

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

This link provides the specific resource information which documents and undergirds the biographical resource information on a specific Florida Baptist pastors, church staff or significant laity leaders.

The link you have chosen connects to the specific individual's resource files that provide the basis for information which the Historical Society has used to develop the respective biographical profile. The sources attached may include copies of articles gleaned from back issues of the *Florida Baptist Witness* and other news publications. Other resources include books, historical journal articles and church histories that are cited as documentation for the biography.

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Stewart, William Payne (1957-1999) was a professional golfer and won 18 tournaments in his lifetime. He won the U.S. Open twice. He and five others died in a tragic private plane crash on October 25, 1999. He touched many in life and death through his humor and faith. Over 3,000 people attended his funeral service at First Baptist Church in Orlando. Golf greats Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Paul Azinger, and over 100 famous co-workers were present for the service. J. B. Collingsworth and Jim Henry were quoted by many sources as they spoke of the faith of Payne Stewart. He was survived by his wife Tracey Ferguson Stewart, daughter Chelsea, son Aaron, and mother Bee. Gulf Wire Services, October 25, 1999. Orlando Sentinel, October 30, 1999.



SPORTS 6 THE HERALD • WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1999

PAYNE STEWART, 1957-1999

A tragic farewell for a remarkable golfer

MITCH ALBOM
KNIGHT RIDER NEWSPAPERS

One of the early news reports said only the pilots in Payne Stewart's private jet were dead. That Stewart and the others inside might be alive, stranded in the clouds, with no way to bring the plane down. This, in America, was enough to send everyone running to the TV set or radio. We could have a real-life disaster film happening before our eyes. And, as ludicrous as the notion was, there was part of you that thought hey, Payne Stewart is a big-time personality, a sports hero, maybe he'll grab the controls and bring that baby in. It happens in the movies, right?

Life is not the movies. And heroes are still human beings.

The truth is, the pilots did not die first, and whatever happened up there, once the Lear jet lifted off from Orlando on Monday morning, happened very fast. The cabin likely depressurized. No one had time to react — not the pilots, not Stewart's two agents, not Stewart himself. The temperature inside the cabin dropped to below freezing. The windows lost over. The passengers, because of the loss of pressure, were instantly incapacitated or perhaps, due to lack of oxygen, already dead.

The plane continued on a straight line, rising steadily into a meandering farewell voyage, a Viking funeral above the clouds. On auto-pilot, it cruised gently for hours, over Florida, over Georgia, over Alabama, Tennessee, Missouri and Nebraska. Several F-16s flew alongside, trying to gauge the damage or rouse the crew. But there was nothing to be done, only fly in step, like steely pallbearers waiting for the tin casket to drop. Finally, somewhere over South Dakota, the jet sputtered, then fell from the sky. It plunged nose first into a grassy field, with not enough fuel left inside to cause a fire. Just a crash. A horrible sound. And the end of all on board and every dream they ever had.

Good-bye to William Payne Stewart, the golfer with the baggy pants and the oversized heart.

A CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON
That was his real first name, you know, William. His father used to make him write it on his entry cards at the U.S. Open, until the son became well-known enough that "Payne" would suffice. Identity was never really a problem, to be honest. From the moment he pulled on his first pair of plaid pants — having just joined the PGA Tour in 1982 and hating that two other golfers were wearing the same clothes as he — everyone knew who Payne Stewart was. He talked big. He laughed big. He won big and he lost big. He had a wonderful swing that every day of envy-fueled, still clothes made the man.

The story goes that when Stewart went to sell his house in Orlando, pop star Michael Jackson came to look at it. The owner's name meant nothing to Jackson, until someone said "the guy who wears the knickerbockers."

"Oh, that guy," the King of Pop said. "I know who he is."

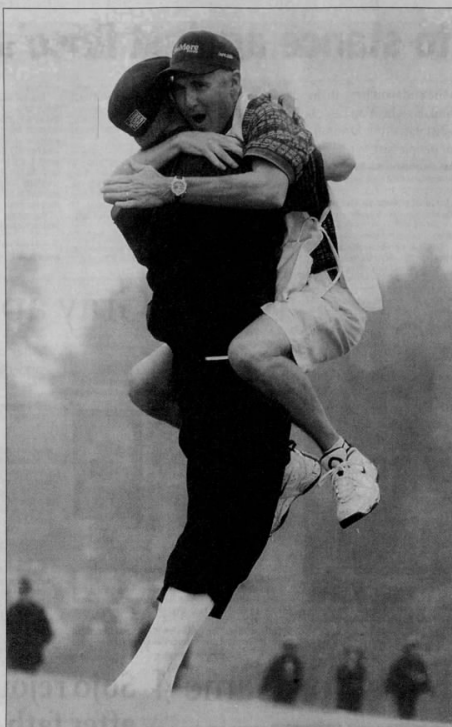
Didn't we all in a certain way, it was symbolic for the 42-year-old Stewart to say good-bye in a sweep above this country, and you sort of hoped he could stay up there forever. For Stewart was more than a good golfer, he was an American golfer. He injected life and spirit and individuality — you know, American traits — into a sport that seems bent on producing robots. He loved the USA. He once described himself as "the guy who puts his hand over his heart when they play the national anthem."

