OBITUARIES

Tommy Edward Smith

1944-2025

Tommy Edward Smith, age 80 of Hardinsburg, passed away Sunday, May 18 at Breckinridge Memorial Hospital. He was born on June 8, 1944 in Hardinsburg, son of the late Russell and Margaret Rose Smith.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Tommy is survived by three children: Travis Smith of Upton, Tina Norris of Adamsville, Ala., and Sherrie Cox of Big Clifty.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday, May 22 at Trent-Dowell Funeral Home with burial on the family farm.

Visitation will be held from 3:30 — 8 p.m. on Wednesday, May 21 and after 8:30 a.m. on Thursday. All times are central.

Gene Lee Smallwood, Sr.

1956-2025

Gene Lee Smallwood, Sr., age 69 of Brandenburg, passed away Sunday, May 18 at Baptist Health Hardin. He was born on Feb. 3, 1956 in Hardin County, son of the late Eli and Christine Allgood Smallwood.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his stepdaughter, Bobbie Jo Voyles.

Gene is survived by his wife, Danita Smallwood of Brandenburg; and seven children: Gene Smallwood, Jr. and Regina Walker (Justin), of Hardinsburg, Jason Dale Claycomb (Samantha) of Tell City, Ind., Tammy Lou Nash of Radcliff, Derrick Barker (Shenea) of Illinois, Destiny Barker (Andy) of Irvington, and DeLicia Johnson (Keda) of Radcliff.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, May 23 at Trent-Dowell Funeral Home with burial in the Mt. Olive Cemetery.

Visitation will be held from 4-8 p.m. on Thursday, May 22 and after 8:30 a.m. on Friday. All times are central.

Richard William 'Rick' Shull

1951-2025

Richard William "Rick" Shull, age 74 of Cloverport, passed away Thursday, May 15 at Breckinridge Memorial Hospital. He was born on April 8, 1951, son of the late Lillian Berry, who was born in Cloverport, and William Shull, who was born in Hicksville, Ohio.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Carolyn Shull.

Rick is survived by two daughters, Kim Haver (Scott) of Aurora, Mo. and Nicole Shull of Indiana; and three stepchildren: Carrie Wiggins (Scott) of Arizona, Richard Todd Smith and Anthony Holcomb, of Louisiana.

Graveside services were held on Monday, May 19 at Cloverport Cemetery under the direction of Trent-Dowell Funeral Home.

Where is my desk?

DALE **DEPOYSTER**

WHY CATHOLIC?

Why all the clutter? Each day when reading The Divine Office, I get drawn into the vast treasury of knowledge the Church offers the people of the world. It is as if you have searched your whole life for this truth, much like Harrison Ford when he finds the treasure in the *Indiana Jones* movies. This adventure finds me every day!

"Remember then how our fathers worked out their salvation; remember the sufferings through which the Church has grown and the storms the ship of Peter has weathered because it has Christ on board. Remember how the crown was attained by those whose sufferings gave new radiance to their faith. The whole company of saints bears witness to the unfailing truth that without real effort no one wins the crown." — St Thomas Becket, Bishop and martyr (A.D. 1118-1170).

Born in England, his timeless defense of the Church was rewarded by being killed by Henry II. Look him up and read his great writing in the middle ages. He gave his life for the truth! Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

Dale writes this article from his home in western Kentucky. Have a question? You may contact him at dale54@live.com. Blog: whycatholicarticles.wordpress.com.

Be proactive when considering asset protection options

CYNTHIA **GRIFFIN**

The road to nursing home care often is sudden and unexpected, but for those who have proactively planned in anticipation of long-term care, significant asset protection is possible.

There are several common ways that people attempt to plan for long-term care, although some options are less risky than others.

The first option many people use is to simply give away assets to intended beneficiaries. This option certainly has the benefit of ensuring that beneficiaries receive the property, but it comes with a high risk, particularly for property that the giver intends to continue to reside in. The property will take on the future liabilities of the beneficiary, such as medical debt, lawsuits and possibly divorce or death.

Furthermore, the tax consequences of lifetime gifting of appreciated assets can be shocking, especially considering they usually are unnecessary.

Lifetime gifts are transferred with the original giver's tax basis intact, so when the new owner eventually sells the property, they will find themselves paying a capital gains bill, whereas an inherited property receives a new tax basis of fair market value upon the death of the owner, resulting in a fresh start for capital gains calculations. While in some cases outright gifts of assets is an appropriate plan, those cases are rare.

A second option for planning for long-term care costs is through standalone long-term care insurance policies. LTCI policies were popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s with both insurance companies specializing in LTCI and with purchasers. However, they since have significantly lost their appeal to both.

Insurance companies discovered the likelihood of a longer-aging population cashing in on the policies was high. This resulted in some companies simply canceling policies and refunding money, while many others raised rates and cut benefits.

Purchasers of standalone LTCI policies similarly have become disillusioned with the policies, as actually using them can be difficult and the benefits rarely cover the increased cost of long-term care.

A much more common approach now for those interested in long-term care insurance is to purchase a life insurance policy that includes a disability rider. This policy guarantees that someone will receive the benefit of the policy.

If the insured needs long-term care, a portion of the policy can be cashed out each year to pay for care, but if the insured does not need long-term care or only needs to cash out some of the policy, beneficiaries receive the remainder.

The insurance policies with disability riders are particularly useful when combined with an asset protection trust, as an early disability payout will usually exhaust at five years — the same amount of time as the Medicaid lookback period.

In most cases, asset protection trusts are the least risky way of protecting assets.

Asset protection trusts are irrevocable trusts specifically designed to protect assets and tax benefits to the people setting up the trust (the grantors) and the future beneficiaries. Asset protection trusts can usually be set up to allow all income to continue coming to the grantors so that their taxable estate does not change. Homestead exemptions remain the same and property still can be bought and sold within the trust.

