

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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Stokes, Edgar Eugene “Gene” (August 18, 1940-) grew up on the family farm near Lee, Florida. He is the son of Edgar and Susie Mae Driggers Stokes. Stokes graduated from Florida State University (B.S., 1962), and the University of Florida (M.Ed., 1967). He was saved at age 11 during spring revival services at Beulah Baptist Church near Lee. Stokes served as a public educator and was a Gideon speaker for 13 years. He was called to preach on January 6, 1985, and served as pastor of Pleasant Grove, Eridu, Florida (1985-1989), and New Home Baptist Church of Madison, Florida (1989-2002). Stokes married Elizabeth Geraldine Holley on June 15, 1963, and they have three daughters. He served as Director of Missions of the Middle Florida Baptist Association since 2002-2011.



From Student to Legacy: Gene Stokes' Lifelong Impact on Education

March 31, 2025 Gene and Geraldine Stokes

From Student to Legacy:

Gene Stokes' Lifelong Impact on Education

MADISON, FL – In 1958, when Gene Stokes stepped onto the newly established North Florida Junior College campus (now North Florida College), he was embarking on a journey that would shape his life and the lives of countless others. As one of the first students to attend the college, he became the inaugural recipient of the Madison County Rotary Scholarship, a financial award that, in his own words, “made the difference between attending and not attending.”

Now, decades later, Stokes and his family are paying that generosity forward with the establishment of the Gene and Geraldine Stokes Family Endowment, ensuring that future students have the same opportunities he did.

A Lifelong Commitment to Education

After earning his Associate of Arts degree in 1960 from NFJC, Stokes continued his studies at Florida State University, where he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Education in 1962. His passion for teaching led him to his first job at Brooks County High School, and later, he continued shaping young minds as a science teacher in Winter Haven, Florida.

Recognizing the value of continuous learning, Stokes returned to FSU for graduate studies. In his third year, he was awarded a National Science Foundation grant, which enabled him to earn a Master's in Secondary Education with an emphasis on Junior College Education and Geology. His career path took him to Madison High School (now Madison County High School), where he taught for a year before joining North Florida Junior College's faculty in 1968 as a science professor. Over the next four and a half years, he left a lasting impact on students in the very institution where he had once been a student himself.

Leadership in Education and Ministry

Beyond the classroom, Stokes dedicated his life to education and service. In 1973, he was elected Madison County Superintendent of Schools, serving until 1977. He then returned to Madison County High School, teaching vocational agriculture until 1989, when he was once again elected as Superintendent of Schools.

In 1985, Stokes answered a different calling, becoming an ordained minister. He served four years at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church before accepting a position at New Home Baptist Church, where he remained until 2002. His dedication to faith and community spilled over to the Middle Florida Baptist Association, where he served as Director of Missions from 2002 to 2011.

A Family Legacy at NFC

Throughout his remarkable career, Stokes and his wife, Geraldine, remained devoted to family and education. Married for 61 years, they raised three daughters Sheri, Gina, and Tania, all of whom followed in their father's footsteps and attended NFC. With five grandchildren and three great grandchildren, the Stokes family is now raising a new generation of NFC Sentinels.

In honor of his legacy the Stokes family established the Gene and Geraldine Stokes Family Endowment. This perpetual scholarship will provide financial assistance to NFC students, ensuring that future generations have access to higher education opportunities just as Stokes once did.

“We are deeply grateful to the Stokes family for their generous contribution,” said Traci McClung, Director of Resource Development at the North Florida College Foundation. “This scholarship will make a lasting impact by easing the financial burden for students and opening doors to educational opportunities.”

The Gene and Geraldine Stokes Family Scholarship, created through the endowment, will assist high school graduates and returning adult students pursuing their education at NFC. The scholarship is open to students seeking an Associate in Arts (A.A.) or Associate in Science (A.S.) degree, as well as those enrolled in vocational programs. Recipients must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA and may reside in any county. Each year, two students will receive \$500 awards, one in an AA or AS program and one in a vocational program. If additional funds are available, awards may increase to \$1,000 per student. The scholarship can be used for tuition, books, or fees, and funds will be applied directly to recipients’ accounts at NFC. Students can apply for the scholarship through the NFC Foundation at <https://www.nfc.edu/foundation-giving/scholarships>.

Looking to the Future

Even in retirement, Stokes remains active, spending his time woodworking and enjoying the community he has helped shape. His journey—from a young student at NFJC to a lifelong educator, minister, and leader—is a testament to the power of education and perseverance.

For more information about the Gene and Geraldine Stokes Family Endowment or ways to support NFC, please contact the NFC Foundation at foundation@nfc.edu or 850-973-9414.