



# Zane Winston Betts II

AUG 4, 1948 - FEB 1, 2026



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Steverson,  
Hamlin & Hilbish  
Funerals & Cremations

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## **Zane Winston Betts II**

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**Z**ane Winston Betts, II, age 77, of Mt. Dora, Fl passed away on February 1, 2026. He was born August 4, 1948 in Alma, Michigan. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Steverson Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals and Cremations, 226 E. Burleigh Blvd., Tavares, FL 32778.



# Tribute Wall

## Zane Winston Betts II

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**Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations** shared an album called **Memories Album 5.**



February 18 at 1:25 PM



**Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations** shared an album called **Memories Album 4.**



February 18 at 1:25 PM



**Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations** shared an album called **Memories Album 3.**



February 18 at 1:25 PM



**Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations** shared an album called **Memories Album 2.**



February 18 at 1:25 PM



**Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations** shared an album called **Memories Album 1.**



February 18 at 1:25 PM



**Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations** shared an album called **Memories Album 6.**



February 18 at 1:25 PM



# Tribute Wall

**Zane Winston Betts II**

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**Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations** shared an album called **Memories Album 7.**



February 18 at 1:25 PM



**Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations** shared an album called **Memories Album 8.**



February 18 at 1:25 PM



Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a photo February 18 at 1:25 PM to the Memories Album 5 album.

**FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE TRIMMING**

The first Christmas tree trimming ever held in Charlotte County is thought to have been in Cleveland in the Huckleby School—and this was in the year 1892.

Sarah Elizabeth Morton, daughter of Lorenzo Clisby, proprietor of the National Hotel, was teacher at the small one-room school house located about one mile northeast of Cleveland.

Only two or three of her pupils had ever heard of a Christmas tree and she decided she'd do something about it.

As Sarah sat at her desk one warm November afternoon, she penned a plain and simple letter to her aunt in New York. In this she asked her to please send immediately a pound of popcorn and a pound of dry cranberries.

Her aunt obliged. Sarah received the shipment just a few days before Christmas Day. On the Friday before Christmas which was on Saturday, she sent three of the bigger boys into the nearby woods to fetch a pert little tree about this high. While they were gone, she had the other pupils build a small fire outside the school house. She showed them, using a thin fry pan her five-year old son, Fred, Jr., had brought from home that very morning, how to pop corn. After this was done they all were put to work stringing the popped corn and the dried, bright cranberries.

Soon the three boys returned with a tree which had nice full branches—a lovely Christmas tree. The tree was fitted to a stand made and they all proceeded to wind the long strings of popcorn and cranberries around and around the tree. Lessons for that day were forgotten. But when school was out she did ask each pupil to return to the school house that evening after supper and bring their parents with them.

When she returned home to the National Hotel she and her son went. When she told her father what had taken place and her plans for the evening, he reminded her that it was the Friday before Christmas and undoubtedly the parents might already have their own plans. Just maybe they could go to the school house that evening as she so hoped.

After their supper, Sarah, her father and her son changed into their best clothes and down to the school they went in one of their surreys. As soon as they arrived, Sarah got down the coal oil lamps and put a few little touches to the Christmas tree standing just to the left of the desk.

Soon it grew dark and Sarah lighted the lamps putting one on the desk and the other on a high shelf near the door. No one had yet shown up. Mr. Clisby kept looking down the narrow road leading out to dusty Riverside Drive near the railroad tracks.

Suddenly Sarah spotted a lantern at the end of the road and he son jumped and shouted with glee—people were coming, they were. Within a few short minutes, five lanterns were spotted and before long everyone was shouting back and forth from one to another.

The little one-room Huckleby School was crowded with some folk even standing outside watching through the windows. Sarah rang the big brass hand bell just once to get everyone's attention. With complete calm and composure, she opened her Bible and read aloud the story of the birth of Christ so long ago in such a faraway place. Then standing beside the Christmas tree she told the legend of the evergreen tree signifying everlasting life. All this time it was so quiet a pin dropped could have been heard. For some time this evening, it was the first time they'd ever heard the wonderful story.

Sarah asked Mrs. Coddle to lead them all in singing some of the best known Christmas carols and then Bishop Grey of the Episcopal Church gave a prayer. When the last A-Mens had been said everyone present flocked to Sarah's side with naught but praise and thanks for all she'd done for them. This was, for sure, a Christmas they'd remember forever, for as long as they lived.

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*Part of Yesteryears  
Huckleby School  
Cleveland, Florida  
Year 1892  
(one-room school house  
1 mile northeast of  
Cleveland, Florida)  
Teacher: Sarah Elizabeth  
Morton, daughter of  
Lorenzo Clisby, proprietor of  
the National Hotel.  
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Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a photo February 18 at 1:25 PM to the Memories Album 4 album.

