

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF

Leslie Holder

ASSIGNMENT RECEIVED
OCTOBER 19, 1944

ASSIGNMENT COMPLETED
MAY 5, 2025



CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF

Leslie Clarence E. Holder

SOUTHAMPTON SDA CHURCH | MONDAY, JUNE 9, 2025 | 4:00PM

OFFICIATING

PASTOR KELBY MCCOTTRY | DR. KENNETH MANDERS
PASTOR DAMON HENDRICKSON | DR. CARLYLE SIMMONS

ORDER OF SERVICE

- Prelude**Owen Simons, *Organist*, and
Samone Outerbridge, *Pianist*
- Processional**.....Clergy and Family
- Opening Prayer**Dr. Carlyle Simmons, *St George's Church*
- Opening Song***"Sweet by and By"* Hymn # 428
- Welcome & Words of Comfort**Pastor Kelby McCottry, *Nephew*
Deerfield & Salem Churches
- Scripture Reading**
Revelation 21: 4L. Landon Holder, *Grandson*
- Song of Comfort***"I Have Fixed my Mind"*
Lloyd Holder, *Nephew*, & Daniel Hill
- Introduction to the Legacy**Pastor Kelby McCottry
- Message In Song***"The Midnight Cry"* Michael Spencer, *Soloist*
- Life Sketch**.....Dana Lightbourne, *Niece*
- Special Song***"We Shall Behold Him"* Joy Barnum, *Soloist*
- Eulogy**Pastor Damon Hendrickson, *Pastor*
Southampton SDA Church
- Benediction**.....Dr. Kenneth Manders, *President of the*
Bermuda Conference, SDA
- Recessional**Conrad Roach, *Trumpeter*

INTERMENT

St. Anne's Church Cemetery, Southampton

Thank you for your support today. Continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

The family requests this time to reflect on Leslie and his legacy.

THERE WILL BE NO WAKE.

PALLBEARERS

COUSINS

Carlos Allers
Xavier James
Alvin Woods
Jaden McCottry

NEPHEWS

LeVar Holder
LeGary Holder
Dwight Paul
Kevin McCottry
Patrick Haney (*in-law*)

FAMILY & PERSONAL FRIENDS

David King
Shawn Smith
Detroy Bean

OPENING SONG

SWEET BY AND BY

There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar;
For the Father waits over the way
To prepare us a dwelling place there.

Refrain

*In the sweet in the sweet
By and by (by and by),
We shall meet on that beautiful shore;
In the sweet in the sweet
By and by (by and by)
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.*

We shall sing on that beautiful shore
The melodious songs of the blest,
And our spirits shall sorrow no more
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.

To our bountiful father above
We will offer our tribute of praise;
For the glorious gift of His love
And the blessings that hallow our days.

FAVORITE BIBLE TEXT

Romans 12:18

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone (NLT)

*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you,
live at peace with everyone. (NIV)*



OBITUARY

On October 19, 1944, the life and legacy of a remarkable man, Leslie C. E. Holder began. His arrival may not have made headlines, but for those who came to know and love him, it marked the start of a life that made a powerful and lasting impact—A life of legacy.

Leslie Clarence Ethelbert Holder was the firstborn son of Leslie and Rosalie Holder. He would later be joined by three younger brothers—Lloyd, Loderick, and Leonard. Unfortunately death claimed his father when Leslie was just 13. Later, his mother married Stuart Anderson, Sr. and from that marriage a fourth brother, Stuart Jr., was born.

During the summer of 1964, Leslie was smitten when he met Sheila Wilson at a Sabbath luncheon at the home of a mutual friend. He commented on how skinny she was, a remark that didn't impress Sheila in the slightest. But one year later, Leslie transferred from Oakwood College to Atlantic Union College and their friendship continued to grow and blossom. On July 28, 1968 this friendship culminated in marriage which lasted two months short of 57 years. To this union was born two remarkable sons: Leslie Jr. and Sheldon, who gifted them two fabulous daughters-in-law, Maria and Kelly. From those unions have emerged five remarkable grandchildren: Landon, Michael, Darby, Levi, and Kerith.

Leslie is predeceased by his parents Leslie Holder, Sr. and Rosalie Anderson, step-father Stuart Anderson, brothers Lloyd (Leona) and Leonard, uncles Rupert (Avis), Christopher Paul Sr., Carlton Paul, and Roderick Paul, and his aunt Winifred Adams.

We remember Leslie for the following legacies:

LEGACY OF EDUCATION

Perhaps the most pervasive and extensive of all the legacies of Dr. Holder is that of Education. From a very young age the importance that he placed on his own

education was evident. When he completed his primary education at Central School (now Victor Scott) he was near the top of his class. However, because he completed primary school early, he was too young to enroll in Berkeley Institute immediately and had to wait until the following Fall to enroll. At Berkeley Institute he continued to excel and again graduated near the top of his class.

His commitment to education then led him to Oakwood College, where he arrived with little more than his summer earnings, a letter addressed to the President (courtesy of Dr. Eileen Musson) and lots of faith. Though he never knew the contents of the letter, he remained forever grateful to Dr. Musson, who encouraged him to further his education at Oakwood College (now Oakwood University).

Leslie thrived in college. He loved the challenges of academics. He initially majored in science, aspiring to become a dentist. However, financial constraints forced him to pivot to accounting, thus ensuring he could complete his studies in four years. While at Oakwood, he formed a lifelong friendship with his roommate, Paul (Dr. Paul Brantley). After their sophomore year at Oakwood, the two friends transferred to Atlantic Union College, where Leslie gained another lifelong friend in his new roommate, Elton Lester.

