

TIME

HONORING A MAN OF GOD

But those
who wait on
the LORD
shall renew
their strength;
they shall mount
up with wings
like eagles; they
shall run, and
not be weary;
they shall walk,
and not faint.

— Isaiah 40:31

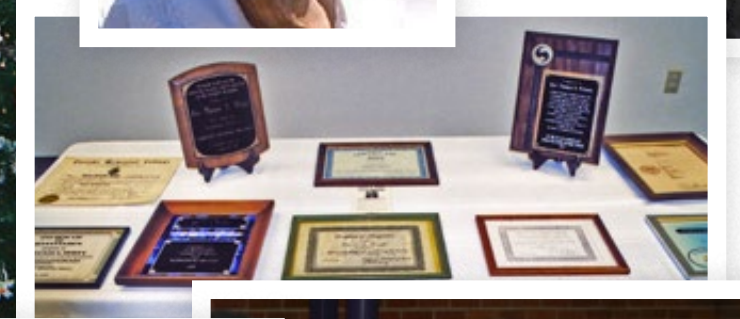
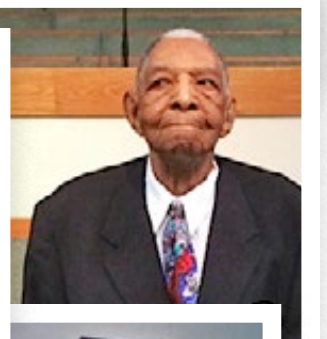
REVEREND DR.

Thomas A. Wright
SR.

IMMEDIATE FAMILY



"THE WORLD DOES NOT HAVE ROOM FOR MEDIOCRITY!"



Reverend Dr. Thomas A. Wright, Sr.

SUNRISE – March 26, 1920 / SUNSET – December 9, 2014

Thomas Alexander Wright, fifth son of Albert and Roxie Shy Wright, a poor but proud farming family, was born March 26, 1920 in Mansfield, Georgia. His family moved to Boynton Beach, Florida when he was a young child. While in the 8th grade, his father passed away which caused him to seek work in order to help support the family. He married at a young age the love of his life, Affie Mae Clayton. Together, they worked diligently to provide a better life for themselves.

In 1942, he left Boynton Beach and moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His plan was to find work and save enough money for both of them to attend college. In 1944, while in Philadelphia, he was drafted to the United States Army. During his tour of duty, he spent time in England, Japan, New Guinea and the Philippines. By this time, his family moved back to Florida and had grown to include the two oldest children (Patricia and Thomas Jr.). Longing for her helpmate, Affie was known for making a daily visit to the Red Cross to complain that she needed her husband at home!

Eventually, her prayers and wishes were answered. In January of 1946, Thomas returned home from the war to Boynton Beach, Florida. He returned home with an intensified desire to receive an education. Shortly thereafter, he was recruited by Florida Memorial College which was located in St. Augustine, Florida at the time. They were looking for veterans interested in attending college and serious about receiving a college education.

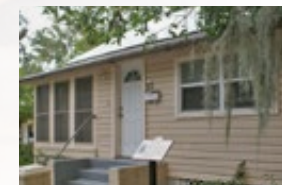
Later in 1946, Thomas, along with his family moved to St. Augustine and he enrolled at Florida Memorial College. He spent his time studying, being a husband, father and working a part time job. In addition to all of these responsibilities, he was also listening to God's calling for him to join the ministry. He maintained his focus on school and it reflected in his grades. He finished at the top of his class.

After graduation, he was offered a scholarship to attend Howard University Divinity School. He was reluctant to accept, as this meant he would again be required to leave his wife and now four children (Patricia, Thomas Jr, Philoron and LaVon) behind. After the unselfish encouragement from his wife, he accepted the scholarship and enrolled at Howard University, located in Washington, D.C. He graduated with high honors, and was President of his class in 1954.



Thomas returned to St. Augustine and began teaching at Florida Memorial College, while working a part-time job in a restaurant. His desire was to become a pastor of a church. God granted his desire in 1954, when he was called to St. Mary's Baptist Church.

At that time, St. Augustine, the oldest city in the United States was very segregated, and extremely racist. Very quickly, Reverend Wright became engaged and increasingly active as a leader in the civil rights movement. He helped organize sit-ins, demonstrations, and boycotts to highlight the need for social justice and equality for African-Americans. Under his leadership, the African-American community in St. Augustine organized efforts to combat racial oppression and built the infrastructure for what would become a highly public movement in 1964. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1964 joined with the city's civil rights leaders and brought with him his nonviolent supporters from throughout the nation.



