

## 22 QUESTIONS WITH... SEN. CHARLOTTE BURKS

Sunday, Mar 08, 2009, Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN

**Name:** CHARLOTTE BURKS



**Picture:** Sen. Charlotte Burks at the Leslie Town Centre. Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea

**Hometown:** Jackson County, in Gainesboro.

**Now living in:** Putnam County, in Monterey.

**Family:** Three daughters, Kim Blaylock and Mike, Kelly and husband Mike Tayes and Kerry and husband Lee King; nine grandchildren, Charlotte and husband Brian Maynard, Amy and husband Jake New, Levi, Whitney,

Tommy, Molly Delk, Eli, Alley and Caden; two great-grandchildren, Trenton and Katie Beth; and one brother living out of six siblings, James and wife Patsy Gentry.

**First job:** Woolworth's Five and Dime, at age 14; in Cookeville, Flatt & Flatt Attorneys.

**Current occupation (and since when):** Farmer and farm wife since 1960; state senator since 1998.

**What I love about my job:** Farming means being able to work and be with your family at the same time. My husband Tommy called it spending quality time together when we had a little resistance from the girls. Being a senator means being able to help people.

**Part of my job I could do without:** My inability to personally respond to the overwhelming number of calls and e-mails I receive.

**What drew me to this occupation was:** As far as farming is concerned, I guess you would say I married into it. I became a state senator under the most difficult of circumstances: a write-in to keep Tommy's murderer from being the only choice. At the time I felt I had no choice. With the overwhelming support and compassion of the people that choice helped me to retain my sanity and give my life purpose.

**Dream job:** What I am doing.

**When I'm not working I'm:** Spending time with my family, doing what grandmas do. There's just not time enough to do it.

**I'm most proud of:** Our daughters and their families — "my grandchildren" and the grace that God has given us to accept things we cannot change without bitterness and hatred consuming our hearts.

**Something most people don't know about me:** I lived in Detroit, Mich., from ages 10-18 when I married, returning to Tennessee.

**Favorite movie:** "Steel Magnolias," going south.

**Favorite food:** Anything sweet, or fresh garden vegetables.

**My hero (and why):** My husband, Tommy. A unique individual. The kind of person I think God wants us to be. He saw no task too big or small, no person not worthy of help. Not perfect, but he had an inner peace within himself that everyone who knew him well could feel. The person I am today I am because of our life together.

**As a child, I thought I'd grow up to be:** A wife and a mother.

**What I watch on TV:** News, documentaries, whatever is on when I can sit down.

**Favorite childhood memory:** My school days, grades 1-6, at Woodrow Elementary in Jackson County. I had the most wonderful teacher in the world, Mrs. Ella Chapman. Eight grades, one room. We were all her children, and each day was a special day.

**If I could do it all over again I'd:** Make the same choices.

**I'd love to meet (living or dead):** The drafters of our U.S. Constitution, and shake hands with Martin Luther King Jr.

**Advice I'd pass on to future generations:** Your worth is not measured by the clock you punch or the pew you occupy, but by the example you live your life by and the work you do every day. Take time for your family and people you love, and make memories worth remembering. Memories sustain you.

## CHARLOTTE BURKS

### From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Charlotte Gentry Burks** (born October 3, 1942) is a farmer and Democratic party politician in Tennessee, representing the 15th District as State Senator since 1998.

In 1998, she became the first write-in candidate to win a seat in the Tennessee State Senate, taking the seat formerly held by her husband Tommy Burks, who had been assassinated during an election campaign by his Republican challenger Byron Looper. She was reelected in 2002 and 2006 with no substantive opposition.

She served as the secretary of the senate's education committee; and was a member of the joint study economic development; government operations; select on children and youth; and the environment, conservation, and tourism committees.

Her voting record has largely been a carbon copy of that of her husband, one of the more conservative Democrats in the state legislature.

State Senator Charlotte Burks, Putnam Co. Executive Kim (Burks) Blaylock, Cookeville City Manager Jim Shipley and State Rep. Henry Fincher celebrate following the unanimous approval of a building and industrial Certificate of Public Purpose and Necessity for the Highlands Business Park. (Kim (Burks) Blaylock is the d/o Charlotte and Tommy Burks.)

