

"Yet we have this assurance: Those who belong to God will live; their bodies will rise again! Those who sleep in the earth will rise up and sing for joy!"

– Isaiah 26:19 NLT

Persistent • Patient • Consistent

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY

OF
COACH
Charles E. Miller

March 27, 1930 – November 8, 2020

*"Charles led the way to
integrating sports in Central
Florida, and integrating sports
coverage, a feat he never
planned or expected..."*

[from the Orlando Sentinel / Mike Bianchi]

Sunday, January 10, 2021 • 1:00 PM

A Virtual Memorial Tribute

HOME CHURCH

Washington Shores Presbyterian, Orlando, Florida 32751

Rev. Erika Rembert Smith, Pastor

Interment – January 9, 2021

Glen Haven Memorial Park, 2300 Temple Dr., Winter Park, FL 32789



A Legacy™

a heritage: character qualities, memoirs . . .

COACH

Charles “Charlie” E. Miller

A TIME TO BE BORN

Charles Edward Miller, the son of Benjamin Watterson and Martha Anna Miller, was born in Louisville, Kentucky on March 27, 1930. Charlie, as he was affectionately called by his family and friends, was the namesake of both his maternal and paternal grandfathers, Charles Johnson and Edward Miller. He was the youngest of five children (3 boys and 2 girls) to be born into the family.

A TIME TO GROW

In 1937 Charles’ family planted its roots in a neighborhood in Louisville called “College Court” which sat directly across the street from a college. Today College Court might be considered a nice project of sorts that boasted of well-manicured lawns, where you were taught early on NOT to walk on the grass. But even more important to a young Charles, the college had a basketball court that kept the boys in the community actively shooting hoops daily, which unbeknownst to them at the time, planted seeds for a hope-filled future. And yet there was something more that helped shape Charles’ life as a champion to many—his grandparents. Charles was blessed with having both sets of his grandparents nearby, contributing greatly to his being raised in an environment that consistently instilled in him values of family, faith, education, respect, honesty, and kindness.



A TIME TO LABOR

Ben Miller, Charles’ dad, worked full time at a chemical plant that made medicine, and during the summer Charles would work with his dad at the plant. He’d also work weekends with his dad and older brothers, cleaning a large Presbyterian Church in town. Growing up in the Mid-West in the 40’s had it’s challenges for the Miller family—there wasn’t an abundance of toys like some of the other kids—but they always had plenty of food and clothes, and Charles always maintained a spirit of gratitude.

In high school Charles hustled to obtain an odd job or two during the summers that ranged from working at Fort Knox as an assistant to a special cook for the National Guard during WWII, as a stock boy at Tom McCann Shoe Store, picking apples in an apple orchid, to shutting off water mains at an old Army camp. But his favorite summer job was serving as a busboy at Churchill Downs. He and his friend served the guests in

the Millionaire’s Club, where they got to see all the horse races, and all of the famous and infamous people who attended the Kentucky Derby.

A TIME TO LEARN

A healthy work ethic was established early on for Charles, which included his academics. In junior high school the walk was *almost* 2 miles one-way, but Charles never minded this as he and his friends would get to talking, and before they knew it, they were on location. The local high school he attended was only 10 blocks away, so life was sweet . . . just like his grandmother Melvania’s apple and blackberry cobbler, which he *loved*.

A TIME TO TEAM UP

In his high school of 2000 students, the only Black high school in Louisville, he tried out for and made the basketball team. Charles’ mother forbade him to play football, so he kept statistics for the football team. The school’s sports teams traveled extensively, from Memphis, Tennessee to Charleston, West Virginia. At the end of his high school career, Charles was offered 5 scholarship opportunities to play basketball. He chose to attend Indiana State University, less than 3 hours away, where he doubled-majored in Industrial Arts and Physical Education.

