

# The Morning Star

---

Tuesday, November 15, 2005

---

## **Banker, artist Bissette dies**

### **Civil activist led Peoples Savings and Loan**

Friends say they will remember 84-year-old Samuel D. Bissette, who became an artist full-time after a long career as a banker, as a man of his word, a great competitor and a talented painter.

Mr. Bissette died at home Monday after a long illness.

Mr. Bissette, who came to Wilmington in the early 1960s, worked 50 years with Peoples Savings and Loan Association of Wilmington as an employee, director, president and chairman of the board. He retired in 1989.

Alton Wood, who retired as president of Carolina Saving Bank a year later, said he was sorry to hear about his friend and competitor's death.

"Sam and I attended a number of meetings together that were related to our business and I got to know him well during those trips," said Mr. Wood, who had known Mr. Bissette since the early 1960s. "Sam was a competitor of ours, a very good competitor at that. And he was a gentleman, a man of his word; I had a great deal of respect for him."

Others in business had similar views of Mr. Bissette.

"The neat thing with loan and savings businesses in Wilmington is that we compete like crazy from nine to five, but after that we're all friends and socialize," said Rick Willetts, chairman and CEO of Cooperative Bank. "Sam was just a good guy, ran a fine savings and loan business, but was perhaps an even better artist. He retired to pursue his lifelong dream."

Mr. Wood learned about Mr. Bissette's passion for art in the late 1980s and liked what Mr. Bissette produced.

"When the Carolina opened a branch in Yaupon Beach, I did something I didn't normally do; I commissioned him to do some art for us," Mr. Wood said. "One time on a trip he said he had paintings in 38 states and seven foreign countries."

Some of Mr. Bissette's art projects, including watercolor paintings and photos, can be viewed online at <http://sambissette.com>.

Mr. Bissette was a member and officer of many local and state organizations, including the Wilmington Lions Club, the YMCA and the North Carolina Watercolor Society. He was president of the Cape Fear Club and St. John's Museum of Art, and was involved with trade organizations for the savings and loan industry on the state and national levels.

A service will be held for Mr. Bissette at 11 a.m. Thursday at First Baptist Church in Wilmington.

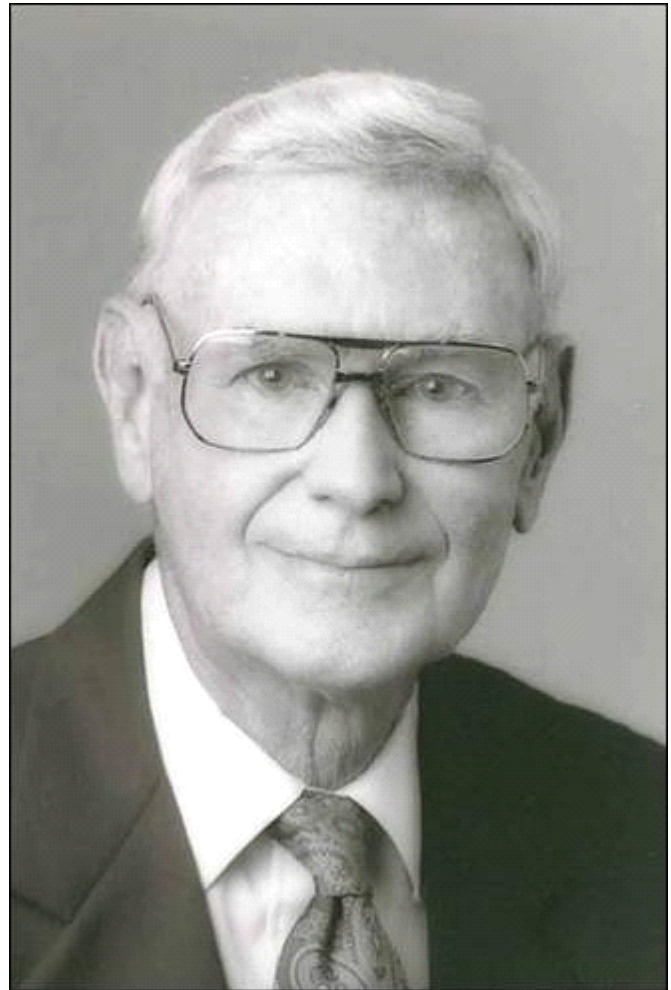
# Obituaries

## Samuel D. Bissette

Samuel D. Bissette, 84, died on November 14, 2005, at home after a long illness. A service will be held for him on Thursday, November 17, at First Baptist Church in Wilmington, N.C., at 11 a.m. Dr. Mike Queen will officiate.

Sam is survived by his wife of 62 years, Ruby, and by his daughter, Sabra Bissette Ledent of Montreal, and his son, Dr. David Bissette, of Washington, D.C. He is also survived by his son-in-law, Jacques Ledent, and his grandsons, Christophe and Tristan, as well as his brother, Jack C. Bissette, and his wife, Mary Ellen, of Goldsboro and his nephew, Jack Bissette, of Wilmington and his family. He is survived as well by his many friends not only in Wilmington, but also across the country and abroad.

Sam had two principal lifetime careers. One was a 50-year term of affiliation with Peoples Savings and Loan Association of Wilmington where he served as an employee, director, president, and chairman of the board, retiring in 1989. The other was an art career that began in 1970 and continued for the rest of



his life. Along the way, he also served as a civic leader, filling director and officer positions with more than a dozen prominent Wilmington organizations. He served at both the state and national levels in the trade organizations of the savings and load industry. He was president of the Cape Fear Club, Saint John's Museum of Art, and the Wilmington Lions Club, and chairman of the board of deacons of First Baptist Church. He served in leadership positions as well at the Cape Fear Country Club, the YMCA, United Fund, Committee of 100, and Foundation of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. In connection with his art career, he served as a trustee of the North Carolina Museum of Art, a director of the North Carolina Art Society, and vice president and director of the North Carolina Watercolor Society, among other art organizations.

His interest in astronomy led him into a 15-year period of telescopic observing, astrophotography, and research and the discovery of an unconventional method of observing the night sky that is recognized nationally and internationally. His 60-painting exhibition of astronomy hangs permanently in Dobo Hall at UNC-Wilmington.

As an historian, he pursued a number of projects that currently reside in the New Hanover County

Library and Randall Library at UNC-W. Included in these are an oral history of New Hanover County, a catalog of markers and monuments of New Hanover County, and a 450-photograph pictorial portrait of the year 1997 for Wilmington and New Hanover County. The Special Collections division of Randall Library, UNC-W, maintains a biographical file on his life.

As an artist, he specialized in watercolor, producing more than 1,500 pieces of work over his career. Among art projects were the mosaics for the Belk Store at Independence Mall, "A Portrait of North Carolina" for Wachovia Bank, "North Carolina--circa 1900" and "Images from the Microworld," owned by UNC-W. He has been publicly recognized at the local, state, national, and international levels by a number of organizations and publications and has exhibited at more than 50 one-man exhibitions. He served as a judge for art exhibitions, including the North Carolina Watercolor Society statewide exhibition of 1976 after he won the state competition in 1975.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to First Baptist Church and the Lower Cape Fear Hospice, which provided support during his illness.

Andrews Market Street Chapel.