Eventually, his passion for equality caused friction among community members, resulting in his wife, Affie losing her teaching position. After receiving several death threats, Reverend Wright joined by his devoted wife, Affie, and their four children, accepted the offer to become pastor of the Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Gainesville, Florida. The congregation was overjoyed to have Reverend Wright as their leader and he served Mount Carmel from 1962-2006.

Shortly after coming to Gainesville, Reverend Wright served as President of the Alachua County Branch of the NAACP and continued the fight for equal rights. As President of the NAACP, he filed a school desegregation suit against the Alachua County School Board, naming his daughter, LaVon Wright (Bracy) as plaintiff. In 1965, LaVon Wright became the 1st African-American to graduate from Gainesville High School.



Other notable accomplishments include assisting the development and establishment of the first child-care center (Palmer-King) for black children in Gainesville in 1968. Also, when his appeal to local government for affordable housing went unheeded, Rev. Wright led Mount Carmel Baptist Church in applying for financing from the federal government to build Gardenia Gardens, a 100-unit low-income apartment development. He continued to be a trailblazer by purchasing the first home in an all-white community and integrating The Forest Ridge subdivision in 1970.

In the 1970's he spearheaded the effort to build the Alavic Shopping Plaza, which showcased African-American businesses. He also began teaching part time at the University of Florida and became a part time Chaplain at the Veterans Administration Hospital during those years. He believed in working multiple jobs, several sources of income, frugal spending, and conscientious saving.

In 1984 the Mount Carmel Baptist Church relocated to NW 8th Avenue to a new state of the art facility with great parking and visibility in the community. The new sanctuary was a proud moment for him and Affie, the congregation, and community as a whole.

In 1989, his wife Affie passed away. It was a major adjustment for him, yet he was thankful that she lived to experience the new sanctuary that they together worked so hard to see become a reality.

Rev. Wright added significantly to his legacy of leadership and achievement with the publication of *thirteen* books, including his autobiography, "*Courage in Persona.*"

– Continued on the next page





August 10, 2002, Reverend Thomas A. Wright, joined the select company of three other African-Americans previously honored by the University of Florida, with an honorary Doctor of Public Service Degree.

In 2003 the church built a family life center, which was named *The Reverend Thomas A. Wright Family Life Center* in his honor.

Reverend Wright never forgot the struggles of his life and the opportunities that he was given to get a quality education. He helped established the East Side Student Assistance, Incorporation which presently provides scholarships for low-income students in Alachua County.



He believed in giving back and thus established endowments for scholarships at Florida Memorial University, now located in Miami, Florida, and Howard University in Washington D. C.

His third endowment was funded this year. In February 2014, he donated \$50,000 to Santa Fe College to create an endowment for the Reverend Thomas A. Wright and Affie M. Wright Family Scholarship. Alachua County Commissioner Lee Pinkoson matched Wright’s contribution to the endowment, bringing it to \$100,000.

Proceeds from the endowment will fund scholarships for students, who live in low-income, multi-family housing units in Alachua County.

On November 25, 2014, his beloved Florida Memorial University bestowed upon him an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.



Reverend Wright had many titles: a Baptist preacher, humble servant of God, social activist, civil rights leader, entrepreneur, educator, devoted father, husband, and author. He will be sorely missed. His wise counsel and reservoir of history is irreplaceable.

To cherish his memories he leaves:

his **children** – Patricia Murray (Reginald), Philoron Wright (Cottie), LaVon Bracy (Randolph);

daughter-in law – Detra Wright;

sisters-in-law – Rovenia and Helen Wright;

special friend – Laghretta Bell;

grandchildren – Kevin A. Murray (Janine), Keith G. Murray, Marc A. Murray (Donna), Reginald W. Murray, Jr. (Brandi), Erik V. Murray (Monique); Regina P. McCurdy (Michael); Thomas L. Murray, Monica Squires (Frederick), Sabrina Fleming (Donald); Thomas A. Wright,III. Phyllis Tyson, Philoron Wright Jr. (Marcie), Patrick Wright (Shonta), Kelly Thompkin, Randolph Bracy, III (Alfreda); LaVon Bracy Davis (Adrian);

great grandchildren – Kevin Murray, Jr, Caylah Murray, Kalandra Murray, Michael Murray, Marcus Murray, Octavius Murray, Caleb Murray Venicia L. Charles, Velitra Murray, Kiera Murray, Gaston Murray, Hannah Murray, Rayne Murray, Parker Murray, Christopher Gallaher, Morgen Murray, Davean Murray, Ellis McCurdy, Elyse McCurdy, Darian Murray, Ebony Stewart, Marshaena Tyson, Marcus Tyson, Kionna Rainelle Squires, Deshaun Bria Squires, Tyree Devaughn Squires, Frederick Louis Squires, III; Donald Shafik Fleming, Brianna Detra Fleming, Sadonna Joann Fleming, Preston Phillip Isaiah Wright, Joshua Thomas Elijah Wright, Mason Patrick Wright, Kameron Alexander Wright, Zyhir Thomas Wright, London Dream Bracy, Brooklyn Love Bracy;

great-great grandchildren – Darius Hood, Jamarian Tullis, Victor Stewart, Victoria Stewart, Mariah Tyson, Leyla Murray, Xavian Charles, Xachary Charles Nya Murray, and a hosts of **nieces, nephews, cousins, godchildren, and friends.**