After earning his Bachelor of Science in Accounting from AUC in 1966, Leslie returned to Bermuda and began his professional journey as an accountant at American International. He also had a brief stint as a math teacher at Bermuda Institute—likely inspired by Sheila, who had started teaching there. Though not yet ready to make a career change, this experience whetted his appetite for the teaching profession.

When a vacancy for an accountant became available at the Bermuda Mission (now the Bermuda Conference), Leslie accepted the role, managing the books for both the Mission and Bermuda Institute. He dedicated 13 years

to the Mission, eventually becoming the first Bermudian to serve as the Bermuda Mission accountant and then treasurer. He completed his tenure at the Bermuda Mission in 1981.

At a time when distance learning and remote classrooms were not as common as they are now, Leslie studied full time in Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University for two years, leaving behind his wife and two pre-teen boys. It was difficult for him to leave his young family behind because family was very important to Leslie. However, he sacrificed and set his personal comfort aside in order to complete this next phase of his education. While at VCU, he broadened his circle of friends further. Some of the strongest bonds were with Joe Holmes, Shirlene Staves, Barbara Blackston, Dollene Trott-Smith, and Drs. Campbell and Howell. Leslie successfully completed his MBA at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Though he dreamed of becoming a Certified Public Accountant, residency complications and job restrictions did not allow for this to occur. Although disappointed, he beamed from ear to ear for weeks, when his son, Leslie Jr., achieved that milestone, becoming a CPA 15 years later. After working for several years at Fidelity, Leslie declared, *"I'm tired of making rich people richer,"* and he returned to his true passion—higher education. He embraced this endeavor with gusto. He first began teaching evening classes at Bermuda College, and quickly transitioned to full time teaching. A beloved Business Administration and Marketing professor, Dr. Holder was known for taking a personal interest in the success of his students. He purchased fun stickers and created certificates of achievement to give to them at the end of each class. Many students credit their success to the encouragement they received from him.

During the summers while still teaching at Bermuda College Leslie continued to pursue excellence. He reached the pinnacle of his

educational journey when he received his doctoral degree in Education from Andrews University.

In total, Leslie spent over 20 years lecturing at the Bermuda College. He played a pivotal role in shaping the lives of countless students. In the end, Leslie's career came full circle—concluding where it began—in education. His family was humbled and elated when informed that the Bermuda College flag was lowered to half mast after Leslie's passing.

Throughout Leslie's life he was passionately concerned not just with his own education, but with the continued education of others around him. He was elated when Leslie earned his CPA and when Sheldon graduated with an MD, and a PhD in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics. He also encouraged his wife Sheila to reach an educational pinnacle and earn her doctorate. To Leslie, education, in particular, Christian education, was the gold standard.

Although not a rich man by any means, Leslie would often find two pennies to rub together to help someone stay in school; especially for his beloved Bermuda Institute! As a testament to his love of education he wrote five books: Bermuda Institute—Origin, Philosophy, Growth, Morning Glory (compiled by Sheila and Leslie), A Concordance of the Book of Proverbs, Preparing Your Personal Promotional Profile (for students), and Preparing Your Historical Lifetime Profile (for working adults).

LEGACY OF MUSIC

Leslie had a love of music that spanned his entire life. In his earliest years he often sang with his brothers. Later in life Leslie formed a youth singing group of at least fifty members who sang at Southampton church, and a small select ensemble known as the Elysians, of which he was especially proud.

The King's Heralds was his favorite quartet. Growing up in church he would emulate their style, performing with countless quartets and small groups for various programs both large and small. He was most comfortable in the baritone range, but would venture up and down to tenor and bass whenever the

need arose. As long as he was singing he was happy.

In the field of music, nothing excited him more than finding the opportunity to combine his love of family with that of music. Even a hint of an occasion to form a family group would put a sparkle in his eye and precipitate a mad dash to the piano to search through his stash of musical scores. Family worship would always feature music, and through continuous exposure, his children learned the nuances of a cappella performances. As soon as Leslie and Sheldon were old enough to carry a tune, they learned to avoid his penetrating glare that would inevitably be directed at anyone who dared sing the melody an octave lower and pass it off as harmony!

Leslie loved to pull groups together to sing. The only person exempt from these singing groups was Sheila, who for some unknown reason was not a part of these singing groups. Leslie would rope in distant cousins, in-laws, and even girlfriends and boyfriends of family members. No one was safe. If you visited the house too often, you would find yourself singing in a quartet for some occasion.

While in college, one summer, due to financial limitations, Leslie stayed on campus instead of returning to Bermuda. During that summer he composed a song he entitled "Campus Summer," later renaming it, "The Holder Theme." Years later, Leslie taught it to his son Sheldon, who in turn taught it to his daughter Darby.

Leslie expanded his interest in music to include instrumental classical, and semi-classical musical styles. He has a suitcase full of LPs and at least 100 CDs. Leslie even learned to play the musical saw, which he would occasionally feature in church services—always a delightful surprise to the congregation.

In addition to performing, Leslie served faithfully as Minister of Music at Southampton Church, using his gifts to enrich worship and uplift hearts through the ministry of music.

