

## X. MEMOIRS

## THE MEMORIAL ROLL

*In Memory of those persons related to the  
Virginia Conference who died in the last year*

## With Memoir

Name of Deceased Clergy, (Date of Birth), & Conference Status Date of Death

**Retired Clergy:**

Thomas E. Jennings (05/17/34) RE .....	May 17, 2021*
William Dabney Walters (02/14/30) RE .....	May 20, 2021*
Emerson L. Shelton (04/01/37) RL.....	May 24, 2021*
John Charles Dameron (07/25/43) RE.....	June 22, 2021
Robert E. Maas (05/31/33) RA .....	June 26, 2021
Garland K. Hines (08/21/47) RE .....	July 04, 2021
Edwin H. Satterwhite (01/16/28) RE.....	July 21, 2021
Lee R. Jamison (12/28/25) RE.....	August 02, 2021
Billy G. Johnson Sr. (10/10/35) RE .....	August 05, 2021
Janis Karen Whitehurst (03/29/49) RL .....	August 11, 2021
Cynthia L. Frye (07/26/38) RA.....	August 13, 2021
John W. Morrison (06/20/39) RE.....	August 20, 2021
John S. Parker (04/14/37) RE .....	August 20, 2021
Joseph E. Hammond Jr. (10/07/50) RA .....	August 25, 2021
Angelito G. Samson (01/09/46) RE.....	September 08, 2021
Paul Benj Davis Jr. (08/24/31) RE.....	September 12, 2021
Alda V. Gunn (04/02/40) RE.....	September 19, 2021
L Douglas Hill (04/09/40) RE.....	September 26, 2021
Wilton B. Thomas (04/30/31) RE .....	September 30, 2021
Virgil W. Soots (01/01/34) RA.....	October 1, 2021
Robert T. Knox (07/29/35) RE.....	October 10, 2021
Thomas L. Coffman (06/15/27) RE .....	October 19, 2021
Kenneth S. James (09/08/27) RA.....	October 25, 2021
Don L. Shull (08/02/35) RA.....	October 30, 2021
George E. King (04/30/27) RE .....	November 05, 2021
Edward F. Wilkins (02/11/50) RE.....	November 05, 2021

Donald L. Long (10/31/34) RE .....	November 18, 2021
George M. Pearson (09/01/46) RE.....	December 12, 2021
G. Thomas Brown Jr. (02/17/47) RE .....	January 03, 2022
Jethro Wade Munford (11/10/34) RE.....	January 24, 2022
Myles E. Pierson (03/01/42) RE .....	February 9, 2022
Raymond F. Wrenn (06/25/18) RE .....	February 10, 2022
George W. Stewart (02/20/37) RE .....	February 21, 2022
Judith Bennett (09/07/34) RE .....	February 26, 2022
Arthur Howell Franklin (04/01/38) RE.....	March 20, 2022
Charles W. Hubbard Jr. (08/19/33) RE .....	March 29, 2022
Richard N. Galbreath (12/16/34) RA.....	April 24, 2022

**Active Clergy:**

Leona Gayle Thornberry (09/19/56) FE .....	June 14, 2021
Terry K. Eum (04/11/84) FL .....	September 13, 2021
Jeffrey Roberts (11/29/59) FE.....	September 21, 2021
William R. Payne (12/29/57) PL.....	October 17, 2021
Janet F. Grissett (12/07/62) FE .....	November 04, 2021

**Key to Conference Status Abbreviations:**

RE - Retired Elder	RA - Retired Associate Member
RD - Retired Deacon	FD - Deacon in Full Connection
RL - Retired Local Pastor	RB - Retired Bishop
PE - Provisional Elder	PL - Part-time Local Pastor
PD - Provisional Deacon	FL - Full-time Local Pastor
RDM - Retired Diaconal Minister	FE - Full Elder
RP - Retired Probationary/Provisional Member	

**Without Memoir**

Name of Deceased Spouse and (Related Clergy's Name) Date of Death

**Spouses of Clergy:**

Gregory Coleman (Rev. Amy Coleman).....	June 12, 2021
Frances W. Hardy (Rev. Robert Hardy) .....	June 22, 2021
Anne M. Minnick (Rev. Jack Minnick) .....	August 07, 2021
Sharon F. Harris (Rev. Hugh Harris).....	September 04, 2021
Sylvia Tarpley (Rev. Emory Tarpley) .....	December 17, 2021
Yvonne Grow (Rev. Ralph Grow).....	February 1, 2022

**Spouses of Deceased Clergy:**

Stella Fritter (Rev. Albert Fritter).....	May 5, 2021
Crystal Jay (Rev. Carroll Jay) .....	May 11, 2021
Doris H. Teeter (Rev. James Higgins).....	May 31, 2021
Ruth S. Stanley (Rev. Samuel Stanley).....	June 26, 2021
Norma Cleaver (Rev. Lee Bowman).....	July 29, 2021

Dorothy S. Donat (Rev. Ward Donat) .....	August 17, 2021
Lois S. Turner (Rev. Trevor D. Turner) .....	September 06, 2021
Gwendolyn Callis (Rev. Duane Ward).....	October 03, 2021
Patsy R. Hemphill (Rev. Eugene R. Hemphill) .....	October 25, 2021
Bethel J. Daniel (Rev. Denzil Daniel).....	November 20, 2021
Mary Barham (Rev. Charles F. Owen).....	November 21, 2021
Shirley Wingfield (Rev. Floyd Wingfield) .....	January 03, 2022
Mable Knotts (Rev. Albert Knotts) .....	January 18, 2022
Sue Sheaffer (Rev. Lee B. Sheaffer) .....	January 26, 2022
Arlin Honaker (Rev. Albert Honaker) .....	February 02, 2022
Patricia Harris (Rev. Paul Harris) .....	February 10, 2022
Martha H. Davenport (Rev. John S. Davenport).....	February 12, 2022
Elva B. Yates (Rev. Alexander Yates) .....	March 19, 2022
John G. Hatcher Jr. (Rev. Myrtle Hatcher) .....	March 21, 2022
Mildred Riley (Rev. Henry Riley) .....	April 1, 2022
Judy C. Hough (Osborne Hough) .....	April 6, 2022

*\*Not Reported at 2021 A. C.*

*Updated 04/27/2022*

**Lay Members**

*of the 2021-2022 Annual Conference who have died in the last year*

Darlene Amon (May 27, 2021) .....	Elizabeth River District
Kathy Foster (June 6, 2021).....	Danville District
Charles Graham Clements (July 16, 2021).....	York River District
Mary Virginia Farrish (September 7, 2021).....	Staunton District
Agnes Inge Dalton (October 16, 2021).....	Richmond District
Sherman R. England (November 3, 2021).....	Danville District
James Davis, Sr. (January 14, 2022).....	Farmville District
Patsie Holliday Cutright (March 19, 2022).....	Charlottesville District

*Updated 04/27/2022*



**THE REV. DR. JUDITH A. BENNETT  
1934 - 2022**

Let us remember with thanksgiving the life and ministry of Rev. Judith Ann Bennett, 87, of Shelton, CT who died February 26, 2022. Judy was born September 7, 1934 in Portland, OR.

Judy attended Portland State University, studying English and elementary education, and Willamette University in Salem, OR, where she studied philosophy and religion. She married David W. Bennett in 1953 and they moved to the east coast. She received a B.A. from Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, NY, while working as a news editor, reporter and photographer for a weekly newspaper, The Cornwall Local, and raising her four children.

During her years in Cornwall, NY, she founded The Wesleyan Dancers, a liturgical dance ensemble. They performed in churches throughout the Hudson Valley. She also taught modern dance at the Storm King School in Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY. Judy felt called to ministry and attended Drew Theological School in Madison, NJ, while serving as pastor at Gladstone UMC in Gladstone, NJ. She received her Master of Divinity in 1977. She later returned to Drew and in 1993 earned a doctorate in sociology of religion.

In 1976, Judy became a provisional member of the New York Conference, and in 1979, she was ordained an elder. From 1977 to 1989, she served as pastor of four NY Conference churches: Inwood UMC, Fourth Avenue UMC in Brooklyn, First UMC in Jamaica, Queens and Goshen UMC.

In 1989, Judy moved to Richmond, VA and was appointed in extension ministry as Associate Program Director for the Virginia Council of Churches, later becoming Associate General Minister for that organization. She also worked as executive director of The Ecumenical Resource Center. In 1997, Judy transferred to the Virginia Conference, where she continued to serve the Virginia Council of Churches until her retirement in 2000.

Beginning in 2001, Rev. Dr. Bennett was adjunct faculty at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University, where she taught curriculum theory and design, philosophy of education, and church and community for students in the M.Div., MACE and D.Min. programs. Her “passion for the life-giving, life-renewing nature of the gospel” led her to offer leadership to many organizations around the Commonwealth of Virginia, notably the Elizabeth Project, the Center for Women in Christian Leadership, and Friends of Incarcerated Women, working to call attention to issues affecting women and children. She was passionate about causes pertaining to gender, racial and social justice, and the environment, and was a role model and mentor.