Asset protection trusts separate property enough from the grantors to protect it, but do not gift it completely to beneficiaries, which minimizes risk from someone else's liabilities.

Planning for long-term care costs requires intentional, individualized planning. For some people, outright gifting really is the best approach, while for others, an asset protection trust or combination of trust and insurance is the safest direction.

By understanding the options and the consequences of each, families can create a plan that protects assets and mitigates risk.

Cynthia Griffin is an elder law and estate planning attorney at Burnett and Griffin PLLC in Elizabethtown. She can be reached at cynthia@bcglawcenter.com.

Will my Medicare premium change because I sold investment property?

RUSSELL **GLOOR**

Dear Rusty: I have questions concerning the deduction of money from my Social Security benefit amount as relates to the sale of investment property. I am 66 years old and have been drawing Social Security since I turned 62. My wife is 56 and is a housewife and has no taxable income. Our income comes from our rental property and my Social Security benefit. I have decided to liquidate two of our properties — one was sold in December 2024, and one is in Escrow and is scheduled to close in March 2025.

My normal Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) has been running about $30K-$32K. However, last year with the sale of the property I will receive a long-term capital gain profit of about $255K. I did a rough calculation on what my AGI will be for 2024, and it looks to be about $318K. How will this affect my Social Security benefit, and will it have an effect on the amount I pay for my Part B Medicare Plan going forward? I have a Medicare Advantage plan.

My next question is about 2025 (after the next property closes and I file taxes), my AGI with the long-term capital gain profit could be between $700k-$800K. How will this affect my benefits going forward? Signed: Prudent Investor

Dear Prudent Investor: Actually, the GROSS amount of your Social Security benefit will not be affected by these transactions, but the NET amount of your SS benefit payment will change due to a provision known as "IRMAA" (Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount). IRMAA affects the Medicare premiums you pay from your Social Security benefit, and a higher Medicare premium will result in a lower net Social Security payment. Here's how this will work for you:

Your Medicare premiums each year (typically for Medicare Part B and Part D) are determined by looking at your "Modified Adjusted Gross Income," or "MAGI", from two years prior (MAGI is your normal AGI plus any non-taxable interest you may have had). Since the property you sold in 2024 will be reflected as part of your 2024 income, IRMAA will cause your 2026 Medicare premiums to be higher than the standard monthly 2026 amount. How much higher depends on how much you exceed the income level for your IRS filing status. Using 2025 rules, if you file as Married/jointly and your taxable income (MAGI) is more than $212,000 but less than $334,000 then, instead of paying the standard 2026 monthly Part B premium, you'll each pay $370 per month for Medicare Part B (and likely a supplemental amount of $35.30 if your Advantage plan includes prescription drug coverage).

Your Medicare premiums are recalculated every year (again based on income from two years prior). Thus, in 2027, IRMAA will also affect your Medicare premiums and your net Social Security payment because of your 2025 real estate transaction. If your MAGI in 2025 will be over $750,000, then IRMAA will increase each of your 2027 Medicare Part B premiums to $638.90 (and likely also add a supplement of $85.80 per month each to your Medicare Advantage premium for prescription drug coverage).

The good news is in 2028 all of this will be behind you and your Medicare premiums will revert to whatever the standard monthly premiums are for that year (because your income levels thereafter will presumably be below the then-IRMAA thresholds).

For reference, here is a link to Medicare's information on the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount, or "IRMAA:"

https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/2025-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles.

KET announces winners of 2025 Young Writers Contest

Custer Elementary School student places second in Short Story

KET is pleased to announce the winners of the 2025 Young Writers Contest. The annual contest encourages creative expression and literacy development by inviting students in grades Pre-K through high school to submit original graphic novels, illustrated stories, poetry and short stories.

The top three winners, along with a list of finalists for each division, are listed below. Full versions of the winning entries will be available online at KET.org/WritersContest.

ILLUSTRATED STORY — EARLY ELEMENTARY (PRE-K, K, 1)

First Place: Greyson Branham, Dorton Elementary, Jenkins

Second Place: Charlotte Dyal, Glenn Marshall Elementary, Richmond

Third Place: Remi Woosley, Glenn Marshall Elementary, Richmond

ILLUSTRATED STORY — ELEMENTARY

First Place: Arlette Rodriguez, St. John School, Georgetown

Second Place: Madelyn Burgin, Eastern Elementary, Pleasureville

Third Place: Thomas Hayes, Homeschool, Pewee Valley

ILLUSTRATED STORY — ELEMENTARY INTERMEDIATE

First Place: Vivian Ahlgrim, St. John School, Georgetown

Second Place: Katherine Hamm, Oak Hill Elementary, Somerset

Third Place: Bailey Schreiner, Lexington Christian Academy, Nicholasville

ILLUSTRATED STORY — MIDDLE SCHOOL

First Place: Emma Ritter, Crosby Middle, Louisville

Second Place: Clara Schlafer, Western Middle School for the Arts, Louisville

Third Place: Heidi Freeman, Crosby Middle, Louisville

ILLUSTRATED STORY — HIGH SCHOOL

First Place: Riley Mitchell, Danville High School, Danville

GRAPHIC NOVEL — ELEMENTARY

First Place: Libby Jones, Central Elementary, Benton

Second Place: Avery Leonard, Central Elementary, Benton

Third Place: Evelyn Parrino, Bates Elementary School, Louisville

Fourth Place: Hadiyah Gauhar, Chenoweth Elementary, Louisville

GRAPHIC NOVEL — MIDDLE SCHOOL

First Place: Lucie McCaffrey, SCAPA

SEE KET/PAGE A6