



James Norman Griffith

January 19, 1926 - May 7, 2015

GRIFFITH, Dr. James Norman.

Funeral services for Dr. James Norman Griffith are scheduled for Monday, May 11, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. at Providence Baptist Church (Rico), 6402 Campbellton Redwine Road, Chattahoochee Hills, GA. Friends may visit the family at McKoon Funeral Home, 38 Jackson Street, Newnan, GA from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 10. Graveside services will be held at 4:00 p.m. Monday at Riverside Cemetery, 1301 Riverside Drive, Macon, GA.

Born January 19, 1926 in Lanett, AL, he was the son of the late Benjamin W. and Mary Norman Griffith. He grew up in Macon, GA and began his newspaper career as a teenager, covering all high school sports for The Macon Telegraph and News. At the age of 18, he became sports editor, one of the youngest sports editors of a daily newspaper in the nation. Before he was 21, he became daily editorial page humor columnist for the Macon papers. His humor column, "The Last Straw," was picked up by General Features Corporation of New York City, national distributor of syndicate newspaper features. He was called "the best writer of humor since Will Rogers." Earning a degree in Journalism/English from Mercer University in Macon, he later became news editor of The Herald in Spartanburg, SC, and then managing editor of the award-winning News-Herald in Morganton, NC. Following his newspaper career, he entered the ministry and graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. After serving four churches-Lakeside Baptist Church in North Myrtle Beach, SC; First Baptist Church of Gray, GA; First

Baptist Church of St. Simons Island, GA; and Beech Haven Baptist Church of Athens, GA-he was elected president and then executive director-treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention. During his administration at the Convention, the Program of Language Missions was upgraded to departmental status with the rapid growth and involvement in this special ministry of the state missions program. The debt on the Baptist Center was paid. The new Searcy S. Garrison Auditorium at Georgia Baptist Assembly, Toccoa, was completed. Six years later a hotel was completed at Toccoa, containing one hundred bedrooms and eleven conference rooms. This hotel was named in honor of Dr. Griffith. The program of Christian Ministries was upgraded to departmental status as Georgia Baptists sought to meet ever-increasing demands of church and community missions needs. A new Royal Ambassador Camp, Camp Kaleo, was constructed near Forsyth and opened its doors to young men and boys for missions education and training. The following year Georgia Baptists provided a new building for the first Southern Baptist alcohol-drug rehabilitation center for men-The Penfield Christian Home in Greene County. Both Camp Kaleo and the Penfield Christian Home were constructed primarily by volunteer labor, a growing stewardship ministry of Baptist Men in Georgia. The Georgia Baptist College of Nursing replaced the former diploma school of nursing and admitted its first students on an accredited baccalaureate degree. Partnerships were established for varying periods of time with Liberia, Panama, New York, and Germany. During Dr. Griffith's 12 years in office, the Georgia Baptist Convention became the top percentage contributor to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program, the state missions offering more than tripled in its amount with the state mission program correspondingly expanded, and significant advances in church planting and language missions were accomplished. From 1981 to 1992, GBC churches grew from 2,977 to 3,282 and membership increased from 1,135,497 to 1,256,562. Dr. Griffith also served in a variety of leadership positions in the Southern Baptist Convention, including terms on the Sunday School Board and Executive Committee. Dr. Griffith wrote a weekly column for The Christian Index for

almost 45 years, and his sermons and writings have been published by Reader's Digest, Pulpit Digest, Proclaim Magazine, North Carolina Biblical Recorder, Baptist Program, Florida Baptist Witness, Western Recorder, Christian Advocate, the Australian Baptist, Open Windows, and many other publications. In addition to three earned degrees, Dr. Griffith was awarded honorary doctorates from Atlanta Law School, Brewton-Parker College, Mercer University, and Truett-McConnell College. The author of four inspirational/humor books - Sure You Can, Stepping Stones, From: Pulpit to Pew, and Looking Up - he has written a humor column for The Newnan Times-Herald of Newnan for over 16 years. In 1949 he married Mildred Roads of West Palm Beach, FL. Other survivors include daughters Doren Yeomans, Rosa Gardner and husband James, and Sunday Griffith; Grandchild Stephanie Hudson; and brother Dr. Ben W. Griffith, Jr. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Macedonian Call Foundation of Georgia, care of Nancy Hall, 8959 Elberta Court, Lake Spivey, GA 30236 or to Developmental Disabilities Ministries at 6320 Amherst Court, Norcross, GA in memory of Dr. Griffith. Condolences can be expressed online at www.mckoon.com

McKoon Funeral Home, Newnan, GA (770) 253-4580.

Cemetery Details

Riverside Cemetery

1301 Riverside Drive
Macon, GA 31201

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY **10.** 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

McKoon Funeral Home
38 Jackson Street
Newnan, GA 30263
(770) 253-4580
care@mckoon.com

Service

MAY **11.** 11:00 AM (ET)

Providence Baptist Church (Rico, GA)
6402 Campbellton Redwine Road
Chattahoochee Hills, GA

Tribute Wall

EO

“ We send our love and prayers to you as we have just learned of Jim's homegoing. He was a dear and precious person, and we loved his wit and admired his scholarship. Blessings and prayers, Ed and Elaine (Herrin) Onley

Elaine H. Onley - May 18, 2015 at 07:15 PM

MS

“ Sunday, I saw your father's obituary in the Athens paper and want to tell you how sorry I am. Your father was an amazing man and touched so many of us, beginning in elementary school for me on St. Simons Island with you. Peter and I visited not too awfully long ago with your dad when he was in Athens for a service for a member of the Beech Haven Church. If your travels ever bring you back to Athens, please let us know. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you. I know you have special memories that will sustain you, but it is hard to say good bye to our fathers. All my best, Margie Mayberry Shedd

Margaret Mayberry Shedd - May 12, 2015 at 02:16 PM

RH

“ Dear Mimi and family, My prayers and best wishes are with you all. Because of my commitments on Monday night I cannot attend the graveside funeral. My family will remember each of you in our prayers and we will remember the wonderful times we were able to share with Dr. Griffith. I was honored to serve with him at Beech Haven Baptist Church and I feel that under his leadership Beech Haven achieved great and lofty goals. My feelings for Jim run deep. He was an awesome friend who affected my life and helped me grow in my understanding of ministry and the needs of people. There is no one I esteem higher than Jim Grittith; He was my mentor, colleague and friend. I still recall his wisdom whenever certain situations arise, and I will never forget the kindness that marked his many and varied ministries. I can truly say that our world has lost a dear "Man of God" and we shall all miss his presence among us. Love to you all, Ron Hatchett Minister of Music at Beech Haven from 1979-1988

Ron Hatchett - May 09, 2015 at 09:09 PM

SW

“ Dear Sunday and family: I don't know if you will remember me or not but I used to sub teach along side of you sometimes in P.E. class. I did not know your father personally but he sounds like such a wonderful and faithful man and servant of the Lord. God bless and keep all of you at this time and in the future. Losing a parent is one of the most traumatic things one can endure but I feel that he is your Guardian Angel now and will be watching over you always. God bless.

Susan Weegar - May 09, 2015 at 09:23 AM

NW

“ *Mimi - I am praying for you and your family. Dr. Griffith was so precious. He encouraged me each time I saw him. He enjoyed and appreciated music. May God grant you added strength, comfort and peace. I love you, Nancy*

Nancy Whittenburger - May 07, 2015 at 11:43 AM