Judy retired from teaching in 2015. The following year she moved to Shelton, CT and was honored with the title “Theologian in Residence” at Mary Taylor Memorial United Methodist Church, where she remained active through 2020. Although she spent many years in Virginia, Judy remained beloved by those in the New York Conference.

Judy is survived by her four children: Stephen Bennett, John Bennett, Joanna Bennett, and Jim Bennett, and their spouses, seven grandchildren, one great grandchild, and her beloved cat, Louie. She was preceded in death by her sister, Lucille Sheets, and brothers, Arthur Marshall and Rex Fagalde, as well as a parade of dogs and cats she met and loved along the way.

Judy was one of a kind. She was a trailblazer, fierce friend, powerful witness and a teacher to her core. She loved learning and teaching, believing that there was freedom in learning. Judy experienced the Gospel as liberation and believed this good news needed to be taught in ways that all of God’s people could find their place in the story. The love and presence of God transformed her life and she believed deeply it could and would transform the world. Through her teaching, Judy offered her students the opportunity to make up their own minds, forge their own path and she breathed life into gifts she saw within people that even they had overlooked. She had a deep sense of call to love and include others who normally would have been left out and not given a seat at the table. She deeply valued hospitality, often serving meals as part of her classes and educational experiences. She had a heart for justice and a penchant for saying exactly what was on her mind. In her courage, she empowered others to find their voice and to be heard. Her legacy undoubtedly lives on in those who were fortunate enough to call her teacher.

*—Submitted by her son, Jim, with words from the Rev. Caitlyn Bailey*

**THE REV. G. THOMAS BROWN, JR.**  
**1947 - 2022**

Tom fought the good fight for many years. He always said, "I want to go be with Jesus, but not today". He was born and reared in Roanoke, graduated from William Fleming HS, Bridgewater College in 1969, and then completed his Master of Divinity at Wesley Theological Seminary. He served 7 appointments over the next 40 years. (see below). Tom got to know and love each of his congregations, and mostly they loved him back. Besides his sermons in the relentless return of every Sunday, and the tons of church meetings experienced by all, he taught many Disciple Bible classes, visited in hospitals, performed many baptisms, weddings and funerals, as do all. Baptisms were his favorite. He could be handed a crying baby, and for some reason it would stop crying while Tom held it.

He also cared about each general community. He volunteered in rescue squads, (fought a few fires along the way), and acquired quite a bit of training, which came in very handy. He is credited (with God on his shoulder) with saving two lives by CPR. When rescue squads stopped using volunteers he became a hospital chaplain and most recently a police chaplain. He always cared about the human condition and made improvements wherever he could.

Since 1993, Tom was very active as a spiritual director in the Walk to Emmaus, both in the Southside Community and the Richmond Community. He served on Emmaus weekends, Chrysalis (for youth) and Epiphany (for incarcerated youth) a total of 67 times. From 2008 to 2018 he served as the Richmond Community Spiritual Director. He will always be remembered for his ever-expanding stories (with a great point), and his self-deprecating humor.

Tom and Ann were able to do some traveling to England and Scotland (John Wesley tour in 1995), Alaska, Hawaii twice, Colorado, Viking Rhine Cruise. More was planned but in retirement (2010) they were joined by their beautiful newborn granddaughter and family. Again, she would stop crying for him if no one else. She has been the light of his life.

In his last years he struggled with many health issues. He always kept a positive attitude with a minimum of complaint, surely enabled by his everlasting faith. Thanks be to God for this life.

Tom is survived by Ann, his wife of 51 years and two children Matthew Brown (Carrie Beth Hensley Brown) of Bridgewater and Sarah Bush (David Bush) of North Chesterfield, one grandchild (Rachel Ann Nelson).

He served:

Gainesville/Bethel of Northern Virginia 1972-1976

Providence/Woodland of Suffolk 1976-1980

Washington Farm of Alexandria 1980-1985

Southview of Roanoke 1985-1992

Main Street of South Boston 1992-1996

St. Luke's of Richmond 1996-2003

Ivey Memorial of Colonial Heights 2003-2010

Retired 2010 and lived in Midlothian

*—Submitted by his wife, Ann*

**THE REV. TOM LEE COFFMAN**  
**1927 - 2021**

Tom Coffman was born in Elkins, West Virginia on January 15, 1927. He was a marine veteran of both World War II and the Korean Conflict. He was a graduate of Bridgewater College and United Theological Seminary in Dayton. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Shenandoah University. Tom's ministry began in the EUB tradition in 1952. While working in youth ministry he provided major leadership for the development of Camp Overlook on the Harrisonburg District. He was an especially well-loved pastor in serving Clinton, Roanoke, Verona, Parkview, Dulin and Asbury Church. On 2 occasions Tom was appointed to serve as District Superintendent, first at Farmville and later at Winchester. After the loss of his devoted wife Marie and mother of their 3 children, Tom was devastated. But by the grace of God he was doubly blessed to marry Nancy Bowlin who supported and shared in ministry. They were especially invested and committed to the work of the Retired Clergy Housing Corporation. Tom served the Virginia Conference in many capacities for 64 years. During the time in which he worked with the Board of Missions he provided exceptional leadership in the development of Ashburn and Wellspring UMC. Tom will always be remembered for his great love of the church's hymns. He was a fine trumpeter and loved to sing. Many of us were supported and mentored by this dedicated servant of Christ who so loved the church and gave himself untiringly to the church's ministry.

*—Submitted by Rev. John B. Peters (at the request of Nancy Coffman)*

## THE REV. JOHN CHARLES DAMERON 1943 - 2021

The Rev. John Charles Dameron was peacefully called home to the Lord on June 22, 2021. A lifelong servant of God, he was predeceased by his parents, Willmore M. Jr. & Hazel J. Dameron and brother, James A. Dameron.

He answered a persistent calling from the Lord that led to his career change from business to ordained elder with the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church. He faithfully served small membership churches in numerous churches in Virginia—Hawkinstown, Mt. Clifton, Mt. Hermon, & Otterbein Chapel (1976); Irvington & White Marsh (1981); Wesley Chapel (1985); Whaleyville & Somerton (1988); Grace-Providence & Emmanuel (1993); and Andrew Chapel & Edgewater (2000). Charles is remembered for his inspired sermons and preaching without notes; his caring visitation to those in need; his special calling to small membership churches, and his fun-loving sense of humor. He retired in 2004 and went on to serve as Pastor Emeritus at Irvington UMC. He performed countless baptisms, weddings, and funerals over his career. He continued preaching and serving in his retirement when called upon, including at Kilmarnock UMC; his childhood church home, Mila UMC; and others.

Charles—Dad, Grandpa, Granddad—is survived by his devoted wife Sue, who stayed by his side and cared for him throughout his battle with cancer; his two loving daughters and their husbands, Stephanie & John Clark and Shari & Russ Laraway; his four grandchildren, Matthew, Kendall, Russell, & Hudson; his brother Willmore Dameron, III (Susan) and numerous other relatives and friends. He was a dedicated husband, father, and friend.

Charles lived a life of public service, including leadership positions over the years with multiple PTAs and the Ruritans; as first chair of the Suffolk Meals on Wheels; and board member/treasurer of the Northern Neck-Middlesex Free Health Clinic; in numerous community activities; and quietly serving behind the scenes, helping so many along with his wife, Sue.

His favorite scripture was John 3:16: *For God so loved the world that he sent his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

*—Submitted by his family*

## THE REV. RICHARD N. GALBREATH 1934 - 2022

Richard's earth-journey began in Winamac, Indiana, in the winter of 1934 as the son of the late Merl and Olive Galbreath. Boyhood days were spent poling his boat on the Tippecanoe River, searching the sandhills for his vast collection of Native American artifacts, earning merit badges that would lead him to be Indiana's youngest Eagle Scout at the time and earning paper carrier of the year on his bicycle paper route. His father's death when he was only 13 led him into an early world of work after school at the local drug store as he helped his mom with household expenses.

A bigger world opened to him at Purdue University where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering and participated in the Navy ROTC. Upon graduation, he left for the Naval Flight School in Pensacola, FL. Through his years of active and reserve duty, he attained the rank of Commander.

In the world of business, he moved to Richmond, Virginia, and became involved with Reveille UMC where he and his wife worked with the MYF. A move to Dinwiddie County in 1978 and to a new little church, Grace UMC, began a new chapter in his spiritual life. He began teaching Sunday School, lay speaking and often serving as the speaker on third Sundays when the charge church did not have a minister.

Richard's sphere of faith and care expanded into the work as he and Diane volunteered in villages in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, on the island of Majuro, and in a number of vulnerable cities and towns in the U.S. through their volunteer work with the Institute of Cultural Affairs. The world was invited their home as exchange students from Germany, Japan, Spain, Brazil, and Russia came to be a part of their family.

