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Grady Nutt

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Grady Lee Nutt (September 2, 1934–November 23, 1982) was a [Southern Baptist](#) minister, [humorist](#), television personality, and author. His humor revolved around rural Southern [Protestantism](#) and earned him the title as "The Prime Minister of Humor."^[1]

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Childhood and Early Career

Grady Lee Nutt was born on September 2, 1934 in [Amarillo, Texas](#), the oldest of four children (three sons and a daughter) born to Grady C. and Doris (née Rickman) Nutt. Raised in a family of devout Baptists, Nutt was a licensed minister by the age of 13.^[2]

Grady Nutt



Birth name	Grady Lee Nutt
Born	September 2, 1934 Amarillo, Texas
Died	November 23, 1982 (aged 48) Vinemont, Alabama
Medium	television recordings books speaking engagements
Nationality	USA
Subject(s)	Christian comedy

Nutt briefly attended [Wayland Baptist College](#) in [Plainview, Texas](#) before transferring to [Baylor University](#).^[2] Immediately after graduation, he married Eleanor Wilson and served as youth minister of the First Baptist Church of [Waco](#) and later at Gaston Avenue Baptist Church in [Dallas](#).^[2]

Influenced	Jerry Clower
Spouse	Eleanor Watkins (1957-1983; by his death)

In 1960, he moved to [Louisville, Kentucky](#) to attend [Southern Baptist Theological Seminary](#), where he simultaneously pastored churches in the Louisville metro area.^[2] Following his graduation in 1964, he served as director of alumni affairs and assistant to the president of Southern Seminary.^[3]

Entertainment career

While serving as a minister and seminary administrator, Nutt began accepting speaking engagements. His speeches were blended with humor, and he came to the attention of [Ralph Edwards](#), the producer of the popular TV series *Truth or Consequences* and *This Is Your Life*.^[2] He was soon a semi-regular on *The Mike Douglas Show*.^[4]

In 1979, he was added to the regular cast of *Hee Haw*, a position he held until his death. During his stint on *Hee Haw*, he was given 90 – 120 seconds in which he would do an improvisational routine.^[5]

In 1981, he was cast as Rev. Grady Williams in a pilot for an [NBC sitcom](#) called *The Grady Nutt Show*.^[1] The episode dealt with Rev. Williams being called to preach the funeral of man disliked by the entire community, and dealing with his teenage daughter's foray into dating.^[6] The 30-minute pilot was broadcast on NBC, but had not yet been put into production as a series at the time of his death.

During his career, he published several books, including *The Gospel According to Norton* and an autobiography entitled *So Good, So Far*; he also released several comedic records and one Southern Gospel album, *Give the World A Smile*.^[7]

Death and legacy

On November 23, 1982, following a speaking engagement in [Cullman, Alabama](#), Nutt boarded a chartered flight (a [Beechcraft Baron 55](#), [aircraft registration](#) number N18411).^[8] The plane crashed immediately after

takeoff, killing Nutt, the pilot and copilot.^[1] The cause of the crash was undetermined; however, weather conditions (fog and rain) were cited as contributing factors in the accident.^[8] He was buried on the Wilson family farm in Fayette County, Tennessee.

Following his death, the [Gospel Music Association](#) established the Grady Nutt Humor award to excellence in Christian comedy.^[9]

His widow has established the Grady Nutt Endowment Fund at the [University of Louisville](#), which offers an annual prize of \$400 to the most creative fine arts project.^{[10][11]} and a Grady Nutt memorial collection was established in the student center at [the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary](#) in Louisville.

Also, [Alice Lloyd College](#) in [Pippa Passes, Kentucky](#) named the Grady Nutt Athletic Center in his honor.^[12]

References

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- ¹¹ [^] [Competition for The Grady Nutt Prize](#) [↗](#). [University of Louisville](#)
- ¹² [^] [Athletic Facilities](#) [↗](#) [Alice Lloyd College](#)

External links

- [Grady Nutt](#)  at the [Internet Movie Database](#)
- "Interview with Grady Nutt , 1981 interview on [Kentucky Educational Television's *Bywords*](#)

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