

Honorary Pallbearers

The Official Board of Deacons of Saint John Baptist Church
&
The Board of Trustees of Saint John Baptist Church

Pallbearers

James Leon Solomon Ryan Garrick Roderic Garrick
Carl Lewis Solomon II Dwayne Mazyck Kendrick Cameron Black

Floral Bearers

General Missionary Organization of Saint John Baptist Church

Acknowledgement

We, the family of Mr. James Lewis Solomon, Jr., Ph.D., would like to thank each of you for your prayers and support during the passing of our loved one. It is our prayer that the Lord blesses each of you in a very special way.

Repast

Immediately following services:
Saint John Baptist Church Fellowship Hall



CONTACT US:
Taylor Street Chapel
803-771-7799
Lower Richland Chapel
803-776-6922
WWW.LEEVY.COM

Services Entrusted To:

Leevy's
Chris Leevy Johnson
-Managing Director-

SIGN THE ONLINE REGISTRY:



Leverette A. Williams, II
-General Manager-

Reflections of the Life of James L. Solomon, Jr., Ph. D. August 24, 1930 – November 29, 2024

James Lewis Solomon, Jr., Ph.D. was born on August 24, 1930, in McDonough, Georgia to James L. Solomon, Sr. and Tessie Wyatt Solomon. He entered eternal rest on Friday, November 29, 2024. James attended the public schools of McDonough and Atlanta Georgia. In 1946, he graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta, Georgia at the age of sixteen. Following high school, he enrolled at Morris Brown College in Atlanta and continued his education until he was drafted into the United States Air Force during the Korean War.

Following the Korean War, James was stationed at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter, South Carolina. He met Helen Marion Kennedy in Sumter, and they were married on July 4, 1954. While in Sumter, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Morris College. James went on to earn his master's degree in mathematics from Atlanta University in 1960. He served as a faculty member at Morris College from 1969 to 1973. While at Morris, James also served in several administrative positions and became the college's vice president of institutional planning and research. He was awarded Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Morris College and Doctor of Laws from Columbia College.

Dr. Solomon was also one of three African American students to desegregate the University of South Carolina and was the first African American graduate student since Reconstruction. He dedicated his life to service. He served in several governmental positions including, Commission for Higher Education and he ultimately served as the Commissioner of the South Carolina Department of Social Services. He was elected to the School Boards of both Sumter School District 17 and Richland School District One.

Dr. Solomon's service extended beyond governmental service as he was active in the local community serving on many boards including, Columbia Urban League, Brothers and Sisters, Palmetto Development Group, South Carolina Commission on the Future, United Way of the Midlands and the American Public Welfare Association. Dr. Solomon was twice awarded the State of South Carolina's highest civilian honor, the Order of the Palmetto, by both Governors Richard Riley and Carol Campbell. He has received numerous other awards throughout his life. He was also an active member of Saint John Baptist Church, Beltline Boulevard, Columbia, South Carolina.

James and Helen's marriage of 70 years produced four children Benton (Bernice) Solomon, Cynthia (Roosevelt) Garrick, James Leon (Sandra) Solomon, and Carl (Takisha) Solomon. He is survived by Jacquelin Jackson (sister), Eloise Solomon (sister-in-law), Kamiel Solomon (granddaughter), Ryan Garrick (grandson), Roderic Garrick (grandson), Amber Solomon (granddaughter), Ashlynn Solomon (granddaughter), Aleah Solomon (granddaughter), Carl Lewis Solomon, II (grandson), Clarke Solomon (granddaughter), Tre Solomon (great-grandson), Judah Solomon (great-grandson), Kaprice Solomon (great-granddaughter), Raegan Garrick (great-granddaughter) and Chase Garrick (great-grandson). He was predeceased by Benton Solomon (son), Cynthia Garrick (daughter), Tony Solomon (son), Reginald S. Garrick (grandson), Johnathan Solomon (grandson), Newt "Buddy" Solomon (brother), Mildred Reid (sister), and Willene Solomon (sister), and his parents, Reverend James L. and Tessie Solomon.

Shining the Way

COLUMBIA, SC - When James Lewis Solomon, Jr. walked onto the University of South Carolina campus with Robert G. Anderson and Henri Monteith Treadwell on September 11, 1963, becoming the first Black students to attend the university since Reconstruction, he was already a leader.