At age 55, he began a new way of connecting with his faith as a second career Methodist minister. He served churches on the Nottoway Charge (Bethel and St. John's) and the Nottoway-Lunenburg Charge (St. Mark's, Thrifts Chapel, and Laurel Hill). In retirement he and Diane came back to Grace UMC. He enjoyed a number of years serving on the ARMS Board as well as endless hours enjoying gardening, mowing fields, tinkering in his workshop and enjoying leisure traveling. His greatest treasure was his love for his four children, 13 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren with his wife of 57 years by his side.

Health concerns did not begin moving into his life until 2020. Although there were only several months of illness, he completed his earth journey on Sunday, April 24. It was orthodox Easter—a new beginning for Richard Galbreath.

*—Submitted by his wife, Diane*

## THE REV. LENARD DOUGLAS HILL 1940 - 2021

Doug Hill was born in Miami, Florida but as a young man moved to Rockbridge County in Virginia where he grew up and attended school until 1958 before a year at Virginia Tech where he was a part of the corps. His plan was to study architecture, only to discover that he really couldn't draw. After a single year he decided to return to Rockbridge County where he attended and graduated from Washington and Lee University in the class of 1962. Following his undergraduate studies, he attended Union Seminary where he studied theology receiving a Master's degree in Theology and prepared for a career in the United Methodist Church. His career would span five decades including a stint as a student pastor at Bethel Methodist Church in Caroline County and five years pastoring Fairmount UMC in Richmond followed by an appointment as associate pastor (Arlington Forest UMC) which was followed by as long pastorate of more than 12 years at The Bethel-Emmanuel Charge on the Rappahannock District and back to Richmond (Beulah UMC) followed by serving as the District Superintendent of the Petersburg District and finally concluding his career at Asbury UMC in Harrisonburg.

During his ministerial career, Doug served multiple conference and district committees, including once being chair of the conference Board of Ordained ministry, which oversees the recruitment and training of new clergy for the Virginia Annual Conference. He mentored and befriended dozens of our upcoming clergy, including this writer. He continued this kind of ministry serving on the Conference Board of Ethics well into retirement. In many ways he was a pastor's pastor, seeing his supervisory roles as an extension of his ministry. He was a strong advocate of Women in Ministry even back to the time when it was not as accepted as it is today.

He loved his vocational volunteerism taking great pleasure in his work with United Family Services for several decades and the PACE student ministry at VCU. Both organizations have sought out ways to remember his contribution to their respective ministries.

Doug enjoyed most of the activities of being a pastor. He never seemed to meet a stranger and if he did, he was sure to try to make a friend out of them. He was a gifted pastor, preacher, story teller, worship leader, scholar, theologian, and pastoral counselor; a package rarely found in a single individual. All that being said, where he probably excelled the most was as a family man. In 1962 he married Janet Anderson. Together they had two children: Amy and David. Both children would become excellent students and go on to graduate college retaining excellent relationships with their father. Together they combined for five grandsons, Clay, Drew, Dylan, Porter, and Aiden. As the family expanded, Doug was careful not to make his in-laws feel like in-laws but a genuine part of the family. In his spare time, what little there was of it, he enjoyed his family a great deal. He loved to read, watch a good movie on television, take the family out for special dinners, keep up with old friends, collect fountain pens, and visit his favorite men's clothing store. It is hard to write a memoir without including that he was always one of the best dressed clergy in the conference. But that probably paled in comparison to how his colleagues held him professionally. He was a true man of God, a priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Doug retired from active ministry in 2005 but continued his work in the parachurch volunteerism that he always enjoyed until his death in September of 2021.

*—Submitted by his son-in-law, the Rev. James D. Thomas*

## THE REV. DR. GARLAND K. HINES, JR. 1947 - 2021

The Rev. Dr. Garland K. Hines, Jr. transitioned peacefully into eternal life Sunday morning, July 4, 2021, at Sentara Obici Hospital in Suffolk where he had recently completed radiation and chemotherapy treatments. He was 73 years of age.

Born in Norfolk on August 21, 1947, he was the first of six children born to Garland and Lillie (Hewitt) Hines. Garland was five years old when his father received the call into ministry. The family moved to California where his father began ministerial training. As a "P.K.," Garland attended elementary school in South Bend, Washington and high school in Portland, Oregon where he met the forever love of his life, Leslie Norcross, at the ripe old age of 12. Four years later his family moved back to Virginia where his father pastored in Leesburg. After primarily a U.S. Mail courtship, Garland returned to Oregon where he and Leslie were married in 1966.

In the early years of their marriage Garland worked in various construction and sales jobs by day and with his father in ministry on weekends, playing his trumpet and singing. By 1977 they had moved to Virginia Beach where Garland

and his father launched an interdenominational ministry that thrived for nearly ten years until his father's health required him to retire. Garland felt he was not prepared to lead the congregation alone, so after much prayer and reflection the decision was made to close the church, complete his college education, and prepare himself for seminary.

Though his father had been raised in Duck Methodist Church in North Carolina, the family was no longer joined to the United Methodist Church when Garland enrolled at Virginia Wesleyan. The Chaplain there encouraged him to participate as a student speaker in the Ministry in Higher Education Sunday program, and he liked what he experienced. Leslie (a former E.U.B.), encouraged him to investigate a United Methodist ordination. In pursuit of more information, he made an appointment with then President Lambuth Clarke. President Clarke was totally encouraging, telling him, "The United Methodist Church needs ministers like you."

The very day in June 1987 when Garland graduated with a degree in Religious Studies from Virginia Wesleyan, he drove to Shenandoah University for licensing school. In September, he began his Master of Divinity studies at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. A whirlwind experience.

At W.T.S. he was one of eight students in the Student Pastor Track program where he pastored three churches (Culpeper Circuit-Charlottesville District) for the next four years. In 1991, with his M.Div. completed, he was appointed to Trinity Circuit-Portsmouth District while he fulfilled his two-year probationary period, along with all the writing assignments required for ordination.

In June 1993 Garland was ordained Full Elder in the United Methodist Church, and he was delighted that Lambuth Clarke, his still strong supporter, was standing with him on the platform in Hampton. When Bishop Stockton draped the white ordination stole over his shoulders, Garland said he felt the weight of the responsibility of which he was being bestowed. At once scary and glorious.

His first appointment as Elder was to Beech Grove on the Portsmouth District. He served eleven productive years at "The Easter Egg Church." Under his watch, Beech Grove experienced major growth in attendance, spiritual growth through the Disciple Bible Study series and other enriching studies, learned more about their Methodist heritage, performed comprehensive restoration and renovations to the sanctuary, and purchased ten acres of surrounding land to assure space for future growth. Meanwhile, Garland completed his Doctor of Ministry at Wesley Theological Seminary.

Other appointments include Messiah-Norfolk District, Asbury and St. James-Peninsula District, and Providence-James River District. In retirement, his final part-time appointment was to Boykins Charge in Southampton County.

Service to the Virginia Conference included chairing the Platform Committee and serving as a member of the Communications Committee. He held numerous district level positions, among them as a longtime member of the District Council on Ordained Ministry, the District Committee on Superintendency, and the District Communications Committee.

Garland was an excellent teacher as well as pastor. His mid-week Bible Studies were enlightening, motivating and often fun. Garland was an encourager. Those who knew him well witness to his ability to minister hope, comfort, and inspiration. He was kind and sensitive and had a gift for building the faith of those around him. But he also loved to tease and have fun. His quick smile and warm personality were memorable traits. It was often said that Garland's personality was bigger than life and his presence filled a room—even when he was trying to be demure.

In his spare time, Garland enjoyed camping with Leslie, golfing, spending time with their children and grandchildren, traveling to the west coast to visit family, working in their yard and flower gardens, hanging bird feeders and identifying feathered visitors, listening to classical music, and playing with their miniature dachshund. They were joyfully anticipating full retirement in the next year.

Garland's funeral at Beech Grove Church was attended by parishioners from nearly all his former churches, colleagues, former classmates, friends, neighbors, and many from his large family. The service was concluded with a recording of Garland singing "The Lord's Prayer" that had been performed at his daughter's wedding. His remains will be interred at Austin Cemetery in Kitty Hawk in the company of literally hundreds of his paternal ancestors.

*—Submitted by his wife, Leslie*

## **THE REV. KENNETH STEPHEN JAMES 1927 - 2021**

On Monday October 25, 2021 Rev. Kenneth Stephen James, 94, was welcomed to his Heavenly home by his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A memorial service was held on Friday, October 29, 2021 in Greensboro, NC with Pastor Roland Shepley officiating. Burial followed at Guilford Memorial Park where Randolph County Honor Guard performed military honors.

Rev. James was preceded in death by his first wife, Betty B. James; and second wife, Elouise O. James.



