



## Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.

December 23, 1953 - July 15, 2019

The life of a man of great faith, humility and presence reflects the glory, compassion and exceptional artistry of his Creator.

Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton, Sr. was born the youngest child of Charles H. Burton, Sr. and Josephine R. Burton on December 23, 1953 in Essex County, Virginia. Preceded in death by his parents, he departed this life on Monday, July 15, 2019.

Raised in Tappahannock, VA, Reverend Burton received his early education in the Essex County Public School System. Following his parents' directives, he would regularly attend church service at First Baptist Church, and was eventually baptized in the chilly waters of the Rappahannock River as a youth. Bruce was involved in the church and community in various capacities, serving on the junior usher board and as a lifeguard at the community swimming pool. After graduating from Essex High School, he matriculated to college, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education and a Master of Education from Virginia State University.

Bruce was a career teacher, working with students for over 40 years in King

William County

and Henrico County Public School Systems. For over 20 years, he taught at the Henrico

Juvenile Detention Center in Henrico County.

On August 30, 1980, Bruce married Mary Taylor, embarking on an unbreakable union and best friendship. Of this union, they proudly raised three children, Davonda, Christine and Bruce Jr. A devoted husband and outstanding father, Bruce Sr. cherished opportunities to be with his family, often documenting “every day” joys and special occasions with either his camcorder or camera. More recently, he could also be seen beaming with joy any time he was in the presence of his granddaughter, Rosalind. The two often enjoyed eating snacks together, taking selfies and making trips to his backyard garden.

Bruce led his family in becoming members of St. James Baptist Church in Varina. He served as a doorkeeper, church school teacher and leader of the Karakul Kraal Sheepfold. In 1999, Bruce was ordained a deacon, eventually serving as Chairman of the Deacon Ministry.

On June 28, 2010, Bruce answered God’s calling to “feed my sheep,” and was licensed to

“preach the gospel”. In May of 2011, he graduated Magma Cum Laude from the Samuel

Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University (STVU) with a Master of

Divinity Degree and two years later earned a Master of Arts in Christian Education Degree.

Reverend Burton was ordained to the ministry on February 19, 2012.

Reverend Dr. Bruce Burton served as an Associate Minister at St. James

Baptist Church in

Varina. He also ministered to the members of St. John Baptist Church of Tappahannock. On June 4, 2017, Reverend Dr. Bruce Burton, Sr. was installed as the twelfth pastor of the historic St. James Baptist Church of Milford. He loved pastoring the church family of St. James.

A photographer and entrepreneur, Bruce was well known for his professionalism and the exceptional quality of his work. He cultivated his gift for photography to help countless individuals chronicle significant milestones and special occasions. Bruce would eventually combine his love for theological studies, passion for photography, and gift for teaching students of all ages to complete a Doctorate of Ministry degree in 2017, focusing on the power of photography and digital imagery in the 21st century church.

Bruce was celebrated for his love for God, warm personality, wit and wisdom. He was gifted in teaching, caring for others and helping them to feel well-loved and respected. He was a man of many talents and hobbies, thoroughly enjoying playing tennis, gardening, playing Jeopardy and watching good movies. He was also a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Of all his accomplishments and affiliations, The Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton's greatest joy was his family. He leaves to continue his legacy and cherish his memory his devoted and loving wife, Mary T. Burton, two daughters: Davonda Smith

(Rashaun) and  
Christine Stephenson (Christopher), a son: Bruce Jr., one granddaughter:  
Rosalind Elyse, three sisters: Linda Dove, Troy Burton and Charlotte Monroe,  
one brother: Charles Burton, Jr. (Mimi), sister-in-law: Elizabeth Rouse  
(Marshall) and a host of relatives, church family,  
friends and former students.

Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton, Sr. loved God, loved people and lived  
a life inspired  
by the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3:13-14 as he shares,  
“Beloved, I do not  
consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what  
lies behind and  
straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of  
the heavenly  
call of God in Christ Jesus.”