Born on August 24, 1930, in McDonough, Georgia, he graduated from high school at just 16 years old and went on to serve six years in the Air Force. He later earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Morris College in Sumter, SC, and a master's degree in mathematics from Atlanta University. At a time when many Black men in the Deep South struggled to escape poverty, he carved out a path of success through education and perseverance.

So, when that moment came to submit his application to the University of South Carolina and help desegregate the heart of the old Confederacy, he wasn't a student activist or "outside agitator." He was a family man, a Professor of Mathematics at Morris College on the fast track to becoming that institution's Vice President of Institutional Planning and Research. He had a lot to lose and no illusions about what standing up for justice and equality might cost. But he did it anyway.

He did it, not because he wanted to make history, but because he knew right from wrong and because, when something needed doing, he wouldn't hesitate to do it. Like every Black man and woman, he faced racism and violence in his life and in the military. He lived under Jim Crow, grew up with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. personally, and he participated in the early stages of the Atlanta Movement. By any measure, he'd already done his part. But that didn't matter. Something else needed doing. So, he did it.

That's the principle that drove him to join Robert G. Anderson and Henri Monteith Treadwell on September 11, 1963, and that's the principle that defined his life before and after. So, in addition to serving as the first Black graduate student at the University of South Carolina, he remained a member of the Morris College faculty for 13 years, rising as both an educator and administrator.

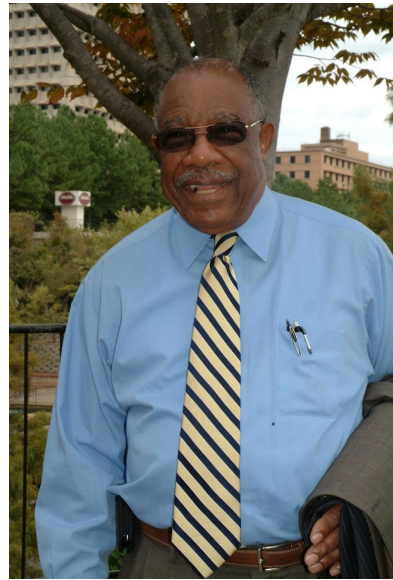
He developed and directed a National Science Foundation (NSF) funded program for elementary school teachers, served as Division Director at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and as Commissioner of the South Carolina Department of Social Services. He was elected to school boards in both Sumter County, where he was the first African American elected to public office in Sumter County since Reconstruction, and Richland County, where he was the first African American to serve as Chairman.

He served on the Richland County Council, the Palmetto Development Group, the South Carolina Commission on the Future, and boards for the United Way of the Midlands and the American Public Welfare Association. He dedicated himself to service not for the fanfare, but for the principle that, to whom much is given, much is expected, and because whenever something needed doing, he would never hesitate to do it.

Throughout his service and his life, James Lewis Solomon, Jr. stood as a light to the people of South Carolina and America not just of who we are, but who we can be both as a nation and a people. He not only blazed the trail; He shined the way for the rest of us.

That light went out on November 29, 2024, after a long battle with cancer. But it lives on in the hearts of his family, friends and all of us who were touched by his actions and his example. His like may not be seen again. But the echoes of his life are felt every day and every time we move forward reaching towards the better angels of our nature.

Memories



Funeral Service

Saturday, December 7, 2024

11:00 a.m.

Saint John Baptist Church

3404 West Beltline Boulevard
Columbia, South Carolina



Prelude

Processional.....“Soon and Very Soon”

Viewing Funeral Directors

Opening Selection.....Saint John Baptist Church Choir

Old Testament.....Psalm 23:1-4.....Reverend Alphonso Counts, Jr.

New Testament.....John 14:1-3.....Reverend Preston Wilson

Prayer of Comfort.....Pastor Aaron Bishop

Musical Selection.....“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

Reflections:

Community Member.....J.T. McLawhorn

Church Member.....Deacon Wallace Brown

Family.....Kamiel Solomon

Ashlynn Solomon

Carl L. Solomon

Acknowledgements/Resolution.....Saint John Baptist Church

Musical Selection.....“Amazing Grace”

Words of Comfort Reverend Dr. Jamey O. Graham, Sr.

Recessional

Postlude



Committal, Benediction & Interment

11:00 a.m., Monday, December 9, 2024

Fort Jackson National Cemetery

4170 Percival Road

Columbia, South Carolina

Memories



Memories