He was a retired Methodist Minister and upon returning to Greensboro attended Muirs Chapel United Methodist Church. Rev. James served several charges in the Virginia Conference and retired after 13 years of service. He also attended Charity Baptist Church until his health would not allow him to do so. Kenneth served his country in the United States Navy during World War II.

He is survived by his son, Stephen “Dale” James (Vicky M.), of Greensboro; step-son, Lyle M. Friel, Jr (Jean), of Farmington, NY; grandson, Kevin Stewart James (Lindsey), of Scottsdale, AZ; great-grandson, Braxton S. James, of Raleigh; great-granddaughter, Kennedy Anne James, and great-grandson, Marcus S. James, of Scottsdale Arizona; seven step-grandchildren; thirteen step-great-grandchildren; nine step-great-great-grandchildren; as well as several other family members and friends whom he loved.

*—Submitted by his son, Dale James*

### **THE REV. BILLY GENE JOHNSON SR. 1935 - 2021**

The Rev. Billy G. Johnson, Sr., age 85, of Danville, VA, passed to his heavenly home on Thursday, August 5, 2021. Bill was loved and respected by all who knew him as a kind, gentle and learned man with a great sense of humor and love of life. He also took great care in the preparation and delivery of his sermons and lessons, which blended his deep intellectual understanding of Scripture with a homespun delivery that drew on his life and experiences.

Billy Gene Johnson was born October 10, 1935, to Z. Truman and Anna Belle Raymond Johnson in Bessemer, Alabama. His dad was a foreman in the coal mines. The 3rd of 4 children, he helped to raise his much younger sister after their mother died prematurely. He attended public school until graduation with honors in 1954 from McAdory High School in McCalla, Alabama. He was Vice President of the National Honor Society and voted “Most Likely to Succeed.” Although offered a scholarship to Auburn University, he chose to devote his life to the Lord and entered the Salvation Army’s School of Officers Training in Atlanta, GA, to become a pastor. Shortly after, on January 10, 1958, he married the love of his life, Joyce Eleanor Cowham Johnson, who was also a young Salvation Army officer.

Together, Bill and Joyce served in that denomination for almost 25 years throughout the Southeastern United States including appointments in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, Maryland and ultimately in Danville, Virginia. During this time, they raised four children: Billy G. Johnson, Jr. (Gisele), Columbia, SC; Gloria Anderson (Dwayne), Waynesboro, VA; Melanie Clark (James), La Cañada Flintridge, CA; and Arthur Johnson (Dara), Ringgold, VA. They also have seven grandchildren (Robin, Peirce, Cody (Brittany), Marshall, Nicholas, Cassidy, and Ashley) and several nieces and nephews.

In 1979, Bill transitioned to The United Methodist Church as a local pastor. Always devoted to continuing education and learning, he went back to school part time to earn his BA from Averett University and then relished his continuing studies at Duke University’s summer program to become an Elder with The United Methodist Church. During this period and his remaining years of service, he pastored numerous churches in Virginia including the Axton charge in Henry County, Grace Design United Methodist and Schoolfield United Methodist in Danville, Nolan Memorial in Hampton, and Grottoes UMC, Mt. Pisgah, Stephens City and Clover Hill, all in the Shenandoah Valley. He retired from active ministry in 2002, but continued to serve later at Calvary UMC as well as many Sunday School and Bible classes.

Throughout his life, he enjoyed spending time outdoors with sports, fishing, canoeing, and other activities. He shared these passions with young people by serving for many years as a Scout Master with the Boy Scouts of America, working at various church summer camp programs, and helping to establish youth programming and facilities in communities through the Boys & Girls Club of America.

Though never able to do as much as he would have liked, Bill also loved to travel, especially touring historical sites. He was able to visit Germany, France, Italy and England as well as two trips to the Holy Land, once as a spiritual guide. In addition, he and his bride enjoyed a Caribbean cruise for their 50th wedding anniversary.

Having learned woodworking from his dad, Bill always enjoyed working with his hands whether for building and nurturing wonderful gardens, or building tree houses, gazebos, or other improvements to various parsonages or his retirement homes or those of his children over the years. He even learned to make stained glass windows after being inspired by the great cathedrals in Europe.

Overall, he was a simple man who worked tirelessly to serve his God, his family and his congregants and communities no matter where that led him. While greatly missed, he died peacefully and ready to meet his Maker. He knew, as in the lyrics of his favorite hymn Amazing Grace, “T’was Grace that brought us safe thus far And Grace will lead us home.” Surely, when he arrived, the Lord greeted him warmly, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

*—Submitted by his daughter, Melanie Clark*

## THE REV. ROBERT TOWNSEND KNOX 1935 - 2021

Robert “Bob” Townsend Knox, 86, of Elon passed away on Sunday, October 10, 2021 at Alamance Regional Medical Center.

Born in Ashland, KY, he grew up in Huntington, West Virginia. He was the loving husband of Jean Hendley Knox, who survives and the son of the late Emory Knox and the late Beatrice Townsend Knox.

Bob attended Fork Union Military Academy for five years, graduating in 1953. He went on to graduate from Marshall University and later Duke Divinity School with a master’s degree in sacred theology. He also had extensive studies at Butner Rehabilitation Center and Dix Hill Mental Hospital in Raleigh, NC.

Bob served The United Methodist Church in the Virginia Conference. He served as an associate in Fairfax, then went on to start a thriving new church, Messiah Methodist in Springfield. He served churches in Waynesboro, Salem, Alexandria and Arlington, where he retired from Cherrydale United Methodist Church in 1999 and was awarded Pastor Emeritus of that church. He was a member of the Virginia Conference Board of Education, Conference Board of Pensions, Boards of Trustees for Ferrum College and Randolph- Macon Woman’s College. He served as Chairman for the Committee on Higher Education, Chaplain of the Practical Nursing Program, President of the Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry and three years as Chaplin of the Virginia Senate. He was active in the community, taking part in the local Councils on Mental Health, Rotary Club and Kiwanis Club. Bob was an instrumental part in starting the program “Life of Elon” at Elon University.

Fork Union Military Academy changed his life and gave him confidence in his abilities and a strong religious foundation. He preached at the Alumni Memorial services and addressed students on various occasions. He always tried to convey to the cadets at the academy an appreciation for both the education and character-building values that they were receiving.

Bob was an accomplished musician. He was an excellent pianist and played many other instruments. He enjoyed painting and was a big supporter of the arts.

In addition to his wife, survivors include two daughters, Kathryn Knox Maeder and husband Troy of Marietta, GA and Karen Knox McMullen and husband Todd of Fredericksburg, VA; and two granddaughters, Alexandra Maeder and Abigail Maeder, both of Atlanta, GA.

*—Submitted by his family*

## THE REV. JOHN WESTFALL MORRISON JR. 1939 - 2021

John Westfall Morrison, Jr., (Jack) was born on June 20, 1939, at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. His parents, John W., Sr., and Jane Selecman Morrison, lived in Waverly, Virginia, where John served a Methodist church. As the son and grandson of Methodist ministers, Jack knew about itinerancy throughout his formative years. After Waverly, he lived in Whaleyville, Newsoms, Urbanna, Back Bay, and Charlottesville, where his father served as minister. The oldest of four children, Jack always considered himself as protector of his three sisters. It was at Urbanna that he fell in love with all things related to water, especially excursions on his family’s 39-foot retired oyster boat.

Jack was always industrious and hard-working. In Urbanna, he delivered newspapers from his bike, followed by his trusted Cocker Spaniel, Buffy. He would rise early, pick up papers, and have them delivered before school started. In his senior year in high school, he drove a school bus. Again, he had to rise early to pick up students from the Back Bay area and make a long drive to Princess Anne High School. This was quite a responsibility for a high school senior, and it showed how he was trusted. While at Randolph-Macon College, for summer employment, he and a college friend sold Bibles door-to-door. He was doing this in Fulton, Kentucky, when he met his future wife, Marion Blackstone. They were married in 1961, and Jack entered Union Theological Seminary.

Important to Jack was his love of music. He played several instruments, but his love was String Bass. He and some friends formed a dance band in high school, called “The Stardusters.” He earned a good portion of his college expenses playing in a jazz ensemble. Music provided a creative outlet for Jack, throughout his ministry and life.

Jack began serving Virginia churches while in seminary. He and Marion served in Mineral, Charlottesville, and Hampton. In 1974, he became a U.S. Army chaplain, and over the course of 26 years in the Army, he served in various assignments at Fort Bragg, Korea, Key West, Fort Devens, Frankfort, Germany, Arlington National Cemetery and Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Always industrious and hard-working, Chaplain Morrison graduated from the Airborne Jumpmaster,

Special Operations, and the Command and General Staff College military courses. He received a Doctorate of Ministry in Psychology and Clinical Studies from Andover Newton Theological School in Boston. His last assignment was as the Family Life chaplain at Fort Knox, Kentucky, where he retired in 2000 as a Lieutenant Colonel. Upon his retirement, he opened Good Shepherd Counseling Ministries, from which he retired in 2018.

