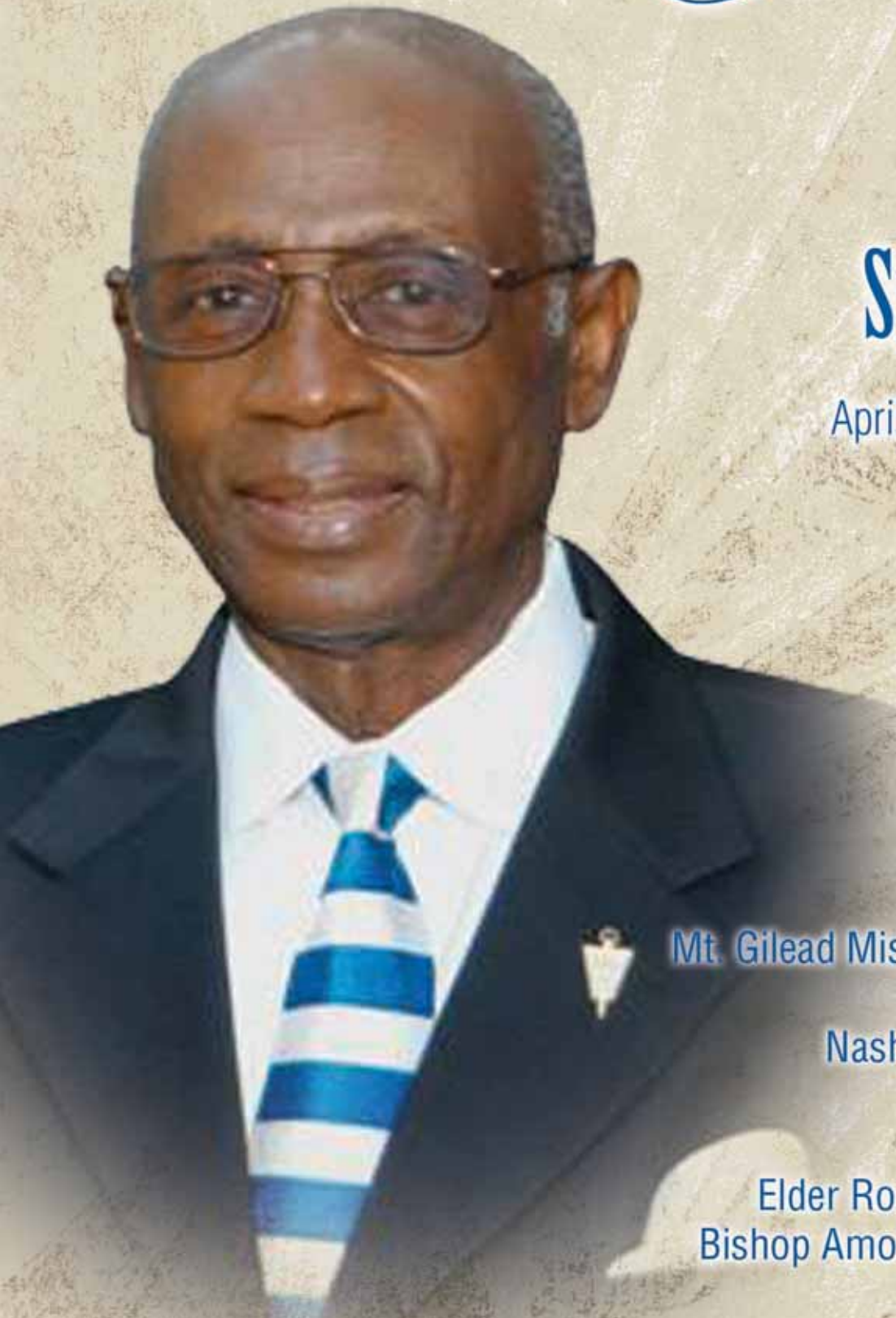


*Celebrating A
Wonderful Life*



Sylvester Davis

April 9, 1932 – April 6, 2013

**Saturday,
April 13, 2013
11:00 AM**

**Mt. Gilead Missionary Baptist Church
901 Acklen Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37203**

**Elder Roderick J. Glatt, *Officiant*
Bishop Amos T. Griffey, III, *Eulogist***

Obituary

Sylvester Davis began his earthly sojourn on April 9, 1932 in Germantown, Tennessee. Being one of seven children, born to Conklin and Margaret Davis, he was exposed to rural life at an early age. His parents instilled Godly principles and Christian values. He made his final transition to be present with His Heavenly Father on April 6, 2013.

