

**John Caston Purvis  
1919-2009**

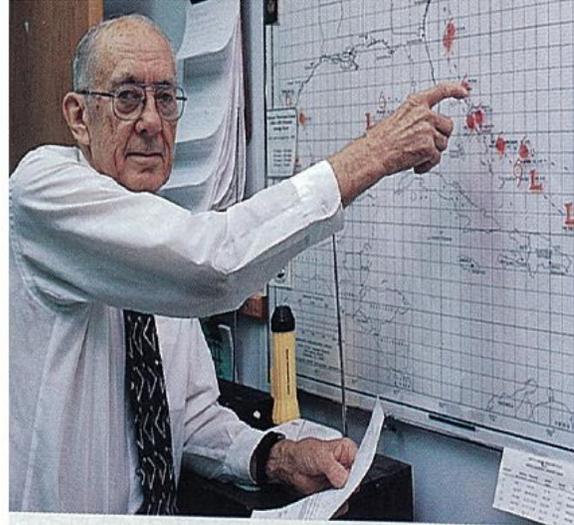
Hope P. Mizzell and Wes Tyler  
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Columbia, SC

Corresponding author: Hope Mizzell, State Climatologist, SC Department of Natural Resources, 1000 Assembly Street, Columbia, SC 29201, USA. Tel. 1-803-734-9568. mizzellh@dnr.sc.gov.

John C. Purvis, retired National Weather Service Meteorologist-In-Charge and South Carolina State Climatologist, died at the age of 90 in Columbia, S.C. on September 1, 2009.

John was born on September 1919, in Ruby, South Carolina. John earned an undergraduate degree from Wake Forest and a master's degree from the University of South Carolina. John's early career in meteorology began with the U.S. Weather Bureau, Spartanburg, S.C. After a transfer to Washington to work within the new mapping and analysis center, John joined the U.S. Coast Guard. John's service as a meteorologist in the Coast Guard during WWII included providing weather forecasts to help plan the Normandy invasion. Following the end of the war, John took a position at the Charlotte, N.C., Weather Bureau before eventually transferring to Columbia, S.C. in 1947.

He was named Meteorologist-In-Charge of the Columbia, S.C., Weather Bureau in 1953. John's enthusiasm contributed to the Columbia office becoming the leading forecast center for the state. Throughout the 1970s he introduced many new weather-related technologies, ushering in a modern warning system that would save lives as well as property.



John retired in 1981 from the U.S. Weather Service but continued to work on weather-related issues for the State of South Carolina. The South Carolina General Assembly appointed him State Climatologist in 1986. In this role, he also taught undergraduate courses in the expanding climatology program at the University of South Carolina.

Additionally, John teamed with the National Climatic Data Center to help establish the Regional Climate Center network that began with the Southeast Center which was initially located in the SCDNR in Columbia, S.C. John directed this office until retiring in 1991. Also in 1991, he was presented the state's highest civilian honor, the Order of the Palmetto, by Governor Carroll Campbell. After his second retirement, John continued to work another decade part-time for the Regional Climate Center. He was 82

when he finally decided he was old enough for full-time retirement.

For five decades John was the go-to-guy for weather information in South Carolina. An icon in meteorology circles, he was often referred to as “a walking history of meteorology and climatology.” However, John’s passion was not limited to the weather. He was a runner, receiving over 100 trophies for various distance road races, but his greatest devotion was to his family and church. John was a Ruling Elder at Congaree Presbyterian Church for decades and was frequently called upon for advice, help, assistance, or just a spiritual presence. John was preceded in death by his wife, Johnsie Huneycutt Purvis. Their love for one another was well known and observable throughout their 57 years of marriage. Anyone who witnessed the two together could immediately sense their tenderness and love for each other setting a daily example of what marriage should be like. John is survived by his daughter, Jennie Band, and sons, Huneycutt and Danny Purvis.