Jack always loved his family. He and Marion had three daughters, Rae, Angela, and Pamela, and three grandchildren, Cameron, Lauren, and Erin. They decided to make their retirement home in Elizabethtown, KY, to be near them. Memorial United Methodist Church became their church home. While on a Caribbean cruise in 2000, Marion died following a snorkeling incident. The tragic loss was sudden and shocking for the whole family.

In 2002 Jack married another Kentucky girl, Sheryl McPherson Radford, a retired high school counselor from Cumberland County, Kentucky. Christian faith, common interests, and a love of learning brought them together.

Jack and Sheryl enjoyed attending Christian Counselor and marriage and family workshops in different parts of the country. With Good Shepherd Counseling Jack and Sheryl conducted couple workshops for a few years. As a marriage & family therapist, Jack continued his individual counseling as well as supervising others until his retirement in 2018.

In 2007 Jack and Sheryl were blessed to be asked to participate in a mission trip to Brazil with Shade and Fresh Water of Virginia. Thus began Jack's keen interest in serving the underprivileged. On a mission trip to Haiti in 2009 to serve at Sonlight Academy in Port-a-Paix, they saw the tremendous need for clean water. Subsequently, Jack was trained in Mississippi as an administrator through Living Waters of the World and with great passion led future mission trips to install a total of nine water purification systems, not only at Sonlight Academy and Baraca Hospital, but in and around the Port-a-Paix area. There he was loved and known as Pastor Jack.

Jack and Sheryl loved to travel. They were fortunate to experience Italy, Greece, Turkey, Nova Scotia, Scotland and Brazil. A favorite family beach was Surf City, NC, where his sisters, nieces, nephew and extended family members would gather. How Jack enjoyed fishing, crabbing, jazz music, and good food! Family was important to Jack and he so looked forward to time with his children and grandchildren. Attending family reunions and celebrations brought him such joy.

Even with Jack's physical disabilities and compromised immune system, he never complained and pushed himself to always be productive. His love of Jesus and his Christian faith were continuously demonstrated by his many generous works for social justice.

In July of 2021 Jack was diagnosed with stage 4 bladder cancer. Even though vaccinated, he and Sheryl both contracted Covid during the second week of August. On August 21, Jack went Home to be with his loved ones who had gone on before. Our hearts were broken.

Micah 8:11 is a wonderful scripture to describe Jack's life journey. *"And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."* NIV

Today Jack walks in the Garden with Him.

*—Submitted by his wife, Sheryl, and sister, Linda*

## THE REV. JETHRO WADE MUNFORD 1934 - 2022

Rev. Jethro Wade Munford, known to most as Wade, touched more lives than his family and friends ever knew. It seems that you cannot fully know someone until they are gone. For it is then that people call or write to tell you stories about their experiences with that person. Many of these you will have never heard. It seems that his love of people, children and adults alike, was something that led him throughout his life to be inclusive of others. Impacting many who felt blessed to know him.

Wade said often that his parents were not full of advice, but he learned how to treat people and his strong work ethic by watching them. They led by example. He was a good student throughout all of his school years. He applied for and was awarded the opportunity to go to Boys State in Virginia during high school. He had a paper route from an early age, and he was a state champion swimmer, twice. He was a great one for organizing pick-up ball games or an afternoon swim.

After high school, while working in a local hardware store, Wade decided to enlist in the Army knowing it was his best chance of furthering his education through the GI Bill. The Army recognized his aptitude for engineering and problem-solving and placed him in the signal corp for decoding. His love of tinkering, taking things apart to see how they worked, would be an asset to him in the military. His love of people and service would be an asset for what would be his true calling.

Although Wade grew up in church and attended regularly, his role had always been as a member and steward, doing small jobs around the building. In his early 20s he received the call he had been trying to ignore. It was God's call. He went to his pastor to talk. Soon thereafter, he made the decision to follow that call into the ministry. How all this made him ready for the ministry, he did not understand, but God did. It seems certain that this is what God had in mind for him all along. His pastor lost no time in getting him involved in youth ministry and then on to a congregation.

He found he loved and did it well. One thing was consistent throughout his career. He followed God's word, he followed church and conference guidelines, long meetings and all. And he led his congregations with love and understanding. This is evident in the testimonies the family has received over the last few months from his former congregations. His ability to listen and to lead, touched many in those fellowships and in their communities.

It seems Wade was called to become involved in the extended community of the places where he served. He believed that this could further the mission and impact of the church. He would eat locally, shop locally, and eventually, in most areas, coffee groups were formed.

Because he kept a trust and was a good listener, many friendships were formed. He loved meeting new people and sharing in life events such as weddings or funerals that in many cases he would be asked to perform by those that were unchurched. The local funeral homes would call him and ask him to perform services for those who had no pastor.

Wade was careful to be a person of trust and a good listener for the youth in those same communities. He worked in the conference YES program for 16 years. This conference program produced more ministers than any other. It is likely that the experience of growing the YES program, led him to the creation of Rock, a summer program for youth in Staunton, Va. After seeing and talking with some kids who were standing on the street downtown, the program was born. This program engaged the younger children in activities and Christian awareness and taught the older youth about service and to lead and mentor. He strongly wanted other churches to also work in this program. Rock lasted many years.

Wade loved to travel. After retirement he was able to achieve a completed bucket, building an address book full of friendships. He loved playing cards, by the book of course, and doing sudoku and crossword puzzles. He loved attending his grandchildren's sporting events, many times driving hours to be there. Family was always a priority with him, as was his God. Even after retirement and some of his health issues began, Wade continued as a visitation pastor part time and then, just as a good steward of the church. Ministering to others, either within his family, or on the road in travels, or in a congregation, was his passion... his calling.

Looking at the last 20 years of Wade's life, one may be stunned that he survived some of the health issues he faced. Certainly his family was. It was, on occasion, pretty miraculous. But at each event, the Lord was not ready have him stop his work on earth. Wade knew God had a plan and he was willing to continue until God was finished with his work here. His family loved him very much. We will all miss him terribly, but we know that he is rejoicing at home with his Lord.

*—Submitted by his wife, Ann*

### **THE REV. JOHN SHEPHERD PARKER 1937 - 2021**

Parker was born April 14, 1937 and died August 20, 2021 after a long battle with Alzheimers. He attended Randolph-Macon College (1955-56) and American University with a BA in Philosophy (1956-59). He then attended the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia and received a Bachelor of Divinity in 1962. He was admitted to the Virginia Conference Probationer and made a Deacon in 1960 and ordained an Elder in Full

Connection in 1961. He served as a United Methodist pastor for 35 years (1960-1995) throughout Virginia.

*—Submitted by his wife, Paulette*

### **THE REV. GEORGE M. PEARSON JR. 1946 - 2021**

The Rev. George M. Pearson, Jr., 75, went to heaven on a beautiful Sunday, December 12, 2021. George was born and raised in Emporia, Va. and was a Methodist from birth. After spending some time at William and Mary with the idea of becoming a high school math teacher, George felt God calling him to teach for Him instead. George ended up graduating from VCU and Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. He served God and the United Methodist Church

in the Virginia Conference for 37 years including Chester UMC, St. Matthias UMC, Mt. Tabor UMC and his final 14 years at Southview UMC in Roanoke. He was very active in youth work in the earlier years of his ministry, but his real passion was teaching the Bible to the many who attended his Bible classes where he mentored many individuals of all ages in the importance of having a strong foundation based on the scripture so that they would see what it meant when they claimed the name of Christ as Christians.

Those left to treasure wonderful memories are his wife Lynn Bryant of Roanoke, his son Chris Pearson of Cookeville, Tennessee, his sister and brother-in-law, Mary Jo and Jimmy Doyle of Emporia, Va., lots of cousins and the many friends that he made along the way. In fact, many will always remember him for his challenge to view life through the Serenity Prayer.

*-Submitted by his wife, Lynn*

### **THE REV. MYLES EDWARD PIERSON 1942 - 2022**

Myles was born in Warsaw, Virginia, on March 1, 1942. He was a graduate of Farnham High School and received an Associate in Arts at Louisburg College in 1970. In 1974, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Virginia Commonwealth University, and in 1980, a Master of Divinity from Virginia Union University.

Myles served churches across the Virginia Conference. Following his retirement from Highland Springs UMC, he served three congregations on a part-time basis, remaining at Asbury UMC in Newport News for 7 years.

The highlight of his ministry was working with Virginia's native tribes. This began with his organizing a work team to roof the United Rappahannock Tribal Center building. Learning there were children in need, he began to help the tribal councils financially provide Christmas gifts for the children. Next it was school supplies. Both of these projects were supported financially by the churches he served. Work teams were organized to repair homes on the reservations. To raise funds for these projects, he would prepare what became known as "The Preacher's Brunswick Stew", Chili, and Fresh Apple Cake. Church members would volunteer their time to prepare the ingredients or to stir the pots, giving Myles the opportunity to know them better.