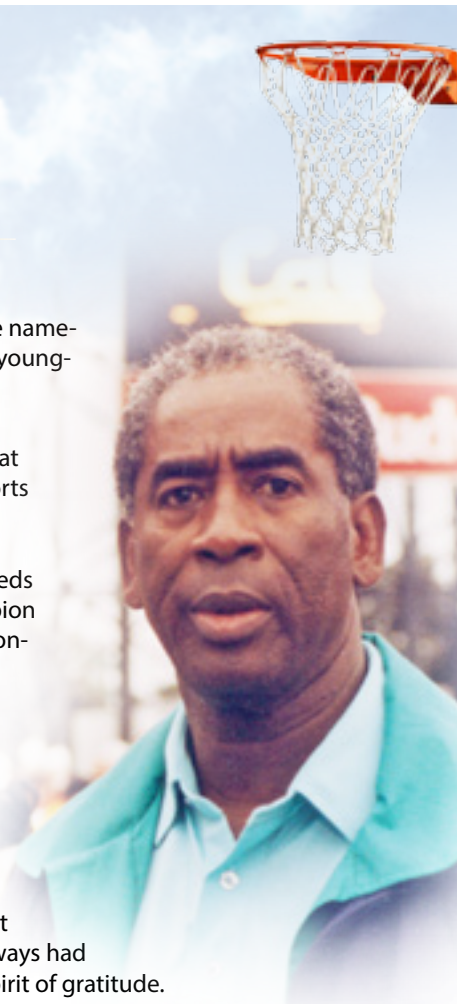


A TIME TO LOVE

At Indiana State University Charles stayed focused, did very well in his studies, and was blessed in his efforts. One of the most significant blessings he experienced in college happened unexpectedly when he and several friends decided to attend a freshman mixer. That afternoon he was introduced to the love of his life, Ms. Margaret Louise Greer, an Education Major out of Crawfordsville, Indiana.

After several conversations and one date, within one week he asked her to wear his ring, and the rest is history. She found him to be very “gentleman-ly” and he found her to be attractive. He admired her nice shoes, and he found that being around her made him feel very “comfortable.” (Plus, she could REALLY cook . . . AND bake [smile].)

Charles credits marrying his wife as the underlying strength of his achievements. Even though she herself was also a local pioneer for racial integration – she was the 1st tenured African American Professor (PhD) at Florida Technological University (now UCF) – Margaret was perhaps most well-known as a vocal cheerleader for Charles and his teams, on and off the court.



A TIME TO SERVE

After Charles graduated college, he was settled in his plan to marry Margaret, but first he needed to become gainfully employed. Through a strategic series of orchestrated “coincidences,” a job offer as a Head Basketball Coach came through Principal Frank Otey of Hungerford High School, which later became Wymore Technical High School, in Eatonville, Florida. Charles served from 1954-1970, coaching some of Central Florida’s finest.

A TIME TO COMMIT

Charles and Margaret married on August 7th, 1955 and after honeymooning in Cincinnati, Ohio, the two settled down in Central Florida, embarking on what would become very successful careers in Education for each of them. From the very beginning of their marriage there were no intentions to remain in Florida, but remain they did, as the blessings continued to flow, starting with a bouncing baby boy they named Gregory, followed by a beautiful baby girl they named Jennifer, but affectionately called “Jiff”

A TIME TO EXCEL

Charles, or “Charlie” as he came to be known in Florida, enjoyed many successes and accomplishments on many levels that include:

- sixteen years of secondary school teaching
- being the first African American Head Coach at a predominately Caucasian high school (Edgewater HS) in Orange County, and the first at a predominately Caucasian college in Florida (Valencia Comm. College)
- having the opportunity to coach and mentor many outstanding young men for 25-plus years
- Head Coach for 2 State HS Basketball runner-up teams AND two High School CHAMPIONSHIP teams
- being the Special Projects Director for Florida Citrus Sports, leading the negotiations to relocate the annual Florida Classic to the City of Orlando, serving as game coordinator for the Classic for 5 years
- developing FL Citrus Sports MVPs Summer Camp to reach local kids from disadvantaged backgrounds, surrounding them with positive influences; the backbone of his program were the 4 “A’s” – Academics, Athletics, Attitude, and Achievement

Central Florida has seen its share of champions over the years, but few were as influential as Charlie Miller.

There are a myriad of newspaper articles about Charles Miller’s career in Education that *“led the way to integrating sports in Central Florida, and integrating sports coverage,”* a feat he never planned or expected, but are both now a heroic part of his legacy. (¹Mike Bianchi/Orlando Sentinel)

However, the portion of his life he did plan to be his VERY BEST at was also accomplished with a true champion’s heart, as he sought to be the best husband and father he could be. Charles loved his family and enjoyed every moment he had with them. Charles left this world having given his best, evident in the way he loved and cared for each of them, individually as well as collectively.

