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November 30, 1935

Time magazine celebrates

NUTT, GRADY LEE

NUTT, GRADY LEE (1934–1982). Grady Lee Nutt, Baptist minister and television personality, was born in Amarillo, Texas, on September 2, 1934, the oldest of four children of Grady C. and Doris (Rickman) Nutt. His father worked as a dairy salesman and operated a dry-cleaning business before going into the ministry. Growing up in a strong Christian atmosphere, Grady was licensed as a Baptist minister at the age of thirteen. He attended Alice Landergin Elementary School and Nixon Junior High, where he first became interested in entertaining. When he was fourteen his family moved to Jacksonville, Texas, where his father received ministerial training at Jacksonville Baptist College. After completing high school, Grady attended Wayland Baptist College in Plainview, where he sang in the International Choir, before transferring to Baylor University in Waco, where he graduated with a B.A. degree in 1957.

Nutt married his college sweetheart, Eleanor Wilson, of Memphis, Tennessee, on June 18, 1957. They had two sons. Nutt served as minister of youth at the First Baptist Church in Waco and later at Gaston Avenue Baptist Church in Dallas. In 1960 he moved to Louisville, Kentucky, and attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received his master's degree in 1964. He lived in Louisville and served as minister of music at the Southside Baptist Church and later as pastor of the Baptist congregation in Graefenburg, Kentucky. He was also director of alumni affairs and assistant to

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ecumenical "love in Corpus Christi"

In its issue dated on this day in 1936, Time magazine featured an account of an ecumenical service held in Corpus Christi. Rabbi Sidney Wolf had joined Rev. William Caper Munds of the Church of the [\(more...\)](#)



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the president at Southern Seminary.

In addition to his ministerial duties, Nutt began entertaining young people with humorous stories about churches and preachers, experiences from his early life, and familiar events from the Bible. He soon gained a national reputation as a speaker and, after being "discovered" by television game-show host Ralph Edwards, appeared eleven times on the Mike Douglas talk show. Nutt went into the entertainment field in 1969 as a lecturer-entertainer and soon averaged about twenty speaking engagements a month, plus others for charitable causes. He regularly spoke at Baptist student gatherings and was a featured speaker at the 1980 and 1982 Southern Baptist Convention meetings.

His career continued on the rise in 1979, when he joined the regular cast of the "Hee Haw" television series. His homespun stories as a preacher on the show won him billing as the "Prime Minister of Humor." In addition, he starred in his own television special, "The Grady Nutt Show," in July 1981. In all, Nutt recorded six albums and wrote such books as *Being Me* (1971), *The Gospel According to Norton* (1974), *Agaperos* (1977), and his autobiography, *So Good, So Far* (1979). He gleaned all of his material from his own experiences or from stories he had heard.

On November 23, 1982, Nutt was the guest speaker at a youth rally and banquet in Cullman, Alabama. Later that night he and two employees of Central American Airways in Louisville were killed when the plane in which they were flying crashed soon after taking off from the airport in Vinemont, Alabama. He was buried in Louisville. His death was mourned by the country music and entertainment world; Buck Owens, cohost of "Hee Haw," described Nutt as "an original whose brand of humor can't be replaced."

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Amarillo *Globe-News*, November 25, 1982. *Baptist Standard*, December 1, 1982. Grady Nutt, *So Good, So Far* (Nashville: Impact, 1979).

H. Allen Anderson

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