, synthetic kratom products that go far beyond traditional use. This bill closes loopholes and ensures these dangerous substances are kept off the market, protecting South Carolinians and prioritizing public safety.

Supporting Families & Protecting Children

We also sent H.4756, the Student Physical Privacy Act, to the Governor's desk last week because every girl deserves to feel safe at school. This legislation protects privacy in restrooms and locker rooms by establishing clear, commonsense standards families across South Carolina have been asking for. This bill puts parents back in the driver's seat and ensures our schools remain safe, respectful environments for every student.

Supporting families and protecting our most vulnerable continues to be a top priority. S.32 passed both chambers and is headed to the Governor's desk, creating tax incentives to support pregnancy resource centers, maternity homes, and organizations that assist victims of human trafficking. This legislation strengthens the network of care available to

women, children, and victims who need it most.

In a unanimous 105-0 vote, the House passed H.4611, ensuring that mothers of stillborn babies receive paid parental leave. This compassionate measure provides support to families during one of the most difficult moments they can face, and it reflects our commitment to standing with South Carolinians in times of both joy and hardship.

Last but not least, H.5201 Safe School Act advanced through the House Education Committee. This bill strengthens coordination between law enforcement, schools, and state agencies to create clear, unified safety plans. Every parent should feel confident that their child is safe at school, and every teacher and staff member deserves that same peace of mind.

As always, I appreciate the opportunity to represent you and to keep you informed about the work being done in Columbia. I welcome your feedback and encourage you to reach out if you have any questions or would like more information on these or other issues before the General Assembly.

To keep up with my legislative updates:

Facebook Link: <https://www.facebook.com/ElectCodyTMitchell>

Website: <https://www.codytmitchell.com/>

Email: ctmitchellsc@gmail.com

Phone #: (843) 332-5050

To keep up with the SC House Republican Caucus:

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Erin Gardner Hot Dog and 50/50 Raffle Fundraiser

On May 1st, we will be selling hot dog plates at Williams Finance in Kershaw to help raise money for and rally around the Gardner family during this difficult time! We will be delivering plates to local businesses (Kershaw, Heath springs, Pageland, Lancaster, Buford areas) with a 5-plate minimum. If you are a location that would like to have plates delivered to you and are not currently listed please contact me directly and I will get you added. Please consider ordering or donating. If you are unable to do either, please continue praying for this family.

Hot dog plates will include 2 hot dogs, slaw, beans, and chili.

We will also be doing a 50/50 Raffle! Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased from North Main Auto Sales, Williams Finance, or directly from me or other family members.

Google Form to sign up for Fundraiser (<https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSeL4GA8yOANA3.../viewform>)

Venmo Link for Donation (<https://account.venmo.com/u/Mason-Kirkley>)

Sizzle & Support FUNDRAISER

SCAN HERE TO GET YOUR \$10 PLATE!

Erin Gardner
A 32-year-old wife, mom, and special education teacher whose life changed overnight with a breast cancer diagnosis. As she fights each day for her family and her future, we're coming together to support her through the challenges ahead. Every hot dog sold is a small way to stand beside Erin and remind her she's not in this alone.

WHEN?
May 1st, 2026

THE MENU:
2 hot dogs served with chili and slaw + a side of baked beans

NOT INTERESTED IN A PLATE, BUT STILL WANT TO HELP?

Questions? Contact Mason Kirkley: 704-962-4559

Last night during the Kershaw County School District Teacher of the Year Recognition Program, Pine Tree Hill Elementary third grade teacher Mary Vannatter was named the 2026 Kershaw County School District Teacher of the Year, while Camden Middle Spanish teacher Marcia Daniels was chosen as first alternate.

All 18 Kershaw County schools selected teachers of the year. Vannatter and Daniels were two of five honor roll teachers selected as finalists for the district award. Other honor roll teachers are Flo Jackson, Blaney Elementary; Abigail Baytes Sheorn, Camden High; and Suzanna Hall, North Central High.

An educator for seven years, Vannatter is known for fostering an atmosphere where students don't just meet expectations — they excel, grow, and thrive. She sees the potential in every student before they see it in themselves, creating a foundation of trust that allows them to reach for the stars. While she is incredibly humble and consistently shies away from notoriety, her influence speaks louder than any public accolade ever could. She is an educator who quietly excels behind the scenes, content to let her students' achievements take the spotlight.

She says, "I'm incredibly honored and honestly so grateful to be named the Kershaw County School District Teacher of the Year. I feel really blessed to do this work every day alongside such amazing colleagues and to serve students and families who inspire me more than they probably realize. Growing up in a military family, I didn't often have the chance to feel rooted in one place, so being embraced by this community has meant more to me than I can fully express. This recognition means a lot, but it truly reflects the entire community I'm so lucky to be a part of."

Vannatter earned a

bachelor of arts degree in early childhood education from the University of South Carolina Upstate and a master of arts in reading education degree from Grand Canyon University.

Her principal Markieta Barber says, "Mary Vannatter stands apart not just for what her students achieve, but for how they grow, believe, and thrive under her care. Year after year, her academic results speak for themselves with exceptional growth across all performance areas. But her magic goes far beyond data. She builds authentic, joyful relationships with students whether she is playing kickball at recess, cheering them on at after school events, or turning everyday lessons into creative, engaging lessons. Her classroom is a place where learning feels fun, students feel seen, and excellence is the standard. We are truly blessed to have her as a Bullpup and now as the District Teacher of the Year!"

Also honored during the evening's celebration was Camden High School Mathematics Teacher

Rasheeda Edwards who was named as the district's Outstanding First Year Teacher.

The judges were impressed with Mrs. Edwards saying, "this teacher requires high level thinking skills of all students. She notices each student and makes sure they each are actively engaged in class. She left a successful career to pursue a dream of helping others."

Other Outstanding First Year Teacher honor

TOTY
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Pine Tree Hill Elementary teacher Mary Vannatter named 2026 KCSD Teacher of the Year; Camden Middle teacher Marcia Daniels to serve as first alternate

Photos (Bowtie Photography)

1: (L-R) KCSD Principal of the Year Markieta Barber, KCSD District Teacher of the Year Mary Vannatter, KCSD 1st Alternate Teacher of the Year Marcia Daniels, KCSD Outstanding First Year Teacher Rasheeda Edwards.

2. KCSD Superintendent Dr. Harrison Goodwin congratulates newly named KCSD District Teacher of the Year Mary Vannatter.

