

*Celebrating the Life and the Legacy of*



*John*  
**ROBERT ANDERSON, JR.**

JULY 18, 1959 - JUNE 7, 2017



SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2017  
11 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

GORDON MEMORIAL  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
2334 HERMAN STREET | NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

THE REVEREND CHARLES L. WHITE, JR., SENIOR PASTOR  
THE REVEREND VH SONNYE DIXON, JR., OFFICIATING



I wrote this little note to John in February 2017.  
I would often peek and witness him reading this love letter.

*“John, I am truly grateful for the life, every day and every moment of it that we are blessed to share with one another. I thank God for your love, your thoughtfulness and for your compassion. Your passion engulfs our world together. Each day we have together is a gift from God that I will forever cherish. When I look into your beautiful brown eyes, I see love, I see hope, and I see truth. My heart is so overwhelmed by the love I feel for you today. It almost feels surreal that I am afraid to close my eyes. This is what I’ve wanted for so long and to finally have it, feels like a dream come true.*

*I love you John with every fiber of my being and I will never take your love for granted. I am forever grateful to God for bringing us back together. Thank you for making my dream come true.*

*I am so Joyfully Blessed,”*

Your Wife Mary F. Anderson

# Life Story

All who knew John R. Anderson, Jr. would agree that his life was a shining example of what it means to be the hands and feet of the Lord he loved. He was the heartbeat wherever he was and lived to serve all who were within his reach. John and I were blessed to share a love that most can only dream of. A lifelong resident of the North Nashville community he loved, John made a significant impact in the lives of those too numerous to count. Although he will be deeply missed, his family, friends, and community find comfort in knowing that death has no sting and the grave no victory for those who believe and look forward to a glorious reunion one day.

The day was Saturday, the 18th day of July in 1959, the weather in Nashville was clear skies with a high of 81°. It was a perfect day for John and Edna Louise Anderson to welcome their first child, a son whom they properly named, John Robert Anderson, Jr. John would be the oldest of Anderson's eight children.



John Anderson was my husband. He was short in stature but he stood tall as a man of faith. In such a short period of time he taught me how to love, and how to be loved. John was not only a devoted husband, he was also a great father. His daughters were the apples of his eye. He reveled in their achievements and encouraged them always to do their best through his calls, text and his inspiring words of wisdom.



John gained his early spiritual grounding at the Jackson Street Church of Christ where his family attended. Growing up in the closely knitted community of John Henry Hale Home Projects, John enjoyed hanging around the Bel Air Barbershop located just across the street. It was there where John would meet the man who would become his mentor, spiritual father and his friend, Mr. James "Jake" Sherrell. Like so many other young men, it was Jake who led John to strengthen his relationship with Christ and to join the Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church.

There was nothing of greater importance in John's life than the day he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. It would forever change the course of his life. From there he felt a stirring in his heart to reach others, to enlighten, inspire, and motivate them to experience the joy and peace that comes through having a personal relationship with God through Christ. John was always busy doing the Master's work whether in the walls of Gordon or out in the community. As a member of Gordon, he was an active member of the Praise Team, Unity, the Mass Choir, Soldier's for Christ (Male Chorus), United Methodist Men and the Men's Sunday School Class. John was also one of the original guys who gathered to start the Brother's Keeper Ministry at Gordon.



As a gifted singer John lived to share the good news through song in a variety of venues. He would perform in churches across Nashville and the southeast. He's performed with such greats as the legendary Bobby Jones and the Bobby Jones Gospel Show; the Gospel Music Workshop Choir of America, Jesse Boyce & Friends, the Ambassadors for Christ and many other singing groups and choirs. He loved singing and praising the Lord.

Someone who lived life with others in mind, John served within his community in many different capacities as he enjoyed the opportunity to make a difference. He believed that "to whom much is given, much is required". John served as a member of the Bethlehem Community Center Board of Directors, Toastmasters International, Men of Esquire, the Barbershop Crew, Jo Johnston's Finest and the list goes on.



John matriculated through the public schools of Nashville and is a proud graduate of the historic Pearl High School Class of 1978. For John, Pearl High opened new worlds of thought. It was at Pearl that he developed a compelling drive and a thirst for knowledge. John would go on to earn a Bachelor of Science Degree from Bethel University in McKenzie, Tennessee in 2005 and a Masters of Business Administration from Strayer University in 2010. John for many years worked in the financial field. He was employed by the Lexon Surety Group, LLC in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee.

John and I first met in 1985 over 30 years ago while we both were singing with the Ambassadors for Christ Choir. At first it was just a mutual friendship but then our relationship grew. We were both very young and though our love never faded we both eventually went our own separate ways.