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

Mount Carmel Baptist Church

2505 NE 8th Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32445

Officiating – Rev. Destin Williams, Pastor

Eulogist – Rev. Randolph Bracy, Jr. – New Covenant Baptist Church of Orlando, FL

Musicians – Dr. Kevin McBride and Ms. Joy Banks

11:00 A.M.

DECEMBER 13, 2014

ORDER OF SERVICE

Processional – “*My Faith Looks Up to Thee*”

Invocation Dr. Thomasenia Adams
Showers of Blessings Harvest Center – Gainesville, FL

Opening Hymn – “*Great is Thy Faithfulness*”

Scripture – *Psalm 27* Rev. Isaac Brantley

Ministerial Reflections
Reverend Adrian Taylor – Springhill Baptist Church
Reverend Willie Mayberry – Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
Reverend Kevin Thorpe, Pastor – Faith Baptist Church
Elder Veronica Campbell – Mount Carmel Baptist Church
Bishop Rudolph McKissick, Jr. – Bethel Institutional Baptist, Jacksonville

Church Family Reflections
Deacon Gussie Butler / Deacon Edward Niblack
Mr. Bruce Smith, Esq. / Minister Laghretta D. Bell and Mrs. Loretta D. Hughes

Selection – “*Amazing Grace*”

Resolutions and Acknowledgments..... Mrs. Barbara Smith and Mrs. Doris Crews

Community Interest
Eastside Student Assistance, Inc. (ESSA) – Mrs. Deborah Jackson
NAACP – Mrs. Evelyn Foxx

Family Expressions
Grandchildren Marc Murray and Reginia McCurdy
..... Phyllis Tyson, Philoron Wright II, and Patrick Wright
..... Sabrina Fleming and Monica Squires, Randolph Bracy III and LaVon Patrice Davis
Nephew..... Michael Wright

Tributes from the Community
Mayor Ed Braddy – Gainesville, FL / County Commissioner Lee Pinkoson – Gainesville, FL
Dr. Jackson Sasser, President – Sante Fe College
Mr. Kareem Coney, Assistant to the President – Florida Memorial University

Heartfelt Expressions of Love
Mrs. LaVon W. Bracy / Mrs. Detra Wright / Mrs. Patricia A. Murray / Mr. Philoron A. Wright

Solo Dr. Samuel Lamar Wright

EulogyRev. Randolph Bracy, Jr.

Blessing of the Food..... Rev. Thomas Fields

Recessional – “*Let the Church Say Amen!*”

