



## Clement Lee Abernethy, III

October 16, 1946 - May 23, 2026

Clement Lee Abernethy III, affectionately known to many as "Chief Ab," passed away peacefully on May 23, 2026 after a short battle with cancer, in Charlotte, North Carolina, at the age of 79. Born on October 16, 1946, in Charlotte, he spent his life dedicated to serving his community and creating a legacy that will endure for generations.

Lee began his remarkable career with the Charlotte Fire Department (CFD) in April of 1968. Over the course of three decades, he rose through the ranks to retire as Battalion Chief in 1998. His contributions to the department were profound, particularly as CFD's first EMS training officer. In this role, he played a pivotal part in shaping the department's response to medical emergencies when it began running medical calls in 1978. Captain Abernethy developed and implemented training programs that equipped firefighters with life-saving skills, leaving an indelible mark on the department and the community it served.

In addition to his service with the fire department, Lee was a Reserve Officer for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. He was also deeply involved in various organizations throughout his life. A proud member of Oasis Shriners, he held numerous roles within the organization and served as its photographer. Lee was a Mason and a caretaker of Sugaw Creek Cemetery, where he dedicated significant time preserving its history. He was also an

active member of Local 660 and took great pride in being part of its rechartering in 1969.

Lee's passions extended beyond his professional life. He had a deep love for the North Carolina coast and cherished fishing trips with family and friends. Fort Fisher held a special place in his heart, where he created countless memories that will be treasured by those who shared them with him.

Lee served six years in the North Carolina National Guard, further exemplifying his dedication to service.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Janet; his children Jennifer Hilliard, Beth Nevil, Windy Abernethy, and Charles Taylor; grandchildren Jamison Hilliard, Emily Nevil, Andrew Nevil, Bryant Abernethy, Heather Lawson, Cateland Abernethy and Zachary Taylor; as well as nine great-grandchildren who brought him immense joy. He was preceded in death by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clement Lee Abernethy Jr.; his sister Sandra Miller; and grandson Brendon Taylor.

Chief Ab's legacy is one of service, dedication, love for his family and community. His storied history will outlast generations to come, ensuring that he will never be forgotten. May his memory bring comfort to all who knew him.

A Visitation will be held on May 30, 2026, from 05:00 PM to 08:00 PM at Cavin-Cook Funeral Home at 494 E Plaza Dr, Mooresville NC 28115. A Funeral will be held on May 31, 2026, at 2:30 PM at The Palmer Building at 2601 East 7th St, Charlotte NC 28204.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Masonic Home for Children in Oxford, NC by using the link below, <https://my.simplegive.com/App/Giving/mhc>

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Cavin-Cook Funeral Home & Crematory, Mooresville, is serving the Abernethy family. Condolences may be made to the family at [www.cavin-cook.com](http://www.cavin-cook.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery

Charlotte, NC 28213

# Upcoming Events

## Visitation

MAY **30**. 5:00 PM (ET)

Cavin-Cook Funeral Home & Crematory  
494 East Plaza Drive (PO Box 977)  
 Mooresville, NC 28115

## Funeral

MAY **31**. 2:30 PM.

Palmer Building

# Tribute Wall

E2

“ To the Abernethy family, we send our deepest sympathy to you for the loss of our Masonic Brother Lee. Lee was an active member of Excelsior Masonic Lodge No. 261 for 56 years and could always be counted on when we needed his help. We are truly sorry for your loss and will miss him tremendously.

*Excelsior Lodge No. 261*

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**Excelsior Lodge No. 261** - 2 hours ago

JJ

“ The community has lost a truly family man, community servant, and a friend. I retired from CMPD Communications and saw Lee often. My family would on occasions see Sandy and Lee at Kure Beach as they were leaving the Martin House and we were coming in. He loved his time at the beach.  
Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.  
RIP my friend  
Jimmy Jones

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**Jimmy R Jones** - 3 hours ago

LK

“ Good man. Good Chief . Good friend . RIP 🙏  
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**Lindsay Keith** - 4 hours ago

LP

“ Les and all the Oasis photographers. purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Clement Lee Abernethy, III.



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Les and all the Oasis photographers. - 6 hours ago

LP

“ Les and all the Oasis photographers. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Clement Lee Abernethy, III.

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Les and all the Oasis photographers. - 6 hours ago