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**Fred Thomas “Tommy” Burks**

b. 22 May 1940, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN – d. 19 October 1998, TN, md on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 1960, Putnam Co., TN, **Charlotte Rose (Gentry) Burks**, b. 3 October 1942, **Herby Gentry & Vada Lou “Louvada” Gentry**. Fred Thomas “Tommy” Burks, s/o **Walter Fred Burks & Christine Gilliam**.

(Source: Tennessee State Marriage record, Putnam Co., TN, pg. 47: Fred Thomas Burks married 17 December 1960, Putnam Co., TN, age 20, b. 22 May 1940, address: 979 Crescent Dr., Cookeville, TN to Charlotte Rose Gentry, age 18, b. 3 October 1942, name of parent, guardian or next of kin of female: Vada Gentry, address: 6250 Frontneck, Detroit, MI).

(**Herby Gentry**, b. 10 July 1911, Gainesboro, Jackson Co., TN – d. 18 July 1974, Detroit, MI, md **Vada Lou “Louvada” Gentry**, b. ? – d. 21 March 1982, Detroit, MI, d/o **John Preston Gentry** (1873-1950) & **Brunetta Mayberry** (1880-1967). **Herby Gentry**, s/o **Hickmon Pulaski Gentry**, b. 14 June 1874, Jackson Co., TN – d. 12 October 1922, Jackson Co., TN & **Harriett H. Loftis**, b. 6 April 1875, Jackson Co., TN - d. 15 October 1944, Jackson Co., TN. Hickman P. Gentry, s/o **Harriett H. Loftis**, d/o **George Rufus Loftis**, b. 21 November 1848, Jackson Co., TN – d. 18 July 1932, Holdenville, OK & **Sarah Elizabeth Chaffin**, b. 28 December 1846, Jackson Co., TN – d. 3 May 1922, Holdenville, Hughes, OK. **George Rufus Loftis**, s/o **James Madison Loftis**, b. 13 February 1811, Tigerville, Greenville Co., SC – d. abt. 1902, Jackson Co., TN & **Sarah Elvira Dowell**, b. 13 February 1810, Jackson Co., TN – d. 15 February 1897, Jackson Co., TN, d/o **John Dowell & Sarah Hickman**. **James Madison Loftis**, s/o **Laban Loftis**, b. ca. 1760, MD – d. 8 November 1850, Jackson Co., TN & **Elizabeth Holcombe**, b. ca. 1769, MD – d. 29 December 1859, Jackson Co., TN).

(**Vada Lou “Louvada” Gentry**, b. ? – d. 21 March 1982, Detroit, MI, md **Herby Gentry**, b. 10 July 1911, Gainesboro, Jackson Co., TN – d. 18 July 1974, Detroit, MI, s/o **Hickmon Pulaski Gentry & Harriett H. Loftis**. **Vada Lou “Louvada” Gentry**, d/o **John Preston Gentry**, b. 19 June 1873 – d. 14 December 1950 & **Brunetta Mayberry**, b. 22 January 1880 – d. 12 June 1967, both buried in Morrison’s Creek Church Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN. **John Preston Gentry**, s/o **William Francis Gentry**, b. 15 August 1855 – d. 15 June 1934 & **Angeline Loftis**, b. 22 August 1857, TN – d. 11 July 1912, d/o **John Pierce Loftis**, b. 3 August 1833, Jackson Co., TN & **Frances America Loftis**, b. 17 January 1837, Jackson Co., TN – d. 9 September 1914, Jackson Co., TN (they were 1<sup>st</sup> cousins), both buried in the Old "Mat" Loftis Cemetery Morrison Creek Road, Jackson Co., TN. **Frances America Loftis**, d/o **James Madison Loftis**, s/o **Laban Loftis**, b. ca. 1760, MD – d. 8 November 1850, Jackson Co., TN & **Elizabeth Holcombe**, b. ca. 1769, MD – d. 29 December 1859, Jackson Co., TN. **John Pierce Loftis**, s/o **Thomas Jefferson Loftis & Parlitha Gallion**. **William Francis Gentry**, s/o **Thomas C. Gentry** (1824-1898), s/o **Jessie Gentry** (1778, NC-1845) & **Elizabeth Gallion**. **William Francis Gentry** md **Rebecca Brown** (1826-1886), d/o **Henderson Brown & Melvina Birdwell**. **Thomas C. & Rebeckah** are both buried in the Thomas Gentry Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN. **Thomas C. Gentry**, s/o **David Gentry** (1754-1847) & **Elizabeth Smith** (1759-1801).

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