# Cemetery Details

## First Baptist Church Cemetery

570 Marsh Street  
Tappahannock, VA 22560

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 22. 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home-Laburnum Ave.  
2110 E. Laburnum Ave.  
Richmond, VA 23222

## Family Hour

JUL 22. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home-Laburnum Ave.  
2110 E. Laburnum Ave.  
Richmond, VA 23222

## Celebration of Life

JUL 23. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. James Baptist Church  
2169 New Market Road  
Richmond, VA 23231



# Tribute Wall



“ *Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *Many condolences on the loss of a great man and father. Our family is praying for yours during your time of grief.*



**Grubb Family (Charlottesville)** - July 22, 2019 at 06:37 PM



“ *My sincerest condolences, praying for you all during this time and always.*



**DeSylvia Bowler Taliaferro** - July 22, 2019 at 05:28 PM

EM

“ *Beloved by many and a Blessing to all!  
Brother Burton shared his gift of teaching for  
many years and always focused on people  
getting better each day! He'll truly be missed  
as his footprint while here spread far and  
wide. My condolences to his family and friends. I know you're  
hurting and I pray that the hurt will get better each moment as time  
goes by! He was truly a gem and now he's home!*



*Ed Martin*

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**Ed Martin** - July 22, 2019 at 04:16 PM

RW

“ *Our condolences and prayers of comfort to  
the Burton family. We will truly miss Mr.  
Bruce. A kind neighbor and friend.  
From,  
The White's  
Jermell, Renee, Coryn, & Camdyn*



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**Renee White** - July 22, 2019 at 01:28 PM

CH

“ *Mrs. Burton and family,  
We were shocked and sadden to hear of the passing of such a dear, sweet, and precious man who whenever you saw him, he would always greet you with his contagious smile and camera in hand. Bruce B. Burton will always be remembered in the hearts of those who attended The School of Theology @ VUU, and had the privilege of knowing Bruce. We pray God will strengthen, bless, and keep you during this season, and in the days ahead.*

*With Deep Sympathy,  
Bishop Alroy S. and Carolyn Henderson*

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**Carolyn Henderson** - July 22, 2019 at 11:45 AM

YJ

“ *Yolonda Johnson sent a virtual gift in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



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**Yolonda Johnson** - July 22, 2019 at 11:13 AM

AB

*I met Mr. Burton ten years ago at Henrico Juvenile Detention Home. We would talk about a multitude of subjects. His classroom was my hangout throughout the school day. It was always a joy when Mr. Bingham would come around because they'd joke on each other's hometown. Mr. Burton helped me when my wife passed and I'm very appreciative of the advice and prayers. My he rest in peace. Your friend  
Anthony Brown.*

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**Anthony Brown** - July 22, 2019 at 02:12 PM

JJ

“ To the Burton Family & Friends:. Condolences & Love to you. Bruce was a school mate of Essex. Our hearts mourn with you. Find strength and comfort knowing God is with you every step. God loves you and so do we. Love, James and Drucilla Acree Jeter.

James and Rev. Drucilla A. Jeter - July 22, 2019 at 09:59 AM

MH

“ Our condolences to the family. May you use this time now to reflect on all those memories you all created over the years. God bless you all!!

Mack & Cameron Hardison

Mack Hardison - July 21, 2019 at 09:21 PM



“ Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr..



July 21, 2019 at 09:05 PM

WD

“ William And Gwendolyn Darby lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.



William and Gwendolyn Darby - July 21, 2019 at 06:29 PM

JS

“ Mrs. Burton, you and your entire family and the St. James Baptist Church, Milford, family have my deepest love and prayers. I absolutely loved my worship experiences as Dr. Burton preached, taught and was just real people, down to earth with me.

*I served as a guest musician and I was always welcomed and made to feel part of St James. He used to love singing with the church, Hold to God's Unchanging Hand! God touched hearts of everybody singing this powerful hymn with your husband leading! Well, now He is in God's Unchanging hand.*

*God holds you and yours in those same hands, especially now. May you all feel peace and God's soothing presence during this bittersweet time.*

*Sincerely,  
Ms. Jacqueline T. Snow*

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**Jacqueline T. Snow** - July 21, 2019 at 03:49 AM

CJ

“ Chris & Larry Johnson purchased the Rose Remembrance for the family of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr..