Fast forward to 2013 we both had married, had children and now were divorced but as fate would have it, a mutual friend reconnected us. Two years later in the Fall of 2015 we started seeing each other again it was almost as if we had never parted. It was almost perfect as if we were destined to be together again. So, putting God first we started months of pre-marital counseling and nine months ago, on August 13, 2016, John and I were married right here at Gordon surrounded by an intimate gathering of family and friends. It was a spirit filled worship service of praise and thanksgiving. I'll never forget singing to him as I walked down the aisle, "I Give Myself Away".

The service was uniquely planned to include a rich African tradition – the Service of the Tasting. As each element was placed before us Pastor White and Dr. Hawkins reminded us of their semblance.

Vinegar is the symbol of the bitterness that life can bring. Honey brings sweetness into your lives and home. Salt helps preserve all that is good in marriage. Pepper is for the spice of life. Water represents the abundance and blessings of life.





It was so appropriate. In the past nine months, we have experienced it all; the bitter, the sweet, the preservation, the spice and yes, we have been blessed in abundance.

John and I were blessed now with a blended family of five lovely young ladies. We were both excited as we began our journey anew. Anyone who truly knows John knows how important family was to him. He loved his girls and his girls loved him too. Now with my love by my side, we treasured priceless moments while watching our family thrive.

John and I loved spending time together preparing meals, enjoying our date night, being in the company of family and friends, and attending church together. John lived life to the fullest, he loved deeply and he enjoyed making others laugh with his “great sense of humor”.

Nothing else could compare to his love for his family. He was a loving and compassionate husband, a wonderful father, a loyal son, a gregarious brother, a sweet and loving brother-in-law, a protective uncle, an amazing nephew and a great friend.

A gracious and compassionate man, John lived to use his gifts, talents, and abilities to the glory of God and for the inspiration of humanity. Although the way before him was not without times of trial, he considered both the peaks and valleys along his life’s journey to be part of God’s perfect plan for his life. John leaves behind a timeless legacy that is deeply rooted in faith, selfless acts of kindness, and unconditional love to all that will be proudly carried on by those who follow in his footsteps.

Now, left to carry on his legacy are me his wife, Mary, along with our loving daughters, Jean Marie Anderson and Janae Louise Anderson of Nashville TN, Melita Wilhoite of Atlanta GA, Tiara McCottry of Atlanta GA, Mia Williams of Greensboro NC; five brothers, Barry (Burma) Anderson, Rodney (Nikechia) Anderson, Trevor Anderson, Marvin (Tanya) Edmond and Antoni Still; five sisters, Phyllis Denise Anderson, Briggette Anderson, Camille Anderson, Tannah Anderson, Lisa (Tray) Buford, all of Nashville, TN; Father-in-law, the Reverend Cleveland Freeman, Jr., Atlanta, GA; sister-in-laws, First Lady Rachel (Dr. Timothy) Hawkins of Oakland, CA and Eunice (Harold) Catlin of Atlanta, GA; 40 nephews and nieces; 50 grand nephews and nieces; uncles, Pastor Larry (Melba) Hunter, and Gentry (Jackie) Hunter, all of Nashville, TN; aunts, Christine Taylor, Lorraine Hunter of Battle Creek, MI, Lois (Bobby) Johnson of Battlecreek, MI, Frances Toran of Nashville, TN, and Sherri (Curtis) Malone of Gallatin, TN; his best friends, Vernon Strayhorn, Tony Driver, Kevin Washington and numerous cousins, other family members and friends are left to cherish his precious memories.

Your Loving Wife,  
Mary

*Until We Meet Again*



# *You Never Said Goodbye*

Author Unknown

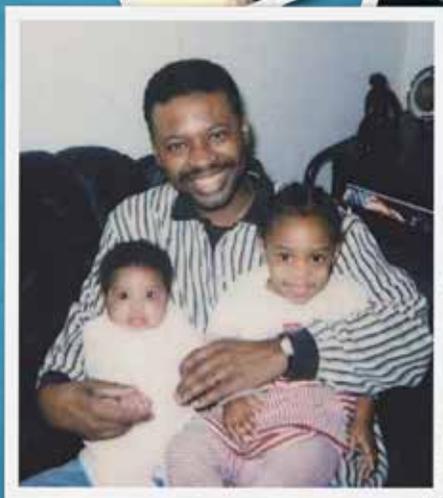
*You never said I'm leaving  
You never said goodbye.  
You were gone before I knew it,  
And only God knew why.*

*A million times will need you,  
A million times we will cry.  
If love alone could have saved you,  
You never would have died.*