A TIME TO SHARE

Some of Charles’ past memberships and community activities included:

- Alpha Phi Alpha
- National Association of Basketball Coaches
- Downtown Athletics Club or Orlando, Board of Directors
- Hungerford Trust Foundation, Board of Directors
- Orange County Sheriff’s Independent Citizens Review Board
- Weekends of Greater Orlando

Charles lectured at professional clinics and workshops sponsored by Stetson University, Rollins College, and Florida High School Activity Association, just to name a few, and received honors, awards, and recognitions far too numerous to name.

A TIME TO THRIVE

Charlie was totally committed to being *present* in every relationship God blessed him with. Through he and Margaret’s 65 years of marriage, educational triumphs, and a growing family, Charles was *present*, or in other words, he *was there*. Throughout his daughter Jennifer’s long and courageous fight with multiple sclerosis, he *was there*.

He *was there* for Greg and (Greg’s wife) Cathy. He *was there* for his granddaughters and for his great grandsons. Favorite activities included eating waffles (especially with great grandson Logan) and delivering containers that were full of coins; this was a tradition that originated with his granddaughters . . . and then passed on to his great grandsons.

Charles *was there* for his church family, he *was there* for his students, and he *was there* for his community. As with any true champion, Charlie *was always there* WHENEVER he was needed.

A TIME TO MOURN

Charles Edward Miller was preceded in death by his:

daughter – Jennifer Charmaine Miller (2006); **parents** – Benjamin Watterson and Martha Anna Miller; **brother** – Benjamin Miller, Jr. AKA Ben Jr.; and **sisters** – Fannie Miller and Sue Johnson.

He leaves behind to cherish many memories of a life well-lived: **his bride** of 65 years – Dr. Margaret G. Miller; **brother** – James R. Miller; **son** – Gregory C. Miller (Cathy); **granddaughters** – Morgan Greer (Antonio) Gonzalez, Evan Nicole Miller, and Courtney Miller (Aaron) Moo; **great grandsons** – Logan & Ari Gonzalez; and a host of **nieces, nephews**, other relatives, and many friends.



A Virtual Memorial Tribute for Charles Miller

OFFICIATING

Rev. Erika Rembert Smith, Pastor

Washington Shores Presbyterian Church – Orlando, Florida 32751

Video Composition – Cartwheel Productions / Dallas Anioce • Videos Produced by jab designs

1:00 P.M.

ORDER OF SERVICE

JANUARY 10, 2021

Violin and Cello Prelude – “Lydia’s Reflection” Eric and Colin Jacobson

Visual Reflections from Charles Miller – “Churchill Downs”

Greetings and Opening Prayer Pastor Erika Rembert Smith

Lessons from the Scripture

Old Testament

New Testament

Visual Reflections from Charles Miller – “It was the Shoes!”

Special Tributes

Nelson Browning (friend/peer)

Bill Buchalter (retired sports reporter / Orlando Sentinel)

A Visual Legacy jab designs

Special Tributes

Commissioner Robert Stuart (student athlete)

Bishop Ronald Kimble (student athlete)

Musical Tribute Norm Lewis

Words of Comfort Pastor Erika Rembert Smith

Final Visual Reflections from Charles Miller – “The Important Things”

Special Directions and Closing Prayer Pastor Erika Rembert Smith

Intermission

A Virtual Reception with the Family

Life Well-Lived

A life well-lived
is a precious gift,
Of hope and strength
and grace,
From someone
who has made our world
A brighter, better place.

It's filled with moments,
sweet and sad,
With smiles and sometimes tears,
With friendships formed
and good times shared,
And laughter
through the years.

A life well-lived
is a legacy
Of joy and pride
and pleasure,
A living, lasting memory
Our grateful hearts
will treasure.

– AUTHOR UNKNOWN

In Appreciation

For each uttered prayer, for each lovely card, for each beautiful flower, for all your comforting words, your visits and your many acts of kindness, we say THANK YOU!!

Please accept our sincere gratitude and know that your love and support have meant more to us than words could ever express.

1 Corinthians 2:9.....

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

– the Family

Mitchell’s Funeral Home, Inc.

Directors



“The Home That Faith and Service Built”

501 Fairvilla Rd., Orlando, FL 32808

(407) 298-0703

www.mitchellsfuneralhome.com

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