



Willis Barnett

July 25, 1926 - March 15, 2019

Willis Barnett was called home to be with the Lord on Friday, March 15, 2019. He was born on July 25, 1926 in the Mt. Hermon Township of Pasquotank County, North Carolina to the late Deacon Samuel Sr. and Annie Mae Turner Barnett. On August 16, 1948, Willis married the love of his life, the late Mary Belle Billups.

Willis was a World War II Army veteran and served in the Allied occupational force in Germany from 1945 to 1946. He worked as a civil servant after separating from the military at St. Juliens Creek Annex in Portsmouth, Virginia and retired from the United States Naval Weapons Station in Yorktown, Virginia in 1988. Because of his job location, Willis relocated his family to Portsmouth, Virginia in July 1961. He maintained residency in Virginia and North Carolina until his retirement upon which he elected to return to Elizabeth City, North Carolina (Weeksville). He and his wife, Mary, remained in Elizabeth City until they moved closer to their children in 2008.

Willis accepted Christ at an early age and served with distinction as a church deacon at Samuel Chapel Missionary Baptist Church and Memorial Missionary Baptist Church (both of Elizabeth City, North Carolina), New Bethel Baptist Church (Portsmouth, Virginia), as a minister at First Baptist Church Southhill (Chesapeake, Virginia), and a member of Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church (Elizabeth City, North Carolina). He served as the pastor of

Jerusalem Baptist Church in Creswell, North Carolina and was an active member of the North Carolina Baptist Pastors' Union. Upon his return to Virginia, Willis became a member of St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church (Portsmouth, Virginia).

Church attendance and participation were integral components of Willis' spiritual being, a trait that was conveyed to his children. Prayer, scripture, and the recitation of Bible verses were the standard order of worship every Sunday morning at the home breakfast table before going to church. He was a member of a local male quartet for several years and a member of the church choir. He was known for being able to "wake up" a church by his fiery renditions of old-time metered hymns such as "Do You Know the Man from Galilee" and "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah." His favorite quartet groups were the Harmonizing Four, the Pilgrim Jubilee, the Swanee Quintet, the Violinaires, the Soul Stirrers, the Highway Q-C's, the Canton Spirituals, and the Mighty Clouds of Joy. As he matured in the Lord, he often shared with fellow believers his understanding of the importance and seriousness of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

From a personal perspective, Willis had a special love for family and was deeply devoted to his wife of 63 years. As situations and needs occurred, he and his wife were known to travel to look after loved ones upon receiving a telephone call. This included numerous trips to Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus, Ohio; various areas of Maryland; New York; and Texas. He was fond of cars and spent much time meticulously caring for those that he owned. His special love was his blue 1961 Ford Galaxy 500. He loved to watch westerns on television and believed in the importance of dress, spending many hours polishing and shining his shoes on Saturdays in preparation for Sunday church attendance. He was straightforward and unbending in his beliefs and convictions and has often been described as a very strong-willed, determined person who viewed the importance of keeping one's word.

Willis was preceded in death by three sisters (Marian, Mary Magdalene, and Carlottia); five brothers (Samuel Jr., Thomas Lee, Matthew, Johnny Lee, and George Lee); and one grandchild (Shelby Watkins).

Left to cherish Willis' memories are his three daughters: Sharon Neeley (Robert), Gwendolyn Jenkins (John), and Terrie Pugh (Vincent) and his son, Willis L. Barnett; his sisters: Elsie Phillips, Margaret Barnett, Louise Barnett, Helen Gregory (Thomas); his in-laws: Edith Barnett, Jean Barnett, Elder Lee Billups (Ernestine), Shelton Billups (Sandra), Shirley Brown; 11 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; and a host of relatives and friends.

Let it be known that Willis Barnett loved the Lord above all else. He peacefully passed into eternity with his Lord and Savior. His favorite apostle was Paul, and he often stated that he wanted to be known for fighting the good fight until the end. We can conclude, that this was accomplished.

“Well done, My good and faithful servant!”

Acknowledgements

Great appreciation is extended to the following.....

- Mrs. Veronica Jackson: Faithfully and selflessly served as Willis' Christian confidante, caregiver, and “riding” partner since 2016.
- Reverend Dr. Johnie Hopkins, Sr.: Faithfully provided heartfelt support to Willis and his family. He also restored Willis and Mary's Elizabeth City family home.

- St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church: Provided ongoing Christian support and assistance for the past five years to Willis and his family. Special recognition is given to Former Pastor Curtis Edmonds; Pastor-elect Dwight Riddick, Jr.; the Diaconate Ministry (Brother Lewis Taylor—Chairman, Brother Felton Brown—Tribal Leader); the Senior Missionary Ministry (special thanks to Ms. Mae Williams); and the Music Ministry.

- J. T. Fisher Funeral Services: Provided a level of service that is second to none.

Cemetery Details

Roosevelt Memorial Park

1101 Campostella Road
Chesapeake, Va

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR **24.** 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

J.T. Fisher Funeral Services
1248 N. George Washington Hwy.
Chesapeake, VA 23323
(757) 487-3700
info@jtfisherfuneralservices.com
<https://www.jtfisherfuneralservices.com>

Graveside

MAR **26.** 11:00 AM (ET)

Roosevelt Memorial Park
1101 Campostella Road
Chesapeake, va

Tribute Wall



“ J.T. Fisher Funeral Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Willis Barnett



J. T. Fisher Funeral Services - March 25, 2019 at 09:15 AM



“ I would like to express my sympathy and condolences at this time. Also at Isaiah 25:8, it tells us that God will wipe away the tears from all faces and he will swallow up death forever and Rev 21:3,4 tells us that sickness and death will be no more. I hope these words will help you during your loss.