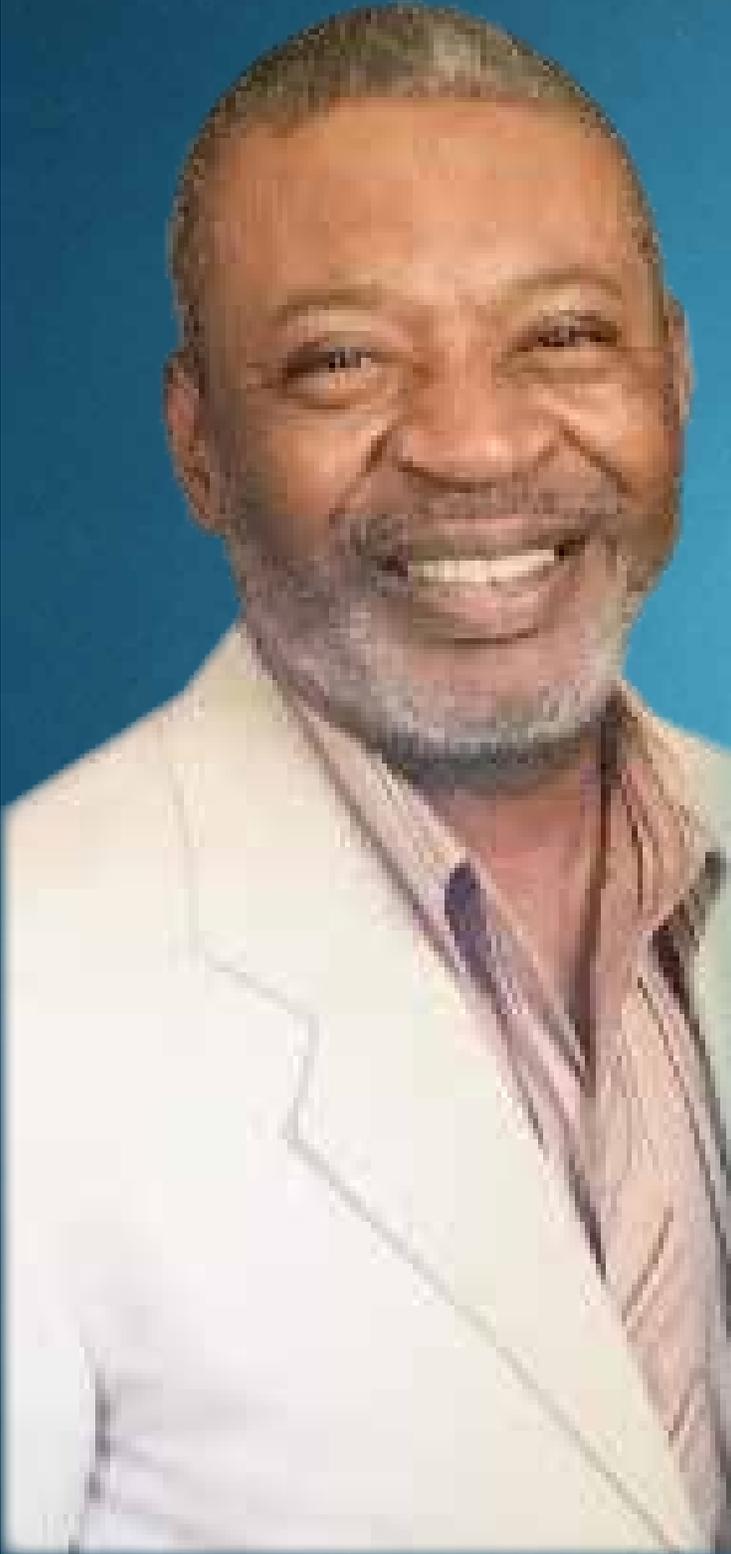
*In life, we loved you dearly,  
In death, we love you still.  
In our heart, you hold a place,  
That no one could ever fill.*

*It broke our hearts to lose you,  
But you didn't go alone  
For part of us went with you,  
The day God took you home.*

Love,  
Your Loving Daughters



# *Miss Me - But Let Me Go*



*When I come to the end of the road  
And the sun has set for me,  
I want no rites in a gloom filled room,  
Why cry for a soul set free.*

*Miss me a little while -- but not too long,  
And not with your head bowed low,  
Remember the love we once shared,  
Miss me -- but let me go.*

*For this journey we all must take,  
And each must go alone  
It's all a part of the Master's plan  
A step on the road home,*

*When you are lonely and sick at heart  
Go to Jesus who will be your friend  
And let Him bury your sorrows  
Miss me -- but let me go.*

# Order of Worship

## **Remembering John R. Anderson, Jr.**

Reverend VH Sonnye Dixon, Jr., Officiant | Pastor, Hobson United Methodist Church