LEGACY OF CHURCH SERVICE

The church and church work was an important part of Leslie's life. He joined the Hamilton church as a young teen and immediately became involved in church activities. He embraced the Pathfinder Club, and quickly rose through the ranks, eventually becoming one of the first Bermudian Master Guides under the leadership of Dr. Ronald Lightbourne and Llewelyn Wainwright.

It was when Leslie's family joined Hamilton Church over 50 years ago that Leslie's friendship with Bernell Mapp began. Leslie and Bernell sang in quartets together and as teenagers were in each other's homes frequently. Their friendship and connection continued through the various stages of Leslie's life.

Throughout his life, Leslie dedicated himself to the church's work. In his local church he served in various roles as a Sabbath School teacher, Missionary Volunteer leader, youth choir director and church Elder. Whenever the need arose he made himself available for service. His love for God and his church was evident in every aspect of his service.

His "church work" also encompassed his work as an accountant at the Bermuda Mission Office. Due to the lack of modern technology he had to reconcile financial accounts manually which often required extended hours to complete the required tasks. There were no Excel or digital spreadsheets. Everything was done manually. In addition to the accounting tasks at the Office he also had oversight for Bermuda Institute operations.

LEGACY OF SOCIAL INFLUENCE

While at AUC, Leslie learned to play two games that captivated his interest: the card game Rook and the game of basketball. Elton Lester, his roommate at AUC, was pivotal in teaching Leslie how to play Rook and basketball. When Leslie returned to the island he taught the game to a group of friends. They began playing Rook on Saturday nights, and the group became known as "The Rookies." At first, there were 4 families which later expanded to 8 families. They not only played Rook, but the families engaged

in social activities such as camping and picnicking. During these gatherings, church and country politics were often discussed and the game was forgotten. During the holidays, the kids were also involved and had their own fun activities. The rookie children, now adults, are still friends today.

Leslie also found countless opportunities to bring his new sports interest—basketball, into his social circles. Sunday mornings would often find him on the outdoor court at Southampton Church, Port Royal (now Death Valley), or even Warwick Church. His consistency drew in friends, family, and neighborhood kids by the dozens. He played regularly and competitively into his 60's, "schooling" unsuspecting players ¼ his age! Consistent with his other legacy pillars, he wanted to share this love to all those around him. He was known to spend his own money to maintain the courts at Death Valley, Southampton Church, and Parsons Road—mostly just replacing nets and removing debris after storms. Sometimes, however, he would go so far as to repaint the lines and replace the hoops! Before there was the BI gym with the indoor court, Leslie was responsible for establishing the outdoor court adjacent to the Southampton Church parking lot.

Later, Leslie began having Super Bowl parties for men only. These parties were professionally catered and continued annually for 20 years. He also made a small mini golf course at his house for the children and instituted cricket games. He also made croquet courses in the yard for family and friends to play.

Leslie's social influence extended to his community. He embraced this commitment with seriousness. He ran as a candidate for the UBP in Pembroke. He chaired the

Consumer Affairs Board and was an active member of the Emergencies Measures Organization. He later chaired the EMO for the Bermuda Conference.

Leslie was a collector of many things, much to Sheila's dismay. He amassed over 100 neckties, their styles and colors varied over the years. These ties were displayed in an extra room, hung up like curtains all around the room. He was an avid historian. He gathered information about countries, their locations, their philosophies and their leaders. He collected over a hundred Time magazines, (only the ones he deemed important). Many national geographic magazines were also in his collection of things to read and keep. Then there were the photos! Leslie had an entire drawer of printed photos and albums depicting places where he and Sheila had travelled and their many family events.

LEGACY OF FAMILY

Leslie was very focused on family. He did everyday things that showed how proud he was of his family and how much he loved them. For example, he commonly wore plain white T-shirts when working outside in the yard. Without any fuss or fanfare, he took a Sharpie and wrote a small phrase on each of his T-shirts. The phrases read, "Sheila's Roommate," "Leslie's Dad," "Sheldon's Father," and similar sentiments.

When it came to playing basketball, He was ready, willing, and quick to play against ANY basketball team, as long as he was playing on the same team as his sons, Leslie and Sheldon. In fact, he named any team that included his sons and himself, "Pest Control."

Leslie, along with Sheila, were the number one fans for their children. Whether it was intramural sports, quiz competitions, band,

steel band, brass ensemble, singing in the choir, preaching for church, or school plays and projects, the event did not matter. He was there to encourage, support, and aggrandize the event. If you talked to him, you would think it was an international event of the greatest importance and caliber. He treated his daughters-in-law and grandchildren the same way.

Even after Leslie and Sheldon were out of school and well established in their careers, Leslie (the father) painted two paintings and hung them up in the boys' old bedroom. One painting showed assets and liabilities, in honor of Leslie's career as a CPA, and the other painting showed PIM-1, the name of the gene on which Sheldon's cancer research is focused. In fact, when Sheldon graduated from Loma Linda University Medical School, Leslie wore a full suit. But under the suit he didn't wear a shirt and tie, he wore a T-shirt that he bought from the bookstore that said "Loma Linda Dad." Just two weeks ago, Leslie and Sheldon did the same thing at their children's high school graduations.

That was Leslie. The non-social media influencer. The present, in-the-flesh, write about it, talk about it, create it, execute it, nurture it, fix it, pass it on, influencer.