C. Outland - March 27, 2019 at 10:40 PM



“ "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master!' "

-Matthew 25:23



You were well loved by all and will be truly missed - but only for a short while!

Tammy Turner Macdonald & John Macdonald

Tammy Turner Macdonald - March 26, 2019 at 03:10 PM

MJ

“ The obituary for Rev Barnett was so amazing that there are few words left to say. But, one of the best moments in my life was the blessing of moving next door to the Barnett family in 1961. It's hard to find families like The Barnett's in today's world of fast food everything. Talented- Extremely Intelligent and best of all - a traditional God fearing Christian family Where Rev Barnett was the head of the family and his precious Mary Belle a true lady of Christian talent and commitment to her man and her children. Hardworking couple with Mrs Barnett initially working the graveyard shift at Norfolk General-Coming Home in time to prepare breakfast for her husband and family. The Barnett Singers and The Billups Singers well-known in Elizabeth City. All four children being college educated and most of all CHRISTIAN educated. Rev Barnett a no nonsense but someone I considered a father figure that I loved and respected. Rev Barnett had this dry sense of humor that allowed him to always be calm. Even as I physically sat on his only son on the front porch wearing my chubette fashions-my weight literally preventing his son “June Boy” from breathing-my childhood friend who loved to tease me about my weight was now letting everyone know he was being smashed and smothered under my voluminous girth. While normally Rev and Mrs Barnett would be napping during the day Rev Barnett calmly arose-opened his front door stating “Miriam would you please let my son up because he's the only one I have” which I readily complied. 😊 To Jun Boy-Sharon Rene - Sweetie Babe-and Terry who barely made it in to this wonderful family as the new baby baby; I thank God for you and your parents. I believe my Mother was placed in your path to nurture and encourage your phenomenal Musical Accomplishments. Of course God allowed me to just come along for the ride to witness your great achievements cause Lord knows I got left way way way way behind as a pianist. 6-1-2-3-4-5 🎹 6-1-2-3-4-5 🎸 Inside joke between my beautiful Barnett Family and I. Rev Barnett kiss Mrs Barnett and my Mom for me. One more thing “ Thank You for being a Balm in Gilead for my Mother and our family when we needed your shining star ✨ and beautiful smiles.

Love You all. Miriam

Miriam Jiggetts - March 25, 2019 at 09:39 PM

SN

Miriam, I truly love it. I was crying and laughing. Sharon Renae 😭

Sharing Neeley - March 30, 2019 at 07:55 PM

DL

“*Uncle Wills Barnett true strong man of God which can't be replaced for memories they were greatly full of listening to what was told never forget pass it on to those who help someone else's now Mr.&Mrs Pugh king Queen are together again.but all Christian's do believe as I we shall see all faithful,and lovelies again.*”

Dennis lews - March 24, 2019 at 11:27 PM

DL

“*Dennis Lews lit a candle in memory of Willis Barnett*”



Dennis lews - March 24, 2019 at 11:11 PM

AF

“*Terrie, Willis & family, “Today and always, may loving memories bring you peace, comfort, and strength.” I am praying with and for you. Love,*”

Andrea Harris Forbes - March 24, 2019 at 01:23 PM

TM

“ To my kind, sweet friend Sharon Neeley and to your family I send sympathy and condolences for your loss. People of Christian faith believe in the life of the world to come. May it bring you peace.

*Tom Markham
Charlottesville, VA*

Tom Markham - March 24, 2019 at 02:37 AM

DR

“ We are lucky to have Sheryl Bradford as our neighbor, our prayers are with her family

Dana and Anne Rhodes - March 23, 2019 at 09:52 PM

DR

“ Dana And Anne Rhodes lit a candle in memory of Willis Barnett



Dana and Anne Rhodes - March 23, 2019 at 09:50 PM

BI

“ To the Barnett family, your loved one will be missed but not forgotten. From the early days when my siblings and I got to know you and Aunt Mary Bell, we knew that we were loved and cared about. It was an honor knowing the both of you. God makes no mistakes. He saw that you were in pain and you ran a good race. He has given you rest. To the family, I can say that we all will see our love ones again soon!! That's God's Promise. Our Prayers are with you all in the days to come. Take care and Praying for you all.
Butler W. Lewis, III, Dennis & Wanda



Butler W. Lewis, III - March 23, 2019 at 09:43 PM

BM

“ Betty M. purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Willis Barnett.



Betty M. - March 23, 2019 at 07:49 PM

AB

“ Aaron Neeley and Wendy Bernal purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Willis Barnett.



Aaron Neeley and Wendy Bernal - March 23, 2019 at 06:19 PM

MF

“ Mr and Mrs. Samuel Barnett Jr and Family purchased the Glorious Memories Garland for the family of Willis Barnett.



Mr and Mrs. Samuel Barnett Jr and Family - March 23, 2019 at 02:22 PM

CN

“ Carol Neeley purchased the Heavenly Light for the family of Willis Barnett.



Carol Neeley - March 23, 2019 at 01:15 PM



“ 65 files added to the album Life Tributes



J. T. Fisher Funeral Services - March 22, 2019 at 03:09 PM



“ *Fiery Lily and Rose was purchased for the family of Willis Barnett.*



March 22, 2019 at 01:20 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Willis Barnett.*



March 21, 2019 at 03:37 PM



“ *Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Willis Barnett.*



March 21, 2019 at 12:43 PM



“ *Terri you & your family. I remember him soft spoken man of God.
RIP*

Donald Green, Jr - March 20, 2019 at 10:26 AM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Willis Barnett.*



March 20, 2019 at 08:49 AM