**YESTERYEAR**

Mrs. Benina Huckleby Hancock delights in wonderful thoughts of yesteryear.

Her first husband was Deia Hunt Huckleby who came to Cleveland when he was six years old and that was in 1878. His Daddy and him moved a sawmill from Cloverport, Kentucky to Fort Myers and thence to Cleveland. This moving process took 54 days by mule team and wagon. He got everything safely here and then went on back to Cloverport for his family. He loaded them onto a schooner and into Fort Myers they sailed.

When Deia Hunt Huckleby was twelve years old he fired the boiler at the sawmill for his Daddy. It was a deep water wood burning boiler. His Daddy trusted him not to let the water get down to a dangerous level where it might blow up. He never did let this happen.

Later on, Mr. Huckleby worked for George Brown, a Colored man who owned and operated a shingle yard at Cleveland, where now is located Palms and Pines Mobile Home Park. Following that he raised cattle and had a great many orange groves.

Mrs. Benina Huckleby Hancock was born at Fort Ogden in DeSoto County. What of the name Benina? "It was a name made up by my Grandma from my Daddy's name which was Benjamin." Her old home of Cleveland became the first school house ever in that community and it was moved down to Huckleby Road the 9th month, 25th day, 1921 and Deia Hunt Huckleby used it afterward for a hay barn.

Mrs. Hancock remembers well since 1916 the Cleveland Methodist Church, the weekly Sunday School Classes held in the little old Church were often conducted out under the old oak trees in the yard. If they were held inside, the children sat on little chairs behind the piano. She recalls how the youngsters at Christmas time often were so small they couldn't even march to the front of the church to take part in the programs. "We had to carry them up."

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1) "Cleveland Methodist Church was built in 1892"

2) "Older than Punta Gorda which was originally named Trabue, FL. Cleveland was first platted in 1884 (part of the wild Florida)"

3) "The National Hotel was built in 1884 prior to the construction of Hotel Punta Gorda"

4) "Cleveland was the Southern Terminal of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad before extending it to Punta Gorda"

5) "Cleveland was originally a military post called Camp Whipple during Seminole Indian War"

6) "A. T. Halloman was Cleveland's first postmaster and the first sermons preached to congregations in Cleveland was by this gentleman"

7) "For years Cleveland had the Post Office and shipping point for this entire section."

Sometimes services of Cleveland Methodist Church were held but twice a month when the traveling pastor would pay a visit. But, regardless, Sunday School was held every single Sunday.

In 1945 a bad storm hit Cleveland and tore the plastering from the church. The new pastor, Rev. Waldo Farabee, got money for Church repair (about \$300) from the Methodist Building Fund. "Before repairs were made, Lucille Johnson and I would go to the Church and put palm fronds on the walls to cover up where there was no plaster."

Then it became time to enlarge the Church, attendance was growing. So, members feasted Church suppers. "We'd usually hold them at the Lodge out where Lazy Lagoon Mobile Home Park is now located. We'd serve fish, heart of palms, and ~~hush~~ puppies. Leona Mulford and I did the cooking. We'd go out to Mr. McQueen's Ranch, South Punta Gorda, and cut out about forty head of swamp cabbage and then cook them. A lot of work for the Church was donated and we hired a contractor to lay the blocks. He'd only take half what was due him. I remember, I even helped lift blocks up to the contractor."

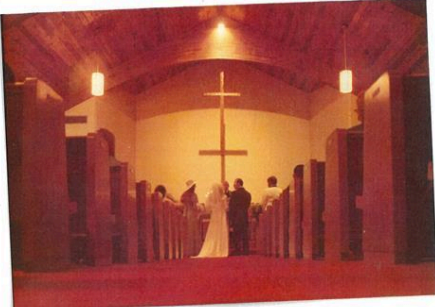
The men of the church did come and pour the foundation and the women prepared lunches for all the workers. "When it was time for shingling the roof of the church, Louise Cleveland, and Marion Stevens got up on the roof with nail aprons on and I'd go up and down the ladder taking them shingles they'd then nail down. The Church belonged to all of us and we were ever so proud."

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Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a photo February 18 at 1:25 PM to the Memories Album 3 album.

**PART OF YESTERYEAR**



MR. AND MRS. P. DOUGLASS HUNTINGTON REQUEST the honour of your presence of the MARRIAGE of their daughter to ZANE WINSTON BETTS, II

ON Saturday, the thirty-first of August nineteen hundred and seventy-four at six oclock in the evening  
Cleveland United Methodist Church  
Reception immediately following Reception Hall  
Reverend Fulwing married us.