Now that his assignment is complete, Leslie leaves to carry his rich legacy of education, music, social influence, church, work, and family including: his wife Sheila; 2 sons, Leslie and Sheldon; 2 daughters-in-law, Maria and Kelly; 5 grandchildren, Landon, Darby, Michael, Levi, and Kerith; 2 brothers, Loderick (Sonia) and Stuart (Sandy); 1 sister Leslene (Leon) Somersall; 2 aunts, Magdalene Paul and Harriet Nisbett; "adopted" daughters Trina Smith and Juliet "Etta" Pearman; nephews, nieces, cousins, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, and friends.

**In all these people
the life and legacy of Leslie C. E. Holder, EdD, JP lives on.**

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A Loving Wife's Tribute

There is an inadequacy of words to express my feelings of love to a giant of a man who impacted my life intimately as my life partner. For almost 57 years (minus two months) we navigated our marital journey, and cemented our bonds of love. How can I pack the immeasurable memories, joys, challenges and trials into a few words of tribute?

Our life was a journey that began in nineteen sixty-three culminating in marriage in 1968. Leslie expressed his love in many ways. Whether it is buying me a new car, parking it outside my office window with a big red ribbon wrapping it as a gift package - (surprise! surprise!) purchasing me a dress or shoes; buying me a favorite candy bar, or bringing me the first loquat or cherry of the season; the message was always the same, ***"I Love You Sheila"***.

Leslie was kind and gentle. He was an introspective, prudent and intelligent man. He would wake me up in the middle of the night when the moon was full to share its majestic beauty, we'd go on rides to see the awesomeness of the ocean or on picnics for two, spread a blanket and reminisce. Leslie loved his homeland, remarking that tourists paid lots of money for what he could experience for free.

He often said, ***"Marrying you was the best decision I've ever made."*** I was his girl; he was my guy. He repeated this right up to a week or two before he died. He lived out his principal text: **Romans 12:18** "If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men." He was a man of peace. God gifted you to me for that I am very grateful.

Therefore, I reflect with much gratitude and love his kindnesses and expressions of love to me throughout our years together. Our family was his most important mission. His devotion to us was God-blessed. He was a wonderful spiritual partner who encouraged me with my goals and with my relationship with Jesus. I will deeply miss my life partner, and the dreams, joy, camaraderie and companionship we shared. Sleep now in peace my dear husband. I'm confident God will raise you up to hear the words 'well done' in that 'great gettin' up morning'. I will see you again.

Sons' Tribute to Their Father

When we were young boys, one of our favorite activities was to sit on our father's shoulders. Sometimes we would be at a parade, or watching a race, or doing an activity where the crowd prevented us from being able to see. Our father would lift us over his head and sit us on his shoulders. From on his shoulders we could see everything that was happening. From on his shoulders we were taller than most, if not all, of the people present. From his shoulders we were secure and comfortable.

Eventually we grew too big and heavy to sit on our father's shoulders at parades and road races. But that didn't stop him from lifting us up. In education, he fostered a thirst for knowledge that has extended to his grandchildren. In music, together we sing from soprano to bass, and play 7 instruments (and counting). In church we have both an Elder as well as a church treasurer. His social legacy has also been passed down to his kids and grandkids, from the basketball court to the card table and everywhere in between. And of course the accomplishments of the family are cheered to the hilt. This year we had 3 graduations! We continue to stand on the shoulders of our father. In high school, college, and beyond, his shoulders lifted us above obstacles, provided vision and perspective, and made us secure.

The shoulders of Leslie C. E. Holder are formed from the muscles of discipline, hard-work, perseverance, goal-setting, humility, helping others, and prayer. These shoulders bolstered us physically, socially, academically, professionally, and spiritually. It is true that we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors – men and women who for hundreds of years have worked hard, and fought hard, to afford us the opportunities we have today.

Not all of these significant ancestors are ancient. May the world never forget Leslie C. E. Holder. We thank God that we were able to sit at his feet, and stand on his shoulders.

Leslie S. and Sheldon L. Holder

A Tribute to Leslie from the Wilson Siblings

Today, we celebrate, honor, and remember a remarkable man—Leslie C. E. Holder. He was a devoted husband, a loving father, a cherished grandfather, and a wonderful brother-in-law. But he was more than family; he was a true friend—a beacon of strength and wisdom whose presence illuminated our lives.

Leslie had the rare gift of expressing his thoughts and feelings with eloquence, capturing the essence of life in words that resonated deeply. He engaged with us, weaving narratives filled with love, humor, and insight.

As the patriarch of the family, he was a guiding light for his children, grandchildren, our children, and many of his nieces and nephews. He instilled in them values of kindness, perseverance, and the importance of family. He cherished every moment spent with his loved ones, both near and far. His dedication to family took him across borders as he traveled to visit and celebrate their accomplishments. He shared laughter and wisdom, creating precious memories we will carry forever.

In business, Leslie was a force to be reckoned with; driven, passionate, and committed. His work ethic was impeccable. He believed in the power of hard work and built a legacy that will continue to inspire generations of our family.

His keen mind and adventurous spirit led him to achieve great things. He co-authored the devotional book *Morning Glory*, wrote a history of Bermuda Institute, and aspired to share his reflections on the Book of Proverbs.

Leslie loved his country deeply. On many occasions, especially weekends, he delighted in sharing history lessons about the unique wonders of our island. He toured like a tourist, taking us along for the adventure! And when we visited, he would play on his beloved, ancient piano—somehow, it was always perfectly in tune.

He was a fierce debater, not merely for the sake of winning, but to engage others, challenge ideas, and seek truth. His love for life was contagious, and he embraced every moment, encouraging us all to live fully and passionately.