Sylvester was educated in the public school system in Shelby County, Tennessee. He attended Forrest Hill Elementary, Neshoba Junior High and Geeter High School.

In June 1951, Sylvester followed in the footsteps of his eldest brother, John, and matriculated to Tennessee Agriculture and Industrial (A & I) University where he worked as a student helper in the Poultry Department.

In the fall of 1951, his pursuit for excellence began as he enrolled in the School of Agriculture at A & I, majoring in Biochemistry and Poultry Nutrition. He equipped himself educationally to enter the workforce by earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biochemistry and Poultry Nutrition, with an emphasis in Plant Science in 1955. He later earned a Master's degree in Plant Science and Biochemistry in 1970.

His stellar professional career began with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Division, as a laboratory technician. As he moved through the ranks, he was rewarded for his hard work and dedication by the late Honorable Ned Ray McWherter, then Governor of the State of Tennessee. Being appointed as the Director of the Plant Industries Division, he was responsible for protecting the State's Agricultural, Silvicultural, and Horticultural Industries from pests and plant diseases. During Governor McWherter's administration, Sylvester engineered a plan to have the entire program transferred to his beloved alma mater, Tennessee State University. He gave 40 years of meritorious service to the State of Tennessee until he retired in April 1995.

His professional achievements and awards were many. He was a member of the Southern Association of Feed, Fertilizer and Pest Control Officials, where he served as the first African American to hold such position. He also served on the Tennessee Entomological Society, the Tennessee Agriculture Chemical Association, the American Association of Analytical Chemists, the Ellington Agriculture Credit Union Board of Directors and the Tennessee Agriculture Chemical Association. In 2005, Sylvester received the highest honor awarded by the Tennessee State University College of Agriculture and Home Economics. He was inducted as a sole recipient into the college's Hall of Fame. Sylvester was a past president of the Tennessee State University Alumni Association, Nashville Chapter. He served as treasurer of the Tennessee State Employees' Association and was a member of the Board of Directors.

Sylvester was inducted as a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated in 1961, where he held numerous leadership positions at the local, regional and national levels. In 1984, Sylvester was inducted into the National Distinguished Service Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated and later served as its President for 14 years. In 2008 he became the second Sigma Brother in the Fraternity's history to receive the Presidential Service Award. Sylvester loved Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity and was affectionately called the "The Dean" by many. He was a mentor, teacher, father figure and role model to many brothers who crossed his path.

Sylvester professed his faith in the Lord at an early age while residing in Memphis, Tennessee. He was a devoted member of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He loved his church and his pastors. He served as deacon, past Sunday school teacher, past chairman of the Board of Deacons, past chairman of the Finance Committee and a servant to all in need.

Sylvester leaves to cherish his memories, his devoted and beloved wife Jo Ann Davis-Davis. He is survived by sons Anthony S. and Kenneth C. Davis; two grandsons, Jordan Anthony Markettus and Savion Cornelius Davis, Nashville, Tennessee; one brother, Isiah Davis, Sr., Memphis, Tennessee; two sister-in-laws, Josephine Davis, Chicago, Illinois and Henrene Davis, Memphis, Tennessee; Goddaughters Rachel Jo Ann Cody, Memphis, Tennessee and Candace L. Witt, Jacksonville, Florida; a devoted cousin, Blair Bell; numerous nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Order of Service

Elder Roderick J. Glatt, *Officiant* – Pastor, Mt. Gilead Missionary Baptist Church

Bishop Amos T. Griffey, III, *Eulogist* – Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church

The Links, Incorporated, Parthenon Chapter – Connecting Link Ceremony

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated – Omega Chapter Service

MUSICAL SELECTION *23rd Psalm* Voices of Mt. Gilead

PRAYER OF COMFORT Deacon Leavy McCoy
Mt. Gilead Missionary Baptist Church

SCRIPTURE *Psalm 23* Deacon Bill Henderson
Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church

MUSICAL SELECTION *Total Praise* Voices of Mt. Gilead

WORDS OF COMFORT Reverend Raymond Bowman, Pastor
Spruce Street Baptist Church

Reverend L. Royal Byars, Former Pastor
Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church

MUSICAL SELECTION *God Is A Good God* Mt. Olive Male Chorus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS Attorney Joy Sims

TRIBUTES The Honorable Jimmy Hammock
International President
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated

Dr. Glenda Baskin Glover, President
Tennessee State University

MUSICAL SELECTION Mr. Frederick Davis

REFLECTIONS Mr. Anthony Davis
Family Mr. Isiah Davis, Jr.
Nieces/Nephews Mrs. Linda R. Witt
The Board Brother Martin Currie
"One of Sylvester's Sigma Sons" Dr. Mack T. Scott
Life Long Friend

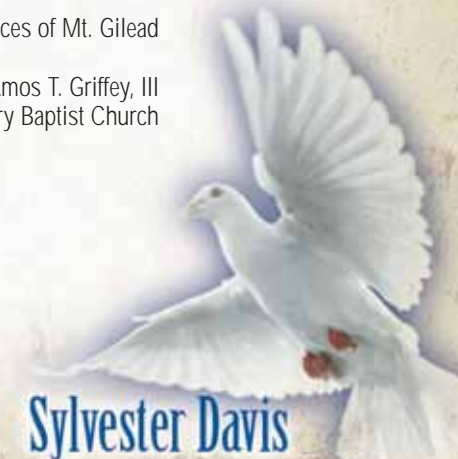
SELECTION *Oh How Precious* Voices of Mt. Gilead

EULOGY Bishop Amos T. Griffey, III
Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church

BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL

Repat
Tennessee State University
The Farrell-Westbrook Building Auditorium
"The Barn"
3500 John A. Merritt Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37209



Sylvester Davis

Celebrating A Wonderful Life



A Message from Sylvester Davis in His Own Words...

"My Sigma Journey"

When I became a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated in 1961, (Eta Beta Sigma Chapter) I honestly never dreamed I would be in the position where I am presently in Phi Beta Sigma. I was born in Rural West Tennessee a few miles west of the Memphis, Tennessee line. My parents worked a farm, where the land was so poor that anytime you saw a rabbit crossing the field with something in his mouth, he would be carrying food to keep from starving. It was tough, but we survived.

My parents had six boys and one girl, and the girl was the oldest. My oldest brother went to college after he completed his assignment in the U.S. Army. My brother became a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated when he was enrolled at Tennessee A & I State University, Nashville, Tennessee. After I finished high school, I wanted to go to college and join Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated just like my older brother, John W. Davis.

I am grateful that my brother John witnessed me climb the ladder in Sigma, before he passed in 2001. I think my first position in the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity was Recording Secretary of the Eta Beta Sigma Chapter; the next step was Vice-President of the Chapter. Following that was two terms as President of Eta Beta. Next step was Regional Secretary for the Southwestern Region, then Vice-Regional Director of the Southwestern Region, and next was Regional Director of the Southwestern Region.

In 1974 the National President (Honorable John E. Westberry), appointed me to chair a committee to find a permanent Headquarters for Phi Beta Sigma. On February 7, 1976 at a General Board Meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, I made my recommendation to purchase the Building located at 145 Kennedy Street, N.W., Washington, DC. A few weeks later I was honored when President Westberry appointed me to Chair the Headquarters Real Estate Committee.

In 1981 I was elected National Director of Bigger and Better Business, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated. In 1984 I was inducted into the Distinguished Service Chapter (DSC). In 1993 I was elected President of the National Distinguished Service Chapter, where I served for 14 years. During my tenure as DSC President, I was able to interact with the Fraternity's highest ranking members through serving them to the best of my ability. It was an honor to be there for them and their families during the good times and most difficult times. I made every effort to represent the DSC for our Honorable Brothers when they were elevated to the Omega Chapter. Those precious moments will always be remembered.

In spite of all of the achievements I have realized within the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, my most cherished project is the "Operation Teddy Bear and Ethnic Books Roundup." This project spearheaded by the DSC Members and their wives and now supported by the entire Fraternity has put Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated on the map as a premier service organization. The program epitomizes Culture for Service and Service to Humanity. Kudos to Mrs. Jo Ann Davis-Davis, Mrs. Maxine Westberry, Mrs. Grace McClendon, and Mrs. Luel Sutton for their outstanding help since the Project was started.

The work of a true Sigma Man never ends. I am now in the process of collecting and binding all of the Crescent Magazines from inception to the present date. The bound Crescents will be shipped to the National Headquarters, and placed in sealed glass cages.

Since 2008, The Honorable Sylvester Davis worked to fulfill his promise to complete the collection of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated's Crescent Magazines that were donated by the late Honorable John Westberry along with his personal collection. The collection will be featured as a documentary on the Fraternity's rich history during their Centennial Celebration in 2013. The National Headquarters of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated has been the recipient of the collection for viewing.