Not only did he enjoy cooking, he enjoyed eating! He looked forward to the church sponsored meals. The highlights were spaghetti suppers and éclair cake. In retirement, he enjoyed the Golden Corral where he and Nancy met many people, some from other states, who became dear friends, as well as many of the staff. He and Nancy enjoyed entertaining in their home as well.

For years, Myles had fought a battle with Alzheimer's. On February 9th, 2022, Myles went home to be with the Lord. His earthly body, at his request, was donated to science in hopes of finding a cure for Alzheimer's. A memorial service was held on February 12th at Corinth UMC in Sandston. The Rev. Dr. Teresa Smith officiated. Music was provided by his step-daughter, Charlene Romano, flutist, and her husband, John Romano, arranged the hymns and accompanied his wife on clarinet. Both are graduates of Shenandoah University.

Surviving are his mother, Wilma Pierson of Farnham; his brother, Lynwood and his wife, Linda, of Warsaw; a sister, Elizabeth Reedy and her husband, David, of Mt. Crawford; as well as sisters Norma and Waverley Pierson of Farnham. He is also survived by his children Ed, Tony, Joe, and Theresa and their spouses, nine grandchildren and one great granddaughter; his wife Nancy and his two step-children, Charlene Romano and John Alan Baughan and their families.

*-Submitted by his wife, Nancy*

### **THE REV. JEFFRY JOEL ROBERTS**

Jeffry Joel (Jeff) Roberts was born on November 29, 1959 and died on September 21, 2021. The 61 years of his life were filled with love for the Lord, love for his family, love for his nation, and especially, love for the unloved.

Jeff is survived by his wife, partner in ministry, and best friend, Lori, whom he met at Wesley Woods, a United Methodist retreat center at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. They were married in May, 1983. He had two sons, Ian, married to Laura Shaffner, and granddaughter, Ivy; and son, Andrew. He also is survived by six brothers and sisters, several nephews and nieces, and scores of friends. His parents, Rev. William T. and Betty Roberts, predeceased him.

Jeff was born in Chicago, Illinois, and except for four years in Rockford, Illinois, he grew up in Chicago. He loved everything about Chicago, especially his beloved Cubs. As his father was a United Methodist pastor, Jeff lived in parsonages in various neighborhoods in his hometown. He graduated from the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in political science and skill in the Russian language.

He began his career at the National Security Agency at Ft. Meade MD where he was able to put his Russian skills to

work. For three years, he was posted in London where his children were born. After 10 years, and the fall of the Soviet Empire, he determined a career change was in order.

Jeff and Lori were dedicated members of Burke UMC. He was a full-time stay at home dad and it was there that he finally answered the call to ministry under the guidance of Rev. Ed Pruitt. He entered Wesley Theological Seminary as a part-time student in 1995 and graduated in 2000, when he was ordained as a deacon. In 2002, he was ordained as an elder. He served as a student pastor at Bethel UMC in Warrenton for two years, at the time considered the best student appointment in the conference! The Chicago boy, who had never lived in a rural area, was then appointed to a two-point charge in Mount Jackson, Virginia. He stayed there for six years, and then moved to Bethany church in Purcellville. After six years there, he was appointed to his last appointment at Springfield UMC. He was an effective and fun-loving pastor who was loved in rural, small town, and suburban churches.

Jeff was known and appreciated for his lively Wesleyan sermons, his loving care for his congregations, and his willingness take stands, even when unpopular, for justice and mercy. He loved to preach and teach. His sense of humor, including his quick wit, stories, cartoons, and satirical hymns, were loved by all. After futilely trying to master golf, he took up hiking, and with clergy friends hiked over a thousand miles on the Appalachian Trail and other trails.

Jeff was loyal to family, friends, and his denomination. He loved Wesleyan theology and practice, other clergy, and his congregations. He served on many district and conference committees, including COSROW and District Boards of Ordained Ministry. He also served on many Emmaus and Chrysalis teams as a Spiritual Director. He and Lori were an effective team for the Lord.

Jeff's life was cut short by cancer, but he never lost his love, his humor, his dedication, and his confidence in the eternal life with Jesus Christ. He was a model for all who knew him of a life well-lived, even when suffering from a terrible disease. He always preached the Great Commandment, and emphasizing the challenges simply to love each other and to love everyone. That is what Christians are called to do.

*—Submitted by his wife, Lori*

### **THE REV. ANGELITO G. SAMSON 1946 -2021**

United Methodist Elder, Reverend Angelito “Gel” Samson, 75, went peacefully with our Lord, surrounded by family & friends, in Virginia Beach, VA on Sept 8, 2021. Son of Vicente Samson, a farmer, & Miguela Gueco, a homemaker, he was the eldest of 3, born on January 9, 1946 in Concepcion, Tarlac, Philippines.

His father passing away at a young age, Angelito was raised by his mom, in his Uncle Antonio's home, alongside his siblings & cousins, in a faith centered household. With fond memories of singing hymns & nightly devotionals, his Uncle, Pastor Antonio Gueco became a strong father figure. During his youth, wherever his Uncle was appointed as pastor, Gel followed to witness his Uncle's service.

His elementary years were in Capas, Tarlac & graduated High School with honors from Lubao Institute in Lubao, Pampanga.

Working hard, he supported himself while earning his Bachelor's degree. He attended Union Theological Seminary, where he met Emma as she studied at Philippine Christian University. They wed in Cavite, Philippines in 1976. Pastor Samson earned his Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary & studied at Asbury Seminary in Kentucky for his postmasteral work, also receiving his Certification in Marriage & Family Therapy from Menninger.

Gaining servant leader reputation, he had a gift for building relationships, uniting people, encouraging teamwork, & empowering others to share their talents. These passions were shown through his ecumenical & interfaith engagements. Pastor Gel was appointed to various churches, large & small. These became among the most active, growing with members, leading faithful worship, teaching the congregation, & delivering community outreach.

Pastor Gel was appointed to the Kansas United Methodist Conference in the USA, becoming the second Filipino pastor in the state. His work led him to the Virginia United Methodist Conference, becoming the first Filipino pastor of a 2-point charge for Resurrection UMC & Princess Anne Plaza UMC. Pastoring both churches simultaneously, his strong faith & passion to help others kept him energized despite time constraints. During his tenure, these churches experienced remarkable membership growth. Though he was largely responsible, he credited his congregation for their outstanding outreach & ability to work together. He was pivotal in establishing & maintaining a strong financial acumen at both churches. In Virginia, he established a loving home, surrounding himself with friends that became family. Witnessing his children marry, then proudly watching his grandchildren grow.

Pastor Samson served the United Methodist Church faithfully for 47+ years. Having various appointments in the Philippines, Kansas, & Virginia; & also a noted professor at Union Theological Seminary & Harris Memorial College.

Loving various perspectives of theology, he sat for hours with seminary students discussing ideas. Having a deep interest in interfaith dialogue, he knew it was a positive way of building community & promoting diversity & understanding.

Throughout his life, Pastor Gel remained a strong social justice advocate. He supported & marched for issues including political freedom, women's rights, climate sustainability, & LGBT inclusion. Much of his sermons took from his cultural experiences, as he championed that differences were bridges to connecting with others. His outreach work prioritized those less fortunate. Known to inspire with his welcoming spirit, he treated all with respect, dignity, compassion, & kindness that characterized his life regardless of background & beliefs. Pastor Gel was respected for leading a life of humility, not by words but by how he lived.

Enthusiastic about mission service, he often hosted missionaries & invited them to speak at his churches. He also served in Brazil, taught in the Philippines, assisted healthcare teams for migrant workers on the Eastern Shore, & led several vacation bible schools & extended pastoral care. He helped organize a community Peace Festival, encouraging several interfaith groups to connect and cooperate, including Islam, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, Shinto & Christian, to support and raise money for an orphanage in East Africa.

Pastor Gel was a delegate to the United Methodist Church General Conference. He served in Virginia UMC's General Global Ministry, Board of Ordained Ministry, & General Board on Church and Society. He was involved in the Tidewater interfaith group, & PAGLAGO - an endeavor to revitalize existing Fil-AM UM churches, & National Association of Filipino Methodists (NAFAUM) in the US.

Though intimately involved in the lives of thousands, leaving a legacy of inspired, friends, students & parishioners, Pastor Gel's greatest love was his family, wife, children, & grandchildren. Much of his retirement was spent caring for his grandchildren, tending to his garden, & writing inspirational reflections. He began each day with God while tending his garden. His garden was a reflection of his devotion to his Creator God. He took pride in babysitting his grandchildren daily, from driving them to school & reading to them, to teaching them our Lord's love.

A voracious reader & writer, he enjoyed fishing, camping, traveling & coffee from all parts of the world. He loved the University of Kansas Jayhawks, Kansas City Royals, and the Kansas City Chiefs Football Team. Self-taught in ukelele, he formed a group, and enjoyed performing at churches, senior living communities & children's birthday parties.