Though today we feel a deep sense of loss, we celebrate a life beautifully lived. We are grateful for the time we had with him and for the indelible mark he left on our hearts. His legacy lives on—in the great memories of times well spent, the stories he told, the lessons he imparted, and the love he so freely gave.

Rest in peace, dear brother-in-law. You will always be remembered, deeply missed, and forever Loved.

Until that great day...

Karen, Patricia, Paula, and Samuel



A Tribute To Dr. Leslie Holder

Former Bermuda College Faculty Member

It is with great sorrow and deep respect that I pay tribute to my former colleague, my friend, my brother in Christ and my prayer warrior, Dr. Leslie C. E. Holder, on behalf of the current and former employees of the Division of Business and Hospitality at Bermuda College.

Dr. Leslie Holder was a dedicated Business Educator who served Bermuda College for over 25 years. His passion for his subjects, whether illuminating the strategies of marketing or unravelling the principles of accounting, was truly contagious. He possessed an impressive command of both the theoretical underpinnings and the practical applications of these disciplines, equipping his students with a well-rounded understanding that extended far beyond the classroom.



Flag at half mast after Leslie's passing.

Dr. Holder had a remarkable ability to create a learning environment that was both positive and deeply engaging. His classroom was a space where curiosity was nurtured, and students felt empowered to participate fully. His creative approach and knack for thinking outside the box transformed potentially dry topics into stimulating and memorable learning experiences.

Dr. Holder was a man whose life and work were firmly rooted in strong core values. He was a man of principle, and this foundation permeated his teaching and his interactions with everyone around him.

Personally, Dr. Holder was not just a colleague, but a friend. Once I moved into administration, he was one of my biggest supporters and encouragers. In fact, Leslie strongly encouraged me to apply for the Dean's position and once I became President would remind me about our lunches at Elbow Beach when he was encouraging me to move into administration. Without that encouragement to move into administration, I am not sure if I would have every applied to become President of Bermuda College and Leslie would often remind me about the role he played.

Whenever I saw Leslie on or off campus, I could be guaranteed a big smile, a hug, and a laugh. And his prayers were always welcomed.

These are the remarks received from some of Dr. Holder's other Bermuda College colleagues:

Dr. Trescott Wilson, a former colleague and Dean, fondly recalls Dr. Holder's *"wonderful sense of humour, a quality that fostered connection and made learning enjoyable"*. He also recalls *"Dr. Holder as a fair individual with an unwavering focus on his student; needs and their success. He held a genuine respect for every student and in turn, earned the deep respect and admiration of those he taught"*.

The current Dean and former colleague, L'Tanya Roberts, shared *"he was a supportive teammate and a role model of humility and integrity. He was always generous with his time and insight, and I thank him for his friendship, example and many years of dedicated service"*.

Dr. Barbara O'Shaughnessy, a former colleague who took over teaching Marketing after Dr. Holder retired said, *"I found Dr. Holder to be a kind and gentle soul who was always ready to assist, whether it be with colleagues or students. He was a loyal Bermuda College promoter and diligent about his course material. My deepest condolences to his family and friends."*

Darlene Emery, a former colleague and part of "the trio" (Darlene, Duranda, & Leslie) shared, *"Dr. Holder was well respected by faculty and students and had an outgoing personality. As a fellow faculty member, I would seek his opinion on current Bermuda affairs, world events and business happenings. I will never forget our lively debates. I also sought spiritual advice from Leslie as he demonstrated daily his love for God and his family."*

Although Dr. Holder retired from Bermuda College some time ago, his legacy as a passionate, principled, and student-centred educator endures at Bermuda College. The lessons he imparted, the positive influence he had, and the fond memories he created continue to live on in the hearts and minds of those who had the privilege of knowing him of which I am one.

On behalf of Bermuda College, I extend heartfelt condolences to his wife, Dr. Sheila Holder; his sons, Leslie Jr. and Sheldon; and the entire family.

Rest in Peace my friend, until we meet again.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Duranda Greene

Friend, Former Colleague & Dean

President Emerita Bermuda College

Tribute To My Mentor And Friend

In appreciation, Dr. Saadia Bean

It is with great sorrow and deep respect that I pay tribute to my former colleague, my friend, my brother in Christ and My Tribute to my Mentor and Friend, Dr. Leslie Holder.

I met Dr. Leslie Holder shortly after my baptism while attending High School at Bermuda Institute. My best friend, Sharon Stevens and I, joined the Southampton SDA Youth Choir. Leslie was an amazing director! He knew how to pull melodious music out of young voices and always ensured that we all got home safely after rehearsals each Friday evening. Sharon and I were also babysitters for Leslie Jr. and Sheldon. The Holder home was a happy place for us teenagers!

After graduating from Bermuda Institute and planning to attend West Indies College, as a supportive choir director, Leslie sponsored me with \$100. Since the college yearly fee was \$600, that was a huge donation from him and Sheila!

Leslie's warm personality was always welcoming. When he was the accountant at Bermuda Mission, now Bermuda Conference of SDA, I would stop by for a chat. Even though he was busy, he would give me a few minutes to share whatever was on my heart, offering lots of chuckles and encouragement. In 1977, before marrying my husband, Pastor Detroy Bean, Leslie advised that I be sure he's the one for me because marriage is for a lifetime! Later, the two of them became good friends, so I'm sure he approved of my choice!

