

Memorial Service
For
Mr. Alexander Hamilton Byers



SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2009
12 NOON

GETHSEMANE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
531 CAMPUS STREET
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

REV. C. FRANKLIN TILLET, JR., PASTOR
OFFICIATING

BISHOP GEORGE E. BATTLE, JR.
EULOGIST

Obituary

know Alexander Hamilton Byers, was to love him. All who had the distinct honor and pleasure to be among his closest circle of family, friends, coworkers, students, and acquaintances, truly believed that he was a **gift** from God. But on Sunday, March 29, 2009, God decided it was time for "Alex" as he was affectionately called, to "be absent from his body, so he could be present with the Lord".

Alex was born in Charlotte, N.C. on October 18, 1922 to Eddie E. Byers, Sr. and Bethel Alexander Byers. He was preceded in death by his parents, two sisters, Mildred Roberta Byers Neal, and Edith Athalia Byers, two brothers, Eddie Elliott Byers of Charlotte, and Thomas Howard Byers of Savannah, Georgia, and granddaughter, Hannah Ruth Collins.

A lifelong member of Gethsemane A.M.E. Zion Church, Alex served his church in many organizations. He expressed his love for God, using his God-given **gift**, his mellow, tenor voice, singing on the Sanctuary Choir for most of his adult life.

Educated in the public schools of Charlotte, he graduated from Second Ward High School in 1939, and worked full time at Dunbar Stanley Photography Studios until he began his studies at Johnson C. Smith University in 1947. Alex' gifts of possessing a strong leadership and ability to mediate led him to Student Government at Smith. In his senior year, he was elected Student Government President. His bright, intelligent mind was a **gift** that enabled him to graduate from JCSU, magna cum laude in May of 1951.

Alexander Byers began his career teaching at a junior high school in High Point, N.C. He further prepared himself to embark upon a career in education, by attending and receiving a master's degree from Columbia University, New York, NY. He then taught mathematics at Northwest Junior High School in Charlotte. Alex discovered his true passion and gift in administration, as he went on to become principal at Amay James and Irwin Avenue Elementary Schools. Two distinct honors for Alex occurred when he was named the first principal of the newly opened J.T. Williams Junior High School, and later Ranson Junior High, where he became the first black principal of a predominately white school. After his stay at Ranson, he led one more junior high Cochrane, before advancing to a higher role. He was appointed to several administrative positions within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District, including Area Superintendent of the Garinger/Independence area. He served in this capacity until his retirement. Because of Alex' true **gifts** to reach and teach students and support and lead numerous staffs, he was appointed by the North Carolina State Superintendent to the state committee to chart a five-year course for education. Alex also served a president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Teachers Association and was chairman of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Principals Association. After his retirement, he continued to provide assistance to his former students.

A member of Pi Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and the Swanks Social Club, Alex was honored for outstanding service from both of these organizations. Other civic affiliations included serving on the Board of Directors of the School Workers Federal Credit Union, now known as the First Legacy Community Federal Credit Union. He was also a member of the Charlotte Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa..

Alex met the love of his life while at Second Ward High School, although Rachel Duren, did not know it then. While he was at JCSU, and she was matriculating at Bennett College in Greensboro, he courted her, and later she consented to be his wife on August 15, 1951. Two daughters were born to this union, Brenda Alexis and Bonita Rachelle, and Alex proceeded to exemplify, yet another **gift**---that of a loving husband and father.

Alex will always be remembered for his brilliant writing skills and his willingness to go out of his way to help students and to support his faculty and staff. During a time when African-Americans were not being hired for teaching positions, Alex readily gave opportunities to those who were qualified.

Alexander Hamilton Byers' **gifts** will long be cherished and remembered by his wife of 57 years, Rachel Duren Byers: two daughters, Brenda Byers Collins (William) of Wilmington, Delaware and Bonita Byers Clark (John) of Virginia Beach, Virginia; two grandsons, Jarrad Alexander Clark and William Alexander Collins; and two granddaughters, Briana Rachel Collins and Jocelyn Alexis Clark; two sisters-in-law, Lois H. Byers of Charlotte and Jacqueline Medford Byers Johnson of Savannah, Georgia; nieces and nephews and a host of relatives and friends.