

He's More Than Coach Cooper

Many of you know Coach Cooper. He has attended our annual PCHS meeting and fish fry for as long as I can remember. He is now a young 98. I did some Internet research on The Coach and found out he is even more amazing than this writer realized. To the best of my knowledge, he is our last living PCHS facility member.

Farm Boy - "He grew up on a farm in Clanton as the seventh of 10 siblings. Cooper said his father was a Baptist deacon and among the first to plant peach trees in Chilton County. Despite growing up during the Great Depression in the 1930s, Cooper said his family's farm always kept them fed and clothed, though their entire home was destroyed once when a tornado passed through in 1932."

High School Athlete - "Cooper played on the football and basketball teams at Chilton County High School, and served as football team captain."

Veteran - Mr. Cooper "is a retired Marine who served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Cooper enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1942 and had dropped out of college to enlist. He went through Officer Candidates School in Quantico, Virginia. As a second lieutenant, Cooper was sent to the Pacific theater in World War II and served at Guadalcanal and Okinawa. His unit was in Guam preparing for an invasion of mainland Japan when the atomic bomb was dropped. He retired from the U.S. Marine Corps as a Col. in 1980 after serving 38 years." In November 2017 he was at American Village being recognized, along with others, for their service as part of a Veterans Day celebration. He presented a flag to Gov Kay Ivey.



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Howard (Samford) Grad - "He is a 1943 graduate of Howard College (now Samford University). He studied biology from 1940-41. He left for WWII in 1942 and later returned to finish. In November 2016 he attended the 175th anniversary celebration for Samford and received the Lockmiller Award as the male from the earliest class represented at the annual Golden Bulldogs gathering for alumni who graduated 50-plus years ago. He played football at Samford".

PCHS Coach - He was coach to many PCHS athletes in the 1940s and 50s. We believe PCHS was his first job after graduation. His wife "Jimmy" taught in Marion also.



Principal - "When Mountain Brook decided to create its own school system, Cooper was tapped to become its first junior high principal."

Emergency Service Manager - After retiring from the Marine Corp Reserves in 1980 he began working in natural disaster response services, eventually working with FEMA. He received a resolution from the Alabama Legislature in March 2018 for his FEMA and military service.

Family Man - "Cooper has lived in Vestavia Hills on Donna Drive since 1976..." His wife James Anna, or "Jimmie," died in 2003. His son James Carl served in Vietnam, returned home and had nearly finished college prior to his early death in a wreck. His daughter Charlotte died in 2006. Coach has 16 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild at the last count we saw.