God blessed Leslie with remarkable musical talent. He invited me to sing in his groups, the Essence and the Elysians. He wrote the scores of music we had to read, and he produced unusual harmonies that soaked into the soul. Last summer, I reminded him of those melodious years. He replied, "I hope I used my small talent as a blessing to do my part." I assured him that it was not a small talent; it was a significant contribution and he was surely a blessing!

In 1981, my husband and I left Bermuda to attend University. When we returned home for the summer, Leslie and Sheila allowed us to house sit while they travelled. We were so grateful because we had nowhere to live for that summer! What loving support!

Throughout the last 50+ years, we have shared many memorable experiences, too numerous to mention. Thank you, Leslie! We will always cherish your welcoming, warm, supportive, and Christlike friendship!

My Loving Cousin

Leslie, I have probed the recesses of my mind attempting to close in on how and when our relationship reached the point of your being a wonderful Cousin, Friend, and Counsellor. All three came into focus depending on the nature of the conversation.

Spending time with you during those final visits were pleasing and purposeful. We always had great conversations which were layered and filled with advice, laughter, and love. You reminded me many times of my being not just a cousin but a sister.

We traveled to the Mall of America and had a fabulous time. You spoke often of the few days we spent there. It was amazingly wonderful especially when we saw in the distance a group of individuals traversing their way toward us laden with large bags and boxes. We laughed and said, "*Here come some Bermudians*", and they were.

My last thoughts of you will remain transfixed in my vision. You opened your eyes and flashed me a beautiful smile. That encapsulated a beautiful unspoken powerful conversation. Thank you my dear cousin.

REST IN PEACE

Your cousin, Lynette Woods

To the Family of Dr. Leslie Clarence E. Holder

I met Leslie in 1964 at Oakwood University, where we were students, and again in the nineteen-eighties at Ephesus SDA Church while he was doing graduate studies at Virginia Commonwealth University.

He was affable, industrious, and intelligent. I know he will be greatly missed by family and friends alike. I pray that God will be with the family during this painful period. Remember this: *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning* ~ Psalm 30:5.

Sincerely,
Halstead D. Howell, MD

As a little grade school boy running up and down the halls of the Southampton SDA Church, I always looked up to Leslie. Although he was about nine years older than I, he loomed much larger than the other boys his age. He was tall, strong, articulate, spoke with a deep voice, was good at sports, and sang well.

I had no clue that the day was coming when I would indeed follow in his footsteps. In my early to mid-teens, he formed the Southampton Youth Choir. It was at a time when the “world” became attractive to those my age; however, the Youth Choir provided a stronger attraction, and the great majority of us stayed by the church when there seemed little else to hold us. Of the fifty who comprised the singing group, he selected me as the assistant director to direct some songs. What a boost to my morale and self-esteem. I well remember the uproar it caused among the church elders when the male singers appeared on the rostrum wearing pink shirts during an era when white shirts and black ties were considered the only sacred attire. Leslie was indeed a man ahead of his time.

Around the same time, he was my high school teacher at the Bermuda Institute. His business class was one of only two classes I looked forward to attending. The other was PE (playing football).

Leslie had a passion for sacred music with complex harmonies. He formed the “Elysians,” an a cappella chorale of eight voices to feed that passion. We practiced in Sheila and Leslie’s living room overlooking Hamilton Harbor. He invited my brother, David, and me to sing tenor. The abundance of snacks made the home a hangout even when not practicing.

At that time, Leslie served as the first Bermudian treasurer of the Bermuda Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. A few years later, I followed him as the second Bermudian to become treasurer of the same organization. He provided me with much guidance in my role for the next eleven years. Following my departure to work overseas for the church, he forever urged me to return as president. That is the level of confidence he had in me.

As I reflect on the life and legacy of Dr. Leslie CE Holder, the words of Jacob Collier, 2024, come to mind:

World, oh, world, you’ve been my home,
Now, it’s time for me to go.
Sun did rise and sun did fall,
You’ve been with me through it all.
Always keeping by my side.
Love, oh, love, you’ve been my friend,
Now the road must reach an end.
Nothing stays and nothing lasts,
Time is swift to come to pass, always moving on.
Goodbye, my friend and mentor. Goodbye, until we meet again.

Leslie was steadfast in his commitment to Christ. Now Christ will be steadfast in His promise to Leslie, *“Blessed are those that do His commandments, that they may have the right to tree of life and may enter through the gates into the City of Life”* (Rev 22:14).

Lovingly submitted by Delbert Pearman

In Loving Memory of Leslie Holder

Ephesus SDA Church, Richmond, VA

We at the Ephesus SDA Church, were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of our dear friend, Leslie Holder, an active member of the church during his time in Richmond, Virginia. I, Shirlene (Douglas) Staves, was especially saddened by this loss because he was a fellow Bermudian whom I met long before our time in Richmond. I remember him directing a powerful mass choir in Bermuda that included members from his Southampton youth choir and members of the choir I was a part of at the Hamilton SDA Church. Even then, his musical talent, leadership, and warm spirit stood out.

In the early 1980s, I moved to Richmond and soon discovered that I was one of three Bermudians who attended Ephesus SDA Church; Leslie was another. He was studying for his Masters degree at Virginia Commonwealth University and at times, was invited to preach. He also joined many of us for Sabbath dinners. Dollene Trott was the other Bermudian. My six-year-old daughter was one of her students at Ephesus Jr. Academy. Leslie, Dollene, and I shared simple meals, spiritual discussions, and the deep connection of Bermudian fellowship during his years in Richmond. One conversation with Leslie stands out in my memory more than forty years later. He shared with me how meaningful Romans 12:18 was to him: *“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”* Leslie didn’t just quote it—he lived it. That spirit of peace and kindness defined his life and will remain his lasting legacy in the hearts of all who knew him. Lastly, I remember his quirky sense of humor which had us all chuckling many times once we got his point. He will be sorely missed by his Ephesus family.

