

Alabama Life & Culture

Roadside Jesus statue is Alabama man's message of love

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A statue of Jesus commissioned by Johnny Williamson and carved by Willie Logan can be seen alongside Alabama Highway 43 near Northport.



Details of the Good Shepherd statue near Northport. It was commissioned by Johnny Williamson and carved by Willie Logan. (Becky Williamson-Martin)

Becky explains on [the Good Shepherd website](#): “A cypress log was chosen for The Good Shepherd Statue because of the longstanding belief that the cypress is the ‘gopher wood’ (or kopher which is the Hebrew word for waterproof) that Noah used to build the ark.”

The statue at 19858 Highway 43 North in Northport (the postal address – it is actually in the community of Samantha). Becky says visitors are welcome to stop and take photos. Fliers telling the story of the Good Shepherd statue are usually available at the site.

Before his death, Williamson said: “The statue is a testimony of my faith. It isn’t meant to be an idol. You don’t worship it, but it gets people to think and do good deeds.”

Following Williamson's death in 2013, his children decided to spread the message even further by creating the Johnny Williamson Good Shepherd Foundation, which collects food for those in need.



Johnny Williamson (Becky Williamson-Martin)

“Johnny Williamson was driven to help others and he practiced the act of giving daily,” Becky said. “He was always prepared to provide a need for his neighbor, never asking for anything in return. It was out of his love for his Savior (The Good Shepherd) that he loved others.”

Becky Williamson-Martin said she and her siblings – Larry Williamson, Ricky Williamson, Phyllis Olive and Ken Williamson – saw the need for the organization. “It is our desire and prayer to fulfill this legacy of love,” she said.

The foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, holds a variety of community events to raise funds for its mission, including concerts and an annual festival. Groups also rent the space for events, which are listed on the Good Shepherd website.

For information on the foundation, call 205-872-4719, or [visit the website here.](#)



The Jesus statue is in a protective glass box but visitors are welcomed to stop and take photos. It is located in the community of Samantha on Alabama Highway 43, 20 miles north of Northport. The baby in the photo is Colton Stanley, the great-grandson of the statue's commissioner, Johnny Williamson's (Becky Williamson-Martin)

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By [Kelly Kazek | kkazek@al.com](mailto:kkazek@al.com)

Longtime logger Johnny Williamson knew his true calling in life was spreading kindness. An inspiration he had in 1999 – to create a Jesus statue with the help of his artist friend Willie Logan – led to people in his community near Northport, Ala., to spread love and kindness in ways he'd never dreamed.

Although Johnny died in 2013, the wooden Good Shepherd statue is set beside Alabama Highway 43 to spread his message.

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The statue

In 1999, after the death of his mother, Williamson was compelled to commission a statue of Jesus with a lamb – the Good Shepherd, says his daughter, Becky Williamson-Martin of Samantha, Ala. The 23rd Psalm was his mother Pearlie Mae Williamson's favorite scripture. The statue now stands in a protective glass box along Alabama Highway 43 in Samantha, 20 miles north of Northport, where it can spread Williamson's message.

Williamson asked his friend Willie Logan – a well-known wood carver who created a statue of Chief Tuskaloosa that stands in front of the Tuscaloosa Public Library – to use cypress for the statue.