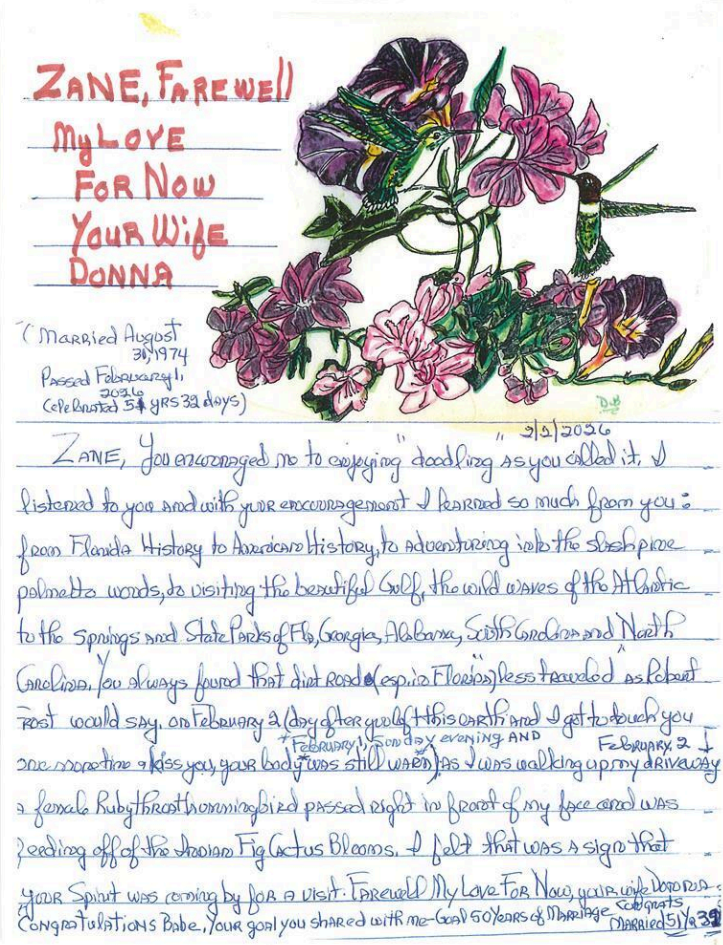
This special poem was given to me by my future husband Zane Winston Betts II after he and his step-father Bob Allison did a day trip to see the marstees at Blue Springs State Park in February, 1973 "Babe, you and I got to get here" he said,

green leaves and forest sunlight  
lucid water rising from the earth  
new day, new wonder  
with no questions of worth  
cloud caves in vapor mountains  
sun rays explode across the sky  
from a heart of silver fire  
night born in colors that slowly die  
the ancient rivers in the ocean  
sing an endless, timelost song  
so ride on down the highway  
to places farther on  
see the changing of the days  
the shaping of tomorrow's dawn  
a part of everything that is  
a part of everything thats gone  
new eyes to see it true  
this world, touched with you

AND WE DID!!

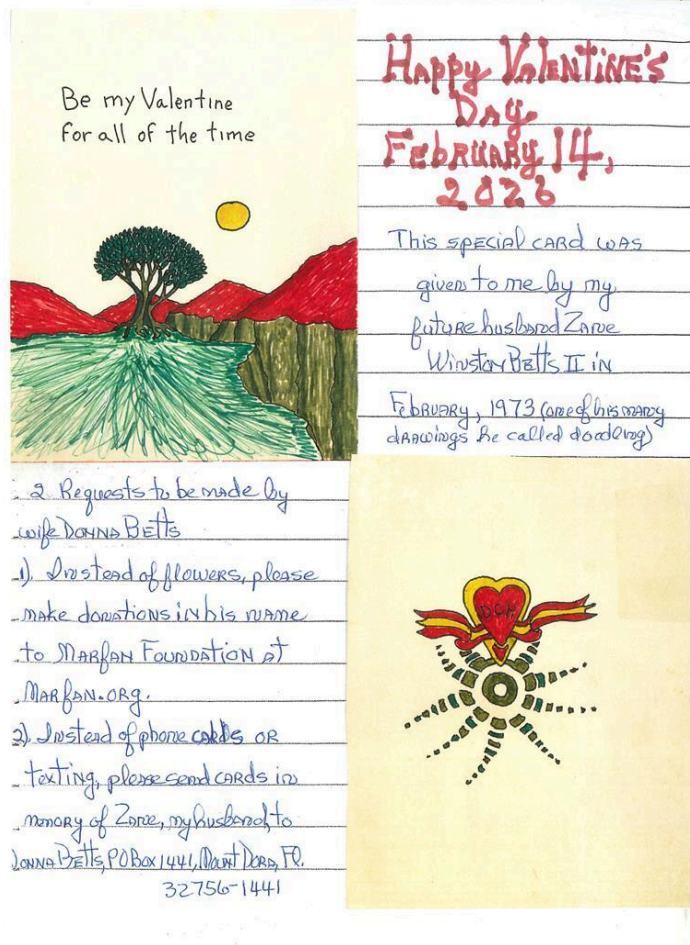


Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a photo February 18 at 1:25 PM to the Memories Album 2 album.





Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a photo February 18 at 1:25 PM to the Memories Album 1 album.





Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a photo February 18 at 1:25 PM to the Memories Album 6 album.

*(AKA Tim Betts)* REMINISCING *Bob Allison was Zane's Stepfather*  
 Reminiscing with Ruth and Bob Allison, Cleveland Avenue, is a treat. Bob's Dad came to Punta Gorda in 1920 from Minnesota when he, Bob, was but two years old. "You know, I loved to eat raw oysters even back then and I still do," he told me jokingly but ever so serious actually. "My Dad was an engineer and he came here to help put in curbs, gutters, sidewalks and drainage sewers. He brought with him from Minnesota Colored workmen and white carpenters and women but they either got homesick or couldn't take the weather so he then hired workers from the South. These workmen lived in tents in the Allison's yard while they did work here.

This fine man remembers the big hotel at Cleveland, The National Hotel which accommodated about thirty-six people. It was owned by the Caboon who as he got older, had a male nurse with him constantly, his name was Arthur Vincent. He remembers, too, that Cleveland Avenue was a dirt road and how wagons were driven from the railroad station-post office-store to the Hotel on this dusty Avenue. He speaks of George Brown and the Marine Way and Shipyard owned and operated by this outstanding Colored man. He believes George Brown came here with Capt. Albert Dewey from South Carolina. The Captain had a Phosphate Barging Service from Liverpool to Boca Grande. (Liverpool was up by Peace River Shores). There was a great deal of dredging around Liverpool and there was even a phosphate processing mill there. The phosphate was loaded onto barges and taken to Boca Grande where it was shipped to Escambia among other places.

George Brown was a small man in stature and very good-natured. His wife, Ferny, was also a small person and loved by everyone. This couple was fond of children and adopted many.

Speaking of George Brown's Shipyard: Bob tells of the skilled craftsmen who worked for him and of the superior brass work and machinery which went into the boats built here. "Brown built boats and repaired boats. He put steam into them or sails or both. He was

*(AKA Tim Betts)* *Bob taught Tim about the history of American history*  
 ZANE'S BROTHER  
 STEPFATHER  
 BOB ALLISON  
 RUTH ZUBLER ALLISON

*YESTERYEAR AS TOLD BY RUTH AND BOB ALLISON*  
 Robert John (Bob) Allison and Ruth Zubler Betts Allison were married in the Cleveland United Methodist Church in Cleveland, Florida. She became Mrs. Ruth Allison. Tim Betts learned a lot from his Step-Father. Bob loved Florida and its history and American history. They did a lot of road trips together and Tim (Zane) worked with Bob during summer months.

*hauling blocks of ice to fishermen and shrimpers at the docks. Bob at his own business: Allison Ice Company and Tim worked side by side with Bob and learned so much from his father. Bob (Zane) was a Commodore Zubler. Did a lot of fishing together and also all the ventures in summer in at the Zubler sailing Post in Broughton Lake, Michigan.*

well known for the smaller commercial boats he built.

How well Bob remembers when the people in the area didn't want the railroad to go through their range country. They wanted the land to remain just as it was. He spoke of how, in the early 1930's, he and his Dad, using a Model A Ford for transportation, would go hunting. "There were no fences all the way up to Kissimmee and Orlando—no fences but lots of quail."

Bob spoke of the Traveler's Hotel, the Railroad Hotel in Punta Gorda out by the Old Ice Plant. This small hotel was used by travelers and particularly by drummers (salesmen) when they'd come into town.

The social life of the women in the 1920's he fondly remembers for his mother was very much involved. These gracious ladies with their long lovely dresses enjoyed afternoons sipping tea and eating cookies. Their main cause, he recalls, was the Church Missionary and for this they worked very hard. The Eastern Star was prominent at that time, as well. He told also that when it came time to close the big Hotel (Hotel Charlotte Harbor) for the season all the elite of the town were invited to a gala affair.

Along came World War II and Bob enlisted in the U. S. Navy. "A classmate of mine worked in the draft board there and when it was getting time for my enlistment she told me and I went into the Navy." A remark made by Bob Allison which I shall forever remember was, "Every war changes the face of the country." And how true it is.



# Media

**Zane Winston Betts II**

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Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a photo February 18 at 1:25 PM to the **Memories Album 7** album.





# Media

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Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a photo to the **Memories Album 8** album.

February 18 at 1:25 PM





## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Zane by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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