Shirlene (Douglas) Staves

When Leslie Holder arrived in Richmond in the early 1980s, he not only pursued academic excellence as a student at Virginia Commonwealth University, but also became an integral part of the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church family. It was through Pastor James Clements that I, Elder Barbara Blackston, was introduced to him. I had the privilege of typing all of his papers while he was pursuing his Master’s degree. During this time, I came to know Leslie as a kind, friendly, and thoughtful individual. His gentle spirit and easy manner won the hearts of many in our church community. Though he returned home after his studies, he remained connected, keeping in touch with many of us over the years. His smile and loving ways will be forever missed. Gone but not forgotten—sleep on, my friend, until we meet again in the soon-coming of our Lord and Savior.

Elder Barbara Blackston

Tribute to a Friend, a Mentor, and a Brother in Christ

While growing up in the Southampton SDA Church, I, Dollene Trott-Smith, always admired Leslie Holder for his love of music and his desire to impact the youth of the church spiritually. I always wished I could have been a part of Mr. Holder's youth choir when I was young. Unfortunately, I lived quite a distance from the church and my dad, being a non-Adventist, limited my church activities to attending Sabbath School and church services. Years later, in the early 1980s, our paths crossed in Richmond where I had begun my teaching career. During this time, I got to know Leslie, not only as a gifted musician and youth leader, but as a scholar and friend. His warmth and humility made him a welcome guest at many Sabbath dinners and a cherished presence in the church. He had a way of making everyone feel seen and appreciated, which explained why the youth at the Southampton church in Bermuda easily gravitated toward him.

Even now, I smile when I think about how much I wanted to sing in his choir. Leslie's love for people, his passion for music, and his spiritual sincerity left a mark on me and everyone he encountered. He will be sorely missed—not just by me, the “wanna-be choir member,” but by all whose lives he touched.

Dollene Trott-Smith,
Huntsville, Alabama

Together, we: Shirlene (Douglas) Staves, Barbara Blackston and Dollene Trott-Smith—honor the life and memory of Dr. Leslie Holder, a friend, a mentor, and a brother in Christ. His kindness, faith and legacy of peace will never be forgotten.

Tribute to Doctor Leslie Holder

Leslie was a great debater. He enjoyed debating with everyone on any subject. As a professor in business at Bermuda College he was respected by students and faculty alike. He was dedicated to his field of work to the extent that he named his house “Trial Balance.” Leslie was a very conservative churchgoer. When he got dressed for Sabbath, he would wear his church outfit until sunset. When he purchased a new outfit or a pair of shoes, he would wear it to church first because he believed that he had to dedicate it to God.

His favorite sport was basketball because he was tall. Leslie thought he had to play because of his height. He would even play through his pain. Leslie was a very loyal friend.

He was someone who did not like change. When Leslie traveled to California he would always stay at the same hotel. I found out that the hotel had a Loquat Tree on its property and every time he came to town the fruit was in season, so I assumed that was the reason why he stayed at the same place.

When he discovered that he might enjoy the life of a seafarer, he and Sheila joined Carol and I on several Caribbean cruises. We would usually eat well on the cruise however upon our return to Naples we had to visit Leslie's favorite restaurant, Andre's Steakhouse.

Leslie was a good friend and a lot of fun. He will be missed by us.

Carol & Clayton McKnight



Elysians '76 - '78





A Tribute to Leslie

Today, we pause to honor a man of grace, discipline, and unwavering faith—Dr. Leslie C. Holder, Sr. His life and labor were not only marked by diligence but deeply rooted in a spirit of service to God and His work.

In an age before modern convenience, Dr. Holder stood firm—faithfully reconciling financial accounts by hand, without the aid of computers or digital spreadsheets.

What some might see as limitations, he met with quiet determination, knowing that his work was more than numbers on a page—it was stewardship of the resources entrusted to the ministry. Dr. Holder held several positions at Bermuda Conference, first as a teacher from October 7, 1968 to June 15, 1969 at Bermuda Institute. He then moved to the conference office and held the position of accountant from June 16, 1969 to December 31, 1976. From January 1, 1977 to June 30, 1981, he assumed the position of assistant treasurer and completed his tenure at the Conference as secretary/treasurer from July 1, 1981 to August 31, 1981.

By the light of late nights and the strength of prayer, Dr. Holder maintained the financial integrity of both church and school operations. His tools were simple: pencils, erasers, ledger sheets, and a typewriter. But in his hands, they became instruments of accuracy, order, and accountability. Every calculation, every correction, was done with care—not for recognition, but as an offering of excellence unto the Lord.