At his first Ryder Cup, at Muirfield Village in 1987, he cried when they played the Star-Spangled Banner. And at his last Ryder Cup, just a few weeks ago, outside Boston, he celebrated his teammates' come-from-behind victory the way a puppy celebrates a new toy.

Stewart won three majors in his career: the PGA and two U.S. Opens. How fitting. All American. But then, Stewart, tall and blond, did go to college at football-star SMU. He smoked cigars and cigarettes. He listened to Jimmy Buffett. He drank rum with his buddies.

He went through a petulant stage common to many American men), he let early success go to his head (again, a common trait). He calmed down as he got older, got married, had children when he adored (sound familiar?).

He was dying to Texas for another tournament when death, which he could not stop for, kindly stopped for him. The kid from Springfield, Mo., was eulogized by the president of the United States, who praised his "remarkable



Payne Stewart is embraced by his caddy, Mike Hicks, after winning the U.S. Open golf championship at the Pinehurst Resort & Country Club's No. 2 course in Pinehurst, N.C. in this June 20 photo. Spending a weekend with his family might have saved Hicks's life. Mike Hicks frequently travels with Stewart, who died Monday, with five other people when their Learjet crashed in South Dakota.



Children play on the beach as the Stars and Stripes (right), the Scottish Saltire (left) and the Royal St. Andrew's Club flag fly at half staff outside the St. Andrews Links clubhouse in St. Andrews, Scotland.

children and impact on his sport."

A PROUD FATHER
It is true, Stewart was known for much of his career as a bridesmaid — he finished second in more than two dozen tournaments — but that only made his winning more complete. This year, he sank a 15-foot putt on the final hole of the U.S. Open to outlast Phil Mickelson. In his elation, and through tears, Stewart congratulated Mickelson on his impending fatherhood. "Being a father is the best thing," Stewart told him. This from a man who just won the U.S. Open. You like to think things happen for a reason. You like to think Stewart had such a great year because he somehow knew this would be it.

A twist of fate Caddie stayed behind, designer got on plane

ELIZABETH A. DAVIS
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Neither man planned to fly with Payne Stewart. But one boarded the plane and died, and the other didn't, living to grieve his friend's death.

Mike Hicks had been Stewart's caddy for 12 years. He probably would have been a passenger on that doomed flight had not his family accompanied him from their home in Mebane to Orlando, Fla., for the Disney tournament last weekend.

Hicks learned about the crash while at the Champions Golf Club in Houston, where Stewart was to have played this week at the Tour Championship.

"I went in and watched television like everyone else. As soon as I knew what happened, I left for home," he said by telephone.

Stewart, his agents, Robert Fray and Van Ardan, and the two pilots, Michael Kling and Stephanie Bellaguarda, were killed Monday. Their Learjet, on a flight from Orlando to Dallas, flew 1,400 miles and plunged into a field in South Dakota.

Golf course architect Bruce Bland is believed to have been a sixth passenger. A senior design associate with a firm owned by Jack Nicklaus, Bland was scheduled to fly on a commercial plane, but apparently got on the plane with Stewart instead.

Hicks flew home with his wife and three children instead of flying with Stewart to Texas. His wife, Mrs. Hicks, said she didn't go on the trip because it was a big job traveling with young children, Hicks' mother, Mrs. Hicks, said Tuesday by telephone from her home in Hillsborough.

But she went, and she said she was glad that she did because he had to come back with her. Mrs. Hicks said, "Really if she hadn't gone he probably would have flown on with Payne. That is usually their itinerary, that he flies with him to the next tournament from Disney."

Instead, Hicks returned to North Carolina on Sunday and flew to

Houston on Monday to prepare for the Tour Championship.

Bland didn't plan to be on the flight, but appears to have been. Scott Todley, a spokesman for Nicklaus' Golden Bear International Inc., said Bland canceled a reservation on a commercial flight so he could fly with Stewart and discuss developing a golf course in Dallas.

Hicks' mother said her son will be a pallbearer at Stewart's funeral, and he and his wife also plan to attend Fray's services.

Hicks remembers when Stewart won the 1998 U.S. Open in Pinehurst in June and rode home to Mebane with Hicks. The next day, Stewart played in a charity tournament Hicks had organized.

"I live in North Carolina, and we had Payne in our home that night. It's one of the moments I'll always remember," Hicks said.

"We all drank champagne from the cup. It's a caddy's dream to have his boss in his home. I'll bet that doesn't happen too often."

Mrs. Hicks said she doesn't know if her son will want to work for another golfer.

"He lost his best friend," Mrs. Hicks said. "They were best buddies."

