



James Alfred Gatling

October 5, 1934 - January 11, 2021

Beloved Husband, Father, and Grandfather, James Alfred Gatling, Sr., was born in the small southern town of Ahoskie, North Carolina on October 5, 1934, to the late Pete and Mamie Gatling. On Monday, January 11, 2021, at the age of eighty-six (86), James transitioned from his earthly bonds to join his heavenly father.

While from a small town, James was one of six brothers and sisters. He was baptized at Calvary Baptist Church and spent much time there in his youth with his mother listening to hymns of the choir. Because James aspired for greater things, after graduating from Robert L. Vann High School in Ahoskie, North Carolina, he enlisted with the military to serve his country and travel the world. While in the United States Army, James deployed with Company A, 68th Tank Battalion, 6th Armoured Division at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He was also stationed in Europe where he traveled to Germany, Austria, and Italy. James was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal while serving. Through the G.I. Bill, James attended Elizabeth City State Teachers College, where he met the love of his life, Sudie Belle Gadson. He graduated from college in 1960 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. After college, James followed Sudie to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where they established their home in Pocomoke City, Maryland.

The focus of James' life was education and development of youths. James worked in the educational field for over thirty-five (35) years, retiring on June 6, 1995. He worked first as a primary teacher at Flower Street School, and then Snow Hill Middle School. James completed his Masters degree in Elementary Education from Morgan State University, and then progressed to become Supervisor of Elementary Education for Worcester County Board of Education. Even during retirement, James remained involved with education through volunteer work, reading to young children, mentoring students at Pocomoke High School, and coordinating scholarships for area youths. He drafted the scholarship plans for VFW Post #1148 and was a member of the AARP's Scholarship Selection Committee, Chapter #2965.

Throughout his life, James was always involved in sports. He played on the Varsity Basketball Team for Robert L. Vann High School. His love for basketball continued while in the military. James was a member of the Army Basketball Team, and played against other foreign military teams in the region. He was involved in Little League Baseball, both as a coach and as an umpire. Later in life, James developed a passion for golf; playing at Winter Quarters and Nassawango Golf Clubs whenever possible.

James always welcomed friends and family into his home with great delight. Many family occasions and gatherings were held at his home; including engagements, weddings, reunions, and anniversaries. His hospitality was renowned and everyone was made to feel like part of the family. No matter the season, everyone delighted in the beauty of James' garden; which was always flourishing with blooming flowers, fruits, and vegetables. James was an avid reader and especially enjoyed reading spy novels, tales of suspense and historical works. James always loved music. He played drums during high school and enjoyed listening to jazz. He was always willing to learn new things. James took up the piano at the age of sixty-five (65). One could often find him practicing in the dining room as the sound of piano melodies echoed

through the house.

During college, James joined the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. the Beta Zeta Chapter in 1959. Their motto, "First of All, Servants of All, We Shall Transcend All," was present throughout all of James' endeavors. James was a member of the Mount Zion United Methodist Church, where he sang in the choir and served as President of the United Methodist Men's Organization, was a member of the Church Board of Pastor Parish Relations, and the Board of Trustees. He was a member of the Maryland and Worcester County Retired Teachers' Associations, and he served as Vice President of the Worcester County Library, Board of Trustees. James was a member of the Pocomoke Rotary Club and served as their Treasurer, Vice President, and President. He served on the Bell Ringer Committee for the Salvation Army and as a member of the Lower Shore YMCA Board of Managers, he served on their Capital Building Fund Committee. James volunteered his time at the adult daycare centers and nursing homes. He participated in groups that entertained and ministered to seniors, and he also read stories to seniors at Brickhaven Daycare in Snow Hill, Maryland. James served on the Board of Directors of the Purnell Museum in Snow Hill, Maryland and on the board of Rural Loan Funding at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in Princess Anne, Maryland.

James served as the founding President of the Sturgis One School Museum. James and Sudie worked for seventeen (17) years to bring the museum from concept to reality. He, along with Sudie, were awarded the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council 2012 Legacy Award for their work to restore, refurbish, and maintain the museum. James was the recipient of many accolades including the Maryland Senior Citizen Hall of Fame in 2000, the Rotary Paul Harris Fellow in 2001, and he received the NAACP, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Achievement Award in recognition of humanitarian service to

the community.

James Gatling was a kind and loving man whose generous spirit touched the lives of his family, extended family, and the community of which he served. This was reflected in his love for his family, and his wife of fifty-nine (59) years, Sudie. We are all grateful for the guidance he showed through his works, his service, his mentoring, and his steadfast and faithful love in Jesus Christ.

James was preceded in death by his parents, Pete and Mamie Gatling and siblings, Florence, Leslie, Jake, and Clayton. James is survived by his loving wife, Sudie; two children, James, Jr. and spouse Vicki and Ryan and spouse Petra-Jane; six grandchildren, Amber, Jamal, Maya, Kinsey, Della, and Nathan and one sister, Mary.

Tribute Wall

LL

“ *Laura Lassiter lit a candle in memory of James Alfred Gatling*



Laura Lassiter - August 16, 2021 at 04:08 PM

JP

“ *Mr. Gatling was my 5th grade math teacher at Snow Hill Middle School. He was a fine teacher--I regretted not having him in succeeding grades. My deepest sympathies to his family. Jeff Pilchard San Francisco, CA*

Jeff Pilchard - February 02, 2021 at 01:48 PM

MW

“ *Sincerest condolences to the Gatling family. Much love, hugs, peace and comfort for you all in light of your loss. Mr. Gatling was a great man and he will be sorely missed. Mitchell & Willetta Wheeler PO Box 1029 Lake Villa, IL 60046*

Mitchell & Willetta Wheeler - January 31, 2021 at 02:06 PM

MP

“ Mr. James Gatling taught me Sunday School at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. He said that I wasn't like my mother, don't know what that meant, at the age of 15 years old. But he was very well Educated, sang well in the Senior Choir. And did outstanding achievements in the community. Yes, he was a voice for the Black families, I thank God for knowing him and Mrs. Sudie Gatling, she taught me in our schools here in our District. Rest in Peace Mr. Gatling.

Ms. Sheila Palmer - January 30, 2021 at 02:59 PM

JS

“ Sending prayers ,hugs and heartfelt sympathy to your family. Marc and Scher

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Judi Scher - January 29, 2021 at 08:52 PM

JS

“ Sending prayers, hugs and caring thoughts to all your family. Marc and Judi Scher \ud83c\udf08 \u2764\ufe0f\ud83c\udf33\ud83c\udf39

J Scher - January 29, 2021 at 08:06 AM

AP

“ I was sorry to learn of Jim's passing. He was a lovely person with whom I worked for many years at the Purnell Museum and at the Worcester County Library. God bless him, and may God bless his family. Alice Paterra

Alice Paterra - January 28, 2021 at 12:03 PM

MT

“ Hello family, let me offer my deepest condolences, God Bless you all. Mr. Gatlin, a man of great integrity and self worth. A man who was kind and thoughtful. A man full of the Spirit of God. Not a bad golfer as well. I will miss him. LoveRev Mitchell Tull and family

Mitchell Tull - January 28, 2021 at 08:04 AM