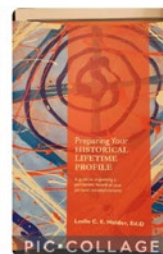
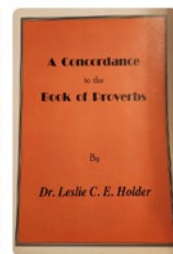
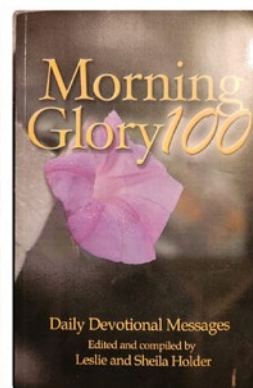
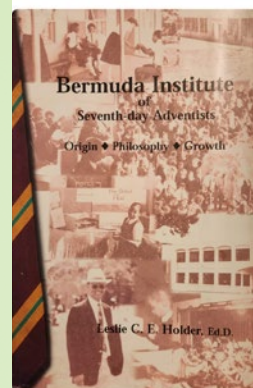
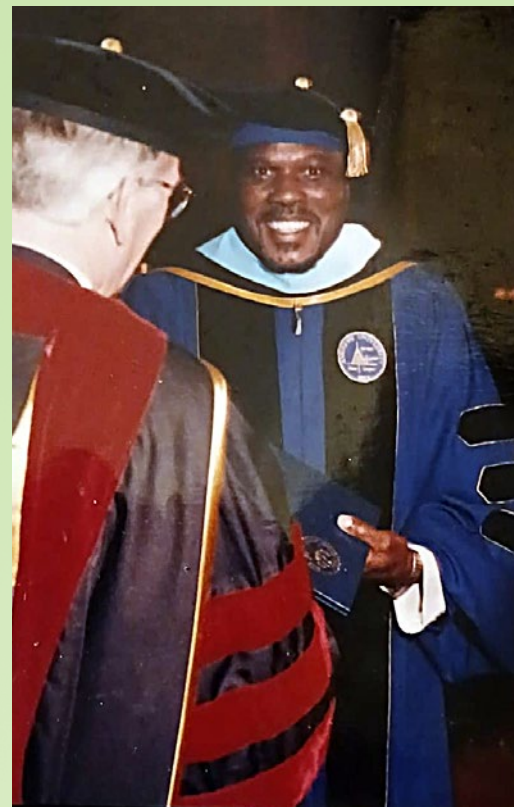
He received and reconciled treasury books with integrity, never cutting corners, always ensuring that God's work was done decently and in order. He managed the intricate accounts of a multifaceted school system, navigating departments and subsidiary accounts with wisdom and grace.

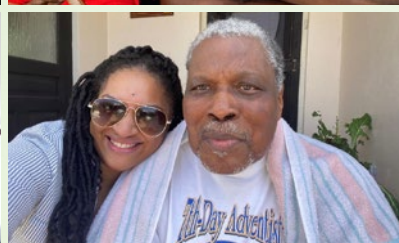
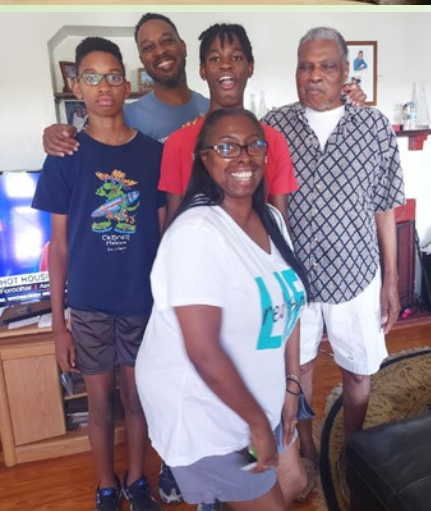
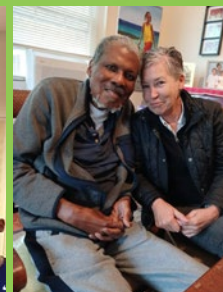
Dr. Holder's commitment was more than professional—it was spiritual. He understood the sacred trust placed in his hands, and he answered that call with faithfulness. His work was quiet, often unnoticed, but in heaven's eyes, it rang loud with purpose.

The Bible reminds us in Colossians 3:23–24, *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.”* Dr. Holder lived this truth. His reward will not only be found in the balance of ledgers, but in the joy of hearing the words, *“Well done, good and faithful servant.”*

We thank God for Dr. Leslie C. Holder, Sr.—for his hands that served, his heart that worshipped through his work, and his legacy that remains a testament to what it means to serve with faith, humility, and excellence. To God be the glory for the life and witness of His faithful servant.

From the Administration and Staff
Bermuda Conference of Seventh-day Adventists







MESSAGES OF GRATITUDE

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all who expressed words of comfort, and showered the family with their expressions of kindness, love, support through prayer, calls, visits and provided food during this difficult season.

Special thanks to Alanda Joaquin who was always giving a helping hand. We thank his team of doctors, Dr. Chris Fosker, Dr. Mary Ellen Taplin, and Dr. Mahesh Reddy. Extraordinary care was provided by the PALS organization during his illness, especially during his last two months of life. Special mention to Leslie's PALS nurse, Merlyn Burgess who made visits almost daily and Dr. Sharon Alikhani, and his caregivers: Noward, Lorraine, Joy, and Ketty.

Recognition is also given to Shawnette Smith of Legacy Consulting Services, Allana Simons of ID Associates (program), Paper Trail (tags), El Shaddai Florist, Owen Simons (Organist), Samone Outerbridge (Pianist), and Conrad Roach (Trumpeter).

We thank D.H. Augustus & Sons Funeral Home for their Professional Services.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to **PALS: Registered Charity 171, HSBC acct 010 263689 001** or the **Bermuda Institute Scholarship Fund: HSBC acct 010 263 689 011 Memo: Leslie C. E. Holder.**