The Prelude

The Processional .....Members of the Clergy and The Family

The Quiet Hour

The Words of Grace and Greetings

The Song of Celebration ..... “*Total Praise*” ..... The Mass Choir of Gordon Memorial UMC

The Prayer of Comfort ..... Rev. Robert L. Beard, Pastor  
New Faith Missionary Baptist Church

The Musical Response

The Reading of Holy Scripture

The Old Testament..... Rev. Lee Hall-Perkins  
*Psalm 23*

The New Testament .....Minister Michelle Wilson  
*John 14 selected verses*

\*The Apostle’s Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; \*  
the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic\*\* church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

*Let us sing together the 3rd stanza of Lift Every Voice and Sing*

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who has by Thy might, Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, May we forever stand,  
True to our God, True to our native land.

The Song of Celebration ..... *“For Your Glory”* ..... Terrence Brown Ensemble

The Word of Witness ..... Professional - Michael Belinsky, Lexon Surety Company  
Community - Steve Fleming, Board of Directors for Bethlehem Centers of America  
Church – Dr. Rodney Diggs (on behalf of Pastor White)

The Ministry of Music ..... *“Thank You”* ..... Terrence Brown Ensemble

The Resolutions ..... Sis. Jaha Martin, Lay Member to the Annual Conference  
Regina Micheaux-Webb, President, Mass Choir  
Bro. William “Bill” Bowen, Brother’s Keeper Ministry

The Acknowledgements ..... Frances Parker

Poetic Tribute ..... Briggette Anderson, Sister

The Family Tributes ..... Daughters – Jean Marie Anderson, JaNae Anderson, Melita Wilhoite  
Reverend Dr. Timothy Hawkins, Brother-in-law  
Pastor, Bible Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church  
Oakland, CA

The Selection of Preparation ..... The Mass Choir of Gordon Memorial UMC  
*“Jesus, You are the Center of My Joy”*

The Eulogy ..... Rev. Larry G. Hunter, Uncle  
Associate Pastor, The Church of Jesus Christ/Apostolic

The Ministry of Music ..... The Mass Choir of Gordon Memorial UMC

The Commendation..... Dr. Shelia Peters  
Minister Jana Hall-Perkins

The Benediction

The Recessional..... *“Let the Church Say Amen”*

Committal Service..... Rev. Joe Shelton  
Graveside

The Dismissal Prayer and Final Benediction

***We invite you to come and greet the family at the repass immediately  
following the interment in the Fellowship Hall.***

INTERMENT  
Greenwood (West) Cemetery  
820 Elm Hill Pike  
Nashville, Tennessee

# Thank You For The Good Times



# *Spending Time With Family*



## *Acknowledgements*

We extend our profound appreciation for the love, prayers, and other expressions of kindness you have shown during this time. For those of you who have shared amazing stories of his humor, love and dedication – inspiring and helping so many, we thank you and ask that you continue to perpetuate his legacy.

Remember us as we will remember you in our prayers.

Mary Anderson & The Anderson Family

## *Pallbearers*

Ken Taylor, Men of Esquire  
James Rhodes, Jo Johnstons Finest

Tyrone Turner, Men of Esquire  
Maurice Lavender, Jo Johnston's Finest  
Nathaniel Jenkins, Jo Johnston's Finest

Tyrone Donelle, Men of Esquire  
Jerome Scruggs, Jo Johnston's Finest

## *Honorary Pallbearers*

Nephews of John R. Anderson, Jr.

DeAundre Anderson  
Fredwon Dixon  
Rodrico Anderson  
Brandon Watkins  
Keyshawn Martin  
The Barbershop Crew

Brent Dixon  
De'John Robert Anderson  
Rodney Anderson, Jr.  
Marvin Edmond, Jr.  
Men of Esquire  
Brother's Keeper

Aubrey Dixon  
Rodriquez Jackson  
Donterrious Anderson  
Trevor Anderson  
Joe Johnson's Finest  
United Methodist Men of Gordon

## *Flowerbearers*

Nieces of John R. Anderson, Jr.

Shaminika Anderson  
TaShara Anderson  
LaKenya Anderson

Bria Dixon  
Tiana Anderson  
Shanique Newsom

Candace McDowell  
Travanisha Anderson  
The Pearl High School Class of 1978

## *Honorary Flowerbearers*

Jean Marie Anderson

Janae Louise Anderson  
Tiara McCottry      Mia Williams

Melita Wilhoite

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FINAL ARRANGEMENTS ENTRUSTED TO

**Smith Funeral Home**

706 Monroe Street | Nashville, TN 37208 | Phone (615) 726-1426

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