Reverend Samson's legacy lives on through his wife of 45 yrs, Emma, daughter Pristine (Sophie), son Domini (Bernadette), granddaughters (Bianca and Brianna), his daughter Bea (Brian), grandchildren (Zion, Czab, & Czef), his mother-in-law Mely, younger brother Rico, & a loving extended family & community. His legacy will continue through the many lives he has influenced.

### **THE REV. EDWIN HOWARD SATTERWHITE 1928 -2021**

The Reverend Dr. E. Howard Satterwhite departed this earth to be with his Heavenly Father on July 21, 2021. The legacy that he leaves proves worthy of that reward.

Born January 16, 1928 in Beaverdam, Virginia, Howard was the youngest son of Maurice and Grace Satterwhite. After graduating from high school, he served in the United States Navy during World War II. He came home to marry his high school sweetheart, Agnes Flippo. They moved to Richmond, Virginia where he worked as an accounting clerk for Crawford Manufacturing and started a family.

It wasn't until 1962 that Howard received the call to the ministry. He, his wife and three children moved into the parsonage at Mount Pisgah United Methodist Church where he became a full time minister and student. He would complete his accounting degree from Richmond Professional Institute, and a bachelor's degree from Union Theological Seminary. Howard would later attain a master's degree from Scarritt College and a Doctor of Divinity from Drew University.

Howard faithfully served the people of the Virginia United Methodist Conference for the next half century. He pastored churches from Midlothian to Parksley, Lawrenceville, Hopewell, Alexandria, Great Bridge, Mechanicsville and Spotsylvania.

Howard was a true believer in the God-centered family. For this reason he was actively involved in the youth programs wherever he served. Young people were drawn to him, and he never passed up an opportunity to spend time with them. The true impact of his ministry became apparent upon his retirement. One individual recently wrote upon Howard's passing that their time spent together at camp placed him upon a path to the ministry. In addition, many of these young people returned to him to perform their weddings. He was honored to do so even when his body was failing, having to hold onto a table to remain erect. Recently Howard and Agnes celebrated their 70th anniversary. At the party when asked how many wedding ceremonies Howard had performed, dozens of hands were raised.

Howard never let his own family forget the importance of a close-knit family. He insisted upon family gatherings

even as we drifted further apart geographically. Each of these events was always prefaced by a mini sermon. These are memories that will live on.

Upon retirement Howard built a workshop and took up woodworking. He particularly enjoyed restoring old furniture. He often said that his favorite part was stripping the piece down to see the beauty of the wood underneath. In part that was his philosophy of life, too. So many have said that he helped them see light during their darkest times.

After a battle with cancer, Howard passed away at home, surrounded by his family. We are reminded of Paul's letter to Timothy: "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.*" (2 Tim 4:7). Few among us can make that claim, but Howard surely can. God Speed in your next journey. You will be missed but not forgotten.

*—Submitted by his daughter, Sue*

### **THE REV. EMERSON LEVAN SHELTON 1937 -2021**

Emerson Levan Shelton was born in Buckingham, VA and was the second oldest child of Harvey Allen Shelton and Elise Shelton Gray. He was the best man who ever lived, but we may be biased.

Emerson was married to Sandra (Sandy) Shelton for more than 59 years. He loved her more than anyone might be able to imagine and he treated her like the Queen that she is. His daughters, Deidra and Karen were both his favorites and he loved them so much. They never doubted his love for God, his wife, or them. He provided for them, he believed in them, he advised them, he cheered for them, he led them, he spent time with them, he went to every single recital, he told them jokes, and he scrutinized their boyfriends with proper skepticism.

Emerson accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior at the age of seven. The Jerusalem Baptist Church in Buckingham was his very first church home, and his faith grew there. In his community, he served as a substitute teacher, school bus driver, thespian, choral and band member (he played the clarinet), babysitter to his little sisters, assistant shopkeeper in his family's general store, and so much more.

Emerson went to Virginia State College and graduated with a degree in Business Administration. After graduation, he married Sandy and they moved to Germany where Emerson was a Captain in the US Army and was a helicopter pilot. After his military service, Emerson worked as an executive for Reynolds Metals Company until his retirement. In response to a call from God and love for people, he served as a Lay Minister in the United Methodist Church. He pastored a four point charge in Fluvanna and Albemarle Counties in Virginia, until the mandatory retirement age of 71.

Emerson and Sandy joined Richmond's First Baptist Church in 2016 and Emerson served as a Sunday School teacher.

He loved God from the core of his being. He loved people with everything he had. He did not believe in hate. He loved to be outside. He loved plants and outer space. He loved food. Any kind of food. He did not love to cook. He loved traveling with Sandy and their friends, Bill and Nancy Keuhl. He loved his family. He was exponentially proud of his grandchildren and he loved them fiercely. He was funny, even if you didn't notice.

Our hearts and minds, bodies and souls resonate with Love. Emerson "got" this. He knew that Love is what we were made for.

Emerson always ended every phone call, every visit, every voice mail by saying, "I love you. OK?" He never skipped it. During the last weeks of his life, he took it up a notch and started saying, "I love you so much. OK?" If he were standing here today, I'm sure it's the one thing he would want you to take away from knowing him, and he'd want you to share it with the world, "You," he would say, "are loved, So much."

*—Submitted by his wife, Sandy and daughter, Deidra*

### **THE REV. GEORGE WILLIAM STEWART 1937 - 2022**

George William Stewart was born February 20, 1937 in Washington D.C., son of Gilbert V. and Lavina A. Stewart. George grew up mostly in Oakton, Virginia where he was active in the Oakton U.M.C. in many ways including the youth program. Other activities, included but not limited to were, Boy Scouts, 4H, and National Reserves. It was during his time in Oakton that he felt the Lord call him to ministry.

Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina is where he began higher education. He served many U.M. Churches as a student in South Carolina. Later he completed his degree at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia. In 1964 was



assigned his first appointment in the Virginia United Methodist Conference, Lynchburg District / Montvale Charge. Montvale is where he met and married the love of his life Mary Alice Lam, and they had two children Lisa Maria and John William Stewart.

During his 37 plus years in the Virginia United Methodist Conference these appointments were held:

Lynchburg District-Montvale Charge- 4 churches  
 Farmville District- Cumberland Charge- 5 churches  
 Rappahannock River District- West Matthews Charge-2 churches  
 Ashland District-St. Peters U.M.C. Charge -1 church  
 Danville District- Stanleytown U.M.C. Charge- 1 church  
 Portsmouth District -Waverly U.M.C Charge 2 churches  
 Danville District-Stuart U.M.C Charge-1 church  
 Farmville District- Jamieson U.M.C. Charge- 1 church  
 Rappahannock River District- Montross Charge-2 churches  
 Winchester District- Cedar Grove Charge-3 churches

George retired in 2001. He and Alice retired home to Montvale, Virginia, where they were close to their children and grandchild Tuesday Dawn Stewart. George had a big heart. He loved his God, family, community, and country. Throughout his life he loved the people, volunteering in community as a firefighter, E.M.S. work, Missions (local, state, world), Scout Leader, Walk to Emmaus and more. All while caring for his family, and church family. He also worked in mediation, substitute taught and served two churches well into retirement.

Even when faced with Parkinson's disease he continued to witness, and love others. On February 20, 2022 just a day past his 85th birthday while surrounded by family, God reached down his hand and called George home, where praise God there is no Parkinson's disease. Survivors include:

George's lovely and devoted wife Alice L. Stewart  
 Daughter Lisa Maria and husband Scott Shrecbhlse  
 Son John William Stewart and friend Nlbbi Nichols  
 Granddaughter Tuesday Dawn Stewart  
 Brother Carl O. Stewart and wife Sylvia  
 Numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

George's and legacy is one of faith and love. May we the survivors take heart always growing in faith and love through Christ Jesus.

*– Submitted by wife, Alice and daughter, Lisa*

## **THE REV. WILLIAM DABNEY WALTERS 1930 - 2021**

The Reverend William Dabney Walters died on May 20, 2021 at the age of 91. He was born in Charlottesville on Feb. 14, 1930. After his parents' divorce he was sent to Miller School, a farm military school. He later moved to Lynchburg and graduated from EC Glass High School. He worked a short time at the shoe factory, since there was no money for college. He served in the Army in the Korean War and earned the Purple Heart and Silver Star medals. He lost 70% of the use of his right arm, and spent many months in the hospital. As a disabled veteran he was able to attend Lynchburg College on the GI Bill, and graduated in 1955. There he met his future wife, Carolyn Smith, and they were married after her graduation in 1956. They moved to Durham, NC, where he earned his MDiv from Duke University in 1958.