Cherished Memories



Syl, you have been my friend, my husband and my rock. Lord, Syl has gone from us and we trust him to Your loving care. You brought him home at last to you. I know that You will soothe him with Your tenderness, touch him with Your grace, and care for him for You are his Father in Heaven.

There have been so many people that have expressed their love for Syl and shared memories of how he impacted their lives. One young man never missed calling Syl on Father's Day and his birthday since he met him over 25 years ago. Another young couple shared that they are successful entrepreneurs because of his willingness to share his expertise and knowledge.

Sylvester was a mentor to young men in the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Many nights I heard him on the phone with a calm and loving voice of a father, only to learn it was one of his "Sigma Children".

Syl had many sayings he would quote when giving advice. "Be firm, be fair and be consistent" was his advice for someone struggling in a position of leadership. Knowing that humor often can help make the point he would say "if you can't be good, be careful, if you can't be careful, run as fast as you can!" Upon retirement his employees presented him a watch inscribed with "You call, we haul".

Syl was a role model. One of his friends shared that he admired how Sylvester handled challenging situations with grace and integrity. He treated adversaries or those with different points of view with respect. Because of this ability, Syl was a true consensus builder and sought by many to give advice on resolving issues that would allow all to succeed.

Syl had many passions: cooking turnip greens, gardening, TSU, Titans Football, contributing to the education of children in Tunica, and eating Bluebell ice cream. But his favorite was traveling because we could share that together. I cherish the memories of the many places we visited with friends. A few of the places visited were Rio, Puerto Vallarta, Paris, London and Aruba where we were made honorary citizens in 2011 by the Department of Tourism.

Syl loved his, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, sons and grandsons. He never missed an opportunity to return to Memphis to visit the "home place". He would make his rounds to every home to visit with his brothers, sister and their families and likewise our home was always open to them. Sylvester was so excited when Anthony brought the grandsons to see him. They affectionately called us "Papa" and Duchess to his delight.

Romans 12:10 reads, "be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love: in honour preferring one another". While with us on this earth, Sylvester's life was a living example of these words. Syl I will truly miss you, my friend, my husband, my rock.

– Your loving wife, Jo Ann



Celebrating A Wonderful Life

Sylvester Davis

Cherished Moments



Celebrating A Wonderful Life



Sylvester Davis

Acknowledgements

The family of Sylvester Davis deeply appreciates and acknowledges all prayers, calls, visits and every act of kindness shown during this transition time. A special thank you is extended to the staff of National Healthcare Corporation (NHC), Dr. Harvey W. Bowles, Mr. Frederick Robertson, Ms. Faye Claybon Davis, Ms. Sharon Boxill, and Ms. ShaRhonda Cartwright for their unceasing and loving care. Special recognition is given to the men of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated for their display of true brotherhood on the local, regional and national levels.

A special thanks to Bishop Amos T. Griffey, III and the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church Family and Elder Roderick J. Glatt and the Mt. Gilead Missionary Baptist Church Family for their generosity and love shown to the Davis Family.

– The Family

In lieu of floral designs, contributions may be made to the Tennessee State University Presidential Challenge, College of Agriculture, in memory of Sylvester Davis, 3500 John A. Merritt Boulevard, Nashville, Tennessee

Honorary Pallbearers

Blair Bell
John Bell
Terry Carroll
Richard Green
Weldon Kidd

Nephews and Great Nephews
Deacons of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

Active Pallbearers

Anthony Davis
Isiah Davis, Jr.
John Ewell
Joe Majors
Keith Pitts
Frederick Robertson

Active Floral Bearers

Nieces and Great Nieces

Honorary Floral Bearers

"The Board"

Ms. Patricia Chrisman Clayton
Ms. Faye Claybon Davis
Mrs. Rita Pritchett Fleming
Mrs. Anita Pritchett Greene
Ms. Eileen L. Singleton
Mrs. Linda Russell Witt

Ms. Cathy Bender
Mrs. Deborah Broadwater
Mrs. Linda Darden
Dr. Barbara Duncan-Cody
Dr. Glenda Baskin Glover
Mrs. Latanya McAdoo
Mrs. Barbara Owens
Attorney Joy Sims
Mrs. Linda Spears
Dr. Phillis Varnado
Ms. Judy Walshtrom
Mrs. Maxine Westberry
Mrs. Iris Winters

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