REPAST

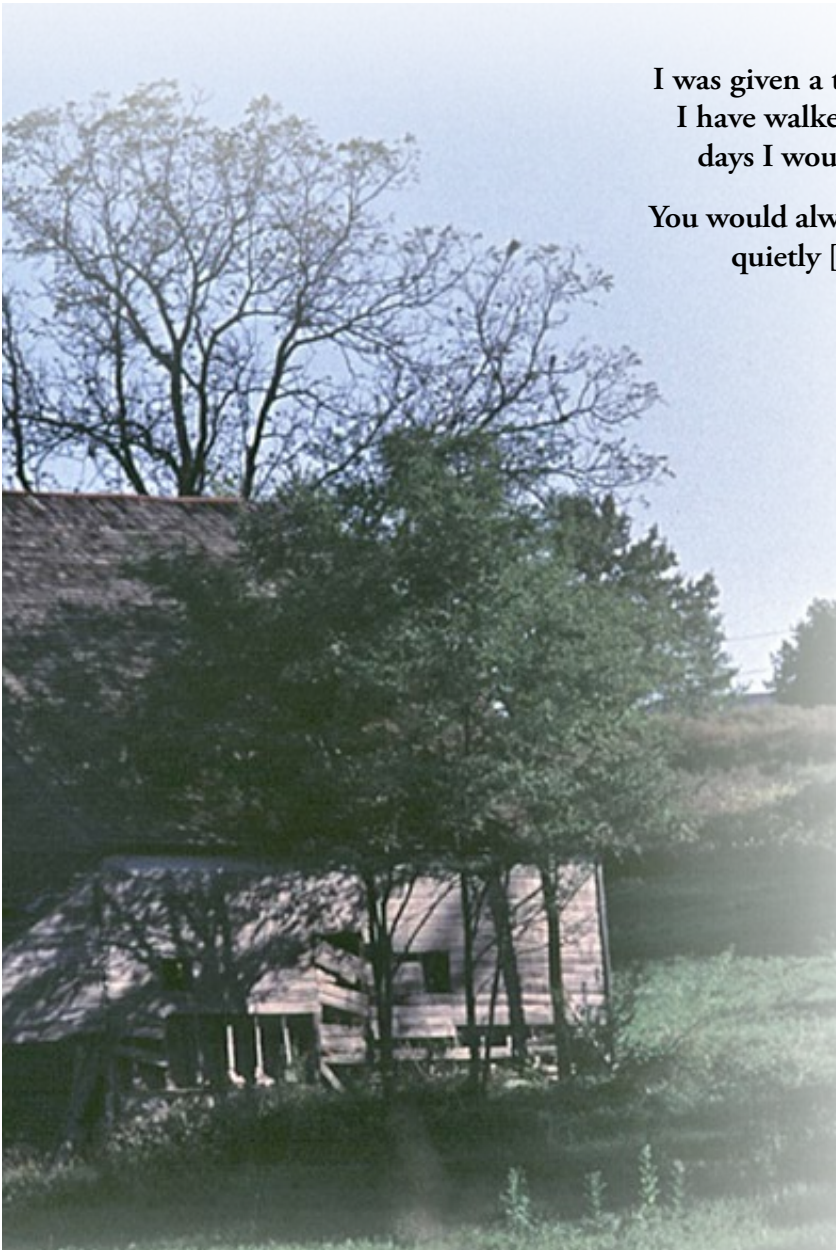
Please join the family immediately after the service in the Thomas A. Wright Family Life Center for lunch.



A large collage of numerous small photographs featuring various individuals and families, likely related to the deceased. The photos are arranged in a dense, overlapping layout. Some photos show individuals in formal attire, while others show families in casual settings. The collage includes portraits of men, women, and children, as well as group photos of families and friends. The overall theme is a collection of memories and relationships.



This House Is Old – I’m Going Home



I was given a temporary house to give life and experience life.
I have walked among the good and not so good. There were
days I would be sad, then you’d come; and wow, was I glad!

You would always try to make me see how I should be. I would
quietly [sometimes] sit and grin, hoping you would quit.
You would visit me and make me laugh, and
then we would talk about the past.

As time ticked on, my house started to fall.
I checked to see where were the flaws.
The doctor would touch and feel,
and I would say, “Are you for real?”

He would smile and say, “Take these pills.”
But deep inside I knew it was only a quick fix.
I had grown weak with too many leaks.
My stay was finally growing to a close.

I fought in spite of the odds.

And even though this house had decayed,
it was YOUR love that kept me each day.
I appreciate your efforts to fix my house.
You may not see me in my house anymore,
but, trust me, I am not all that far away!

My spirit will dwell in a place prepared for me,
with a NEW body – wait ’til you see!
Our Father is kind – He freed my mind.
He left the door open for me; I’m
going home where I need no key.

One day we’ll meet again. So until
then, take care of YOUR house
before YOU spring a leak!

GOING HOME

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall ALL be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in VICTORY!”

– 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him....wherefore comfort one another with these words."
— 1 Thess. 4:14,18

Pallbearers

Erik Murray	Kevin Murray
Thomas Murray	Thomas A. Wright, III
Keith Murray	Randolph Bracy, III
Patrick Wright	Philoron Wright, II

Honorary Pallbearers

Reginald Murray, Sr.	Reginald Murray, Jr.
Dr. Kevin McBride	Judge Stephan Mickle
Rev. Lindsey Gardner	Rev. Nathaniel Ford
Deacon Board of Mount Carmel Baptist Church	



Entombment on Monday, December 15, 2014 at 11a.m.

Boynton Beach Mausoleum

1611 South Seacrest Boulevard – Boynton Beach, Florida 33435

Appreciation

We, the family of the late Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Wright, Sr., truly thank God for *each and everyone of you!* Your outpouring of prayers, love, kindness, and support have sustained us throughout the passing of our loved one.

Special thanks to the Mt. Carmel Family and the Veterans Hospital Staff for their care and support of our father.

We take comfort in 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

Chestnut Funeral Home, Inc.

18 N.W. 8th Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32627

(352) 372-2537

MeaningfulFunerals.net

"Promising to serve your family with dignity, respect, and professionalism"