Tour to postpone events — Competition in two PGA Tour events will be postponed Friday because of a memorial service for Payne Stewart, the U.S. Open champion killed Monday in a plane crash.

The Tour Championship in Houston, a \$5 million event for the top 30 players on the money list, will start Thursday with 27 holes. Another 27 holes will be played on Saturday, with an 18-hole final round on Sunday.

In the Southern Farm Bureau Classic at Madison, Miss., the tournament will be just 54 holes with rounds scheduled for Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

Contributions in Stewart's honor can be made to The Payne Stewart Memorial Fund, First Orlando Foundation of the First Baptist Church, 3000 S. John Young Parkway, Orlando, Fla. 32803-6699.

STEWART FROM PAGE 1

Duval won the Tour Championship at Champions two years ago. What would another victory mean this week?

"I don't know," he said. "I really don't know. The feelings will probably not be as great as they might have been."

He may find out. The Tour Championship will start with 27 holes on Thursday, the first time a score over 100 could be enough to lead after the first round.

No golf on Friday for those who want to attend Stewart's memorial service in Orlando. Then 27 holes on Saturday, followed by some degree of normalcy — an 18-hole final round — on Sunday.

Someone will hold the trophy and cash the check. And someone's joy will be tempered by the thought of Stewart — a great ambassador, a great friend, a great player who lost his life with shocking suddenness.

Whether Stewart's death is crushing enough to cancel a tournament — it usually takes a war for that to happen in golf — is debatable.

But the look on the faces of 22 players Tuesday and the library-like setting on the golf course made it clear that golf, even at this level, was nothing more than hitting a little white ball, finding it, and hitting it again.

"I imagine everybody will be playing and doing the best they can," Duval said. "But I don't know how spectacular the golf will be."

Perhaps the mood will change by the time the first break is struck Thursday morning, a short time after a brief service for Stewart on the first tee.

Some have suggested a PGA Tour award in Stewart's honor, maybe naming the Tour Championship trophy after him.

Now that the game is on, perhaps the best way to honor Stewart is to play with the same tenacity that carried him to two U.S. Open titles.

Otherwise, it's not worth the effort to tell them that.

More Legal Ads On CLASSIFIED Page 2

Legal Notices R-99-113 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on Monday, October 27, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. in the Board of County Commissioners' Conference Room, 1000 West Washington Street, Tallahassee, Florida, to consider and act upon the following Resolution: RESOLUTION R-99-113 NOTES, FEES, AND CHARGES FOR POTABLE WATER DELIVERED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO REPEAL THE SCHEDULES FOR CERTAIN POTABLE WATER DELIVERED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. Interested parties may appear at the public hearing to present testimony and evidence in support of or in opposition to the proposed resolution. The public hearing will be held in the Board of County Commissioners' Conference Room, 1000 West Washington Street, Tallahassee, Florida, on Monday, October 27, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. For a complete copy of the resolution, please contact the Florida Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Water Management, 2205 North West Highway, Tallahassee, Florida 32304-2000. For a complete copy of the resolution, please contact the Florida Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Water Management, 2205 North West Highway, Tallahassee, Florida 32304-2000.	Legal Notices R-99-114 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on Monday, October 27, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. in the Board of County Commissioners' Conference Room, 1000 West Washington Street, Tallahassee, Florida, to consider and act upon the following Resolution: RESOLUTION R-99-114 NOTES, FEES, AND CHARGES FOR POTABLE WATER DELIVERED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO REPEAL THE SCHEDULES FOR CERTAIN POTABLE WATER DELIVERED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. Interested parties may appear at the public hearing to present testimony and evidence in support of or in opposition to the proposed resolution. The public hearing will be held in the Board of County Commissioners' Conference Room, 1000 West Washington Street, Tallahassee, Florida, on Monday, October 27, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. For a complete copy of the resolution, please contact the Florida Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Water Management, 2205 North West Highway, Tallahassee, Florida 32304-2000. For a complete copy of the resolution, please contact the Florida Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Water Management, 2205 North West Highway, Tallahassee, Florida 32304-2000.	Legal Notices R-99-115 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on Monday, October 27, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. in the Board of County Commissioners' Conference Room, 1000 West Washington Street, Tallahassee, Florida, to consider and act upon the following Resolution: RESOLUTION R-99-115 NOTES, FEES, AND CHARGES FOR POTABLE WATER DELIVERED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO REPEAL THE SCHEDULES FOR CERTAIN POTABLE WATER DELIVERED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. Interested parties may appear at the public hearing to present testimony and evidence in support of or in opposition to the proposed resolution. The public hearing will be held in the Board of County Commissioners' Conference Room, 1000 West Washington Street, Tallahassee, Florida, on Monday, October 27, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. For a complete copy of the resolution, please contact the Florida Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Water Management, 2205 North West Highway, Tallahassee, Florida 32304-2000. For a complete copy of the resolution, please contact the Florida Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Water Management, 2205 North West Highway, Tallahassee, Florida 32304-2000.
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