His first appointment was the Bethany Charge: Bethany, Indian Hill and Early's Chapel. He moved to Toano and served Mt. Vernon and Tabernacle. He continued on to Trinity, Poquoson; St. Mark's, Petersburg; Monumental, Portsmouth; District Superintendent, Rappahannock; Larchmont, Norfolk; and retired six years later as D.S. of the Norfolk District. He was elected twice to the Southeastern Jurisdiction Conf. and served on many Conference committees, and the Board of Trustees of VA Wesleyan College. In retirement he filled in at Susannah Wesley, Gloucester; and First Christian in Norfolk.

Dabney came into this world on Valentine's Day which was totally appropriate for the man he was. He touched so many lives throughout his ministry. He was famous for his hugs and his impish sense of humor. He got to know all his neighbors while riding his bike and walking their dogs. He enjoyed traveling, cruises, and watching sports on TV (especially Duke basketball). He was a true Methodist - he loved a covered dish dinner.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Carolyn, and two children, Wendy Roane (David) and Richard (Julia); and four grandchildren, Brandon Roane (Robyn), Ashley Rogers(Mike)

Bonnie White (Nick) and Matthew Walters (fiancee Rebecca). He also had seven great- grandchildren: Amy, Sam, and Ezekiel Rogers; and MaryElla, Harris, AnnaLeigh Roane; and Hazel White.

Dabney lived a full life. His heart finally gave way and he had a quiet death at home--a fitting end for a servant of God.

*–Submitted by his wife, Carolyn*

### **THE REV. EDWARD FRANKLIN WILKINS 1950 - 2021**

Edward Franklin Wilkins of New Market, VA realized the hope of resurrection Friday, November 5, 2021 at Cabell Huntington Hospital, Huntington, West Virginia.

He was born February 11, 1950, in Alexandria, VA. Ed was the son of Gilbert Franklin Wilkins and Zelma Lee Trivett Wilkins. Both preceded him in death.

On December 10, 1977, he married Frances Darlene Affleck, who survives him. Together they raised four beloved children; R. Michael Thweatt, Jr. (Joyce), Janene Thweatt Whitmore, Paul Jared Wilkins (Morgan Bentley), and Erin Wilkins Fletcher (Henry). The family grew welcoming grandchildren, grandchildren at heart and great-grandchildren. Grandchildren include Kellen Lee Breeden (Samantha), Glenna Leigh DeHart, Amelia Ryan Wilkins, Alexander Payne (Jescah Thompson) and Allison Vicente Rodriguez. Great granddaughters, Thea Rue and Riley Ann Payne were born October 19, 2021.

Ed is survived by two sisters, Phyllis Hughitt of Palm City, Florida, and Barbara Wilkins Bonner of Reston, VA. He was predeceased by one sister, the Reverend Mary Wilkins. Ed is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews.

Ed was a graduate of George Mason University and Wesley Theological Seminary. He was an ordained Elder in the Virginia Annual Conference. During his ministry as a United Methodist Pastor Ed served several churches in the Virginia Annual Conference: Macedonia/Montague Ave., Winchester District; Bon Air (Associate), Richmond District; Shiloh (Montpelier), Ashland District; Nelson United Methodist, Charlottesville District; Mt. Jackson/Quicksburg, Harrisonburg District; Mt. Horeb, Harrisonburg District; White Chapel/Oak Level, Harrisonburg District; Mt. Olive/Shiloh, and Donovan Memorial/Cherry Grove, Harrisonburg District. In retirement Ed filled pulpits in a several churches in Shenandoah County.

Ed's calling to preach began as a 5-year-old standing behind a clothes hamper in his childhood home. His ministry grew over the years. He loved serving as a counselor at Camp Highroad during his college years, youth ministry as a young pastor, and decades in the local church setting. He was gifted in the grace of pastoral care, faithfully visiting and caring for people and sharing God's gift of love with them.

Ed's calling to serve God culminated in the ministry of peacemaking. He was the founder of Apple Valley Mediation Network and served as its Executive Director for 20 years. Ed remained active as a Certified Mediator by the Virginia Supreme Court until his passing.

A Service of Death and Resurrection was held Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at Macedonia United Methodist Church in the Winchester District. Macedonia UMC was Ed's first appointment and the location of his wedding to his wife of nearly 44 years. Ed's ministry came full circle over the decades as his body rests in the Macedonia Cemetery. Ed's smile and joy for living is missed in this earthly realm, but lives in the memories of all who knew and loved him.

*–Submitted by his wife, Darlene*

### **THE REV. RAYMOND FITZHUGH WRENN 1918 - 2022**

On June 25, 1918, as the WWI Battle of Belleau Wood wound down with American soldiers showing their mettle under fire, Raymond Fitzhugh Wrenn entered the world, born to Winnie and Raymond N. Wrenn in pacific and rural Herndon, VA. The oldest of three sons, the first marker event in his journey of faithful discipleship occurred when he was baptized on June 1, 1919, at Centreville ME Church, South.

A voracious reader, at 15 Raymond graduated valedictorian from high school to attend American University on full scholarship, where he was involved in the school newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine, and graduated with a degree in English with minors in German and Education.

Raised in the Congregational Church, in the late 1930s he was drawn to the Wesleyan tradition as the 1939 merger of

three denominations (MEC, MECS, and MP) led to the formation of The Methodist Church. The next significant event in his faith journey came as he discerned a call to ordained ministry, leading him to Emory University's Candler School of Theology, where he received his divinity degree in 1942; he was ordained Deacon in 1942 and Elder in 1944. For 80 years, Raymond would have a profound, lasting impact on the Virginia Conference.

In his first 11 years of ministry, Raymond served the five-point Fauquier Charge, Christ (Norfolk, where he was founding pastor), Wesley Memorial (Richmond), Crozet, and Bethany (Purcellville). In those 11 years, the congregations he pastored received 561 new members, 40% of them new Christians. Another life-changing event during these years occurred while at Crozet, when he met and married Rena DeShazo Lynch, who would be his life partner for nearly 60 years; together they raised their children, Richard, Elizabeth, and Katharine (at his death Raymond's family had broadened to include a daughter-in-law and son-in-law, three grandchildren, two step grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and two step great-grandchildren).

1953 brought new change to Raymond's ministry, when he was appointed as the first Executive Secretary for the Northern Virginia Board of Missions, with primary responsibility for developing new congregations in underserved communities in the burgeoning DC suburbs. He served in the capacity until 1968, when he was appointed Associate Program Director for Planning for the Conference. He served in this capacity until retirement in 1982, guiding and facilitating new church starts, Conference mission funding and activities in communities facing missional challenges and opportunities, and providing positive leadership for the innovative Churches in Transitional Communities project, and the Revealing Christ campaign to fund new congregations across the Conference. His leadership was recognized in many ways, including being awarded an honorary doctorate by Randolph-Macon College in 1980.

In the words of a colleague, "There was never a church anywhere in the Virginia Conference that he did not know, could not comment on, or had not been by." Raymond's familiarity with the churches of the Conference was also aided by his keen interest in Conference history. For many years he served on the Board of the Conference Historical Society. His anecdotes about people, events, and congregations of the Conference were an endless source of entertainment, inspiration, and delight for many; he was a founding member of the Ethelbert Drake Society, a semi-secret and completely comical organization none took seriously. More importantly and interestingly, in William Warren Sweet's *Virginia Methodism: A History*, Raymond served as editorial secretary, chauffeur for the illustrator, and posed as "George Whitfield Preaching at Bruton Parish Church" and "The Pensive Sinner."

"Retirement" was defined loosely for Raymond. Throughout his ministry, he was an advocate for young clergy and took a keen interest in their lives. He once advocated for new clergy to be paid \$100,000 their first year, with the salary decreased by \$10K each year until it leveled at \$50,000, because in his opinion, "That's when clergy really need the money." His encouragement for the next generation of clergy continued once he ended his life under appointment. For 13 years, he served as Adjunct Professor of Field Education at Wesley Theological Seminary—two of which he served as Director. He continued to serve in many offices, boards, and agencies in the church and community. His experience, knowledge, and creativity were especially critical in the restructuring of the Virginia Conference from 18 districts down to 16; the absence of his wisdom and institutional memory in this current season of restructuring is grievous. And this year his poetic, serene, and calm prayer to begin sessions of the Annual Conference, a task he performed annually since 2009, will be greatly missed.

Raymond died peacefully in the presence of family and in the hope of resurrection on February 10, 2022. His service of Death and Resurrection on February 17, 2022, was led by Revs. Jason Micheli and Levi Stroud at Annandale United Methodist Church, where he and Rena were wed in 1949 and celebrated their 50th anniversary in 1999. Following the service, his seven cherished and long-ago recruited pall bearers (Raymond was quite the planner) bore his body to its final resting place, next to his beloved Rena in the Annandale Church cemetery.

Scholar, musician, advocate for justice, generous philanthropist, poet, man of wit, dapper wearer of bowties, delighter in family, friend: a great tree has fallen in our forest of faith, friendship, and family. We will not see his like again. How blessed we are that once, he walked among us.

*—Submitted on behalf of the Wrenn family by The Rev. David M. Hindman*