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**Chris & Larry Johnson** - July 20, 2019 at 11:33 AM

RS

“ A pillar of faith and my #stvu2011 classmate. Rest beloved for we shall meet again.  
Dr. Robin Poole Sessoms, Clinton, MD

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**Robin Sessoms** - July 20, 2019 at 09:00 AM

JJ

“ *Condolences to the family of Bruce Burton.*

Jacquelyn B. Jones - July 20, 2019 at 02:25 AM



*A kind brother .. whenever he walked into the room.. we would shout "Bruuccceeee".. from Jamaica Funk.. he would always break out into a big grin. He would share the vegetables from his garden. God has received an angel.*

Catrina Brown - July 20, 2019 at 12:29 PM

EV

“ *I share an inexpressible loss with the family of the late, Bruce B. Burton.*

Emna J. Valentine - July 19, 2019 at 11:43 PM

TD

“ *Offering profound and deepest condolences to the Burton family! The St. James Baptist Church, Milford, will truly miss his leadership.*

*Sincerely,*

*Tommy and Mary Davis*

Thomas Davis - July 19, 2019 at 09:49 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr..*



July 19, 2019 at 06:23 PM

SF

“ *Sonny And Dianathia Fortune lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



Sonny and Dianathia Fortune - July 19, 2019 at 03:49 PM

RJ

“ *It was a wonderful experience sharing time off and on with Dr. Burton on the campus of STVU. I would see him taking pictures of various events then we ended up in the 2017 Cohort and both received our Doctor of Ministry Degree. He and lovely wife hosted our completion celebration at their home. R.I.P. my brother and friend.*

Rev. Dr. Maceo E. Freeman, Jr. - July 19, 2019 at 03:11 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr..*



July 19, 2019 at 01:46 PM

VF

“ *Verdine A Freeman lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



Verdine A Freeman - July 19, 2019 at 12:14 PM

DG

“ *Deborah Giles lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



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**Deborah Giles** - July 19, 2019 at 11:00 AM

SC

“ *Sheila Claytor lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



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**Sheila Claytor** - July 19, 2019 at 10:16 AM

SB

“ *Sherman Barrack lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



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**Sherman Barrack** - July 19, 2019 at 08:48 AM

FH

“ I came to Richmond 25 years ago to attend seminary. In the spring of my 1st year, I went to work for St. James Baptist Church in Varina just outside of Richmond. I met and made deep friendships with many people at St. James. One friend was Bruce Burton. He was the chair of the ushers and later became a deacon and chair. Bruce reached out to me and made me feel welcome and part of the church family. His wife Mary, also embraced me. I had the great privilege to serve as Youth Minister to his children Davonda, Christine, and Bruce and they have all grown up to reflect the genuine grace wisdom and great character of the parents. His hobby was photography and it was always a wonderful entre' for him to meet new people. During my second year at STVU, the yearbook committee planned to leave out the graduate school section. I invited Bruce to take pictures at the closing celebration and that began his more than 23-year relationship with STVU its students and faculty. Each year I would tease him about when he would enroll. He finally did and didn't stop until he finished the Doctor of Ministry program. Over many years, Bruce took pics of my grandchildren, family events, and headshots. He and Mary were among the few I invited to attend my wedding. I will always cherish those pictures for many years to come. He served his internship with my husband's church and was beloved there also. We lost Bruce Burton this week and I have still not been able to wrap my mind around it. He was such a wonderful light and stable personality knowing always how to make himself a friend to all he encountered. Rest In Peace, my dear friend. Your passing leaves a great big hole in the universe.

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Faith Harris - July 19, 2019 at 12:22 AM

CJ

“ *Enid, Missie and I are deeply sadden. It is hard to express how we feel. Our prayers are with you doing this time of difficulty. May God continue to bless you.*

*Charlyne - Bruce always called me Pee Wee.*

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**Charlyne E. Jackson-Fields** - July 18, 2019 at 10:10 PM

DL

“ *Derrick Lindsey lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



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**Derrick Lindsey** - July 18, 2019 at 09:28 PM

SB

“ *Special prayers for The Burton and St. James family. Rev. Burton always made us feel like we were part of his church family. He will be missed.*

*Shirley M. Berry  
Second Mt Calvary Baptist Church  
Milford Va.*

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**Shirley Berry** - July 18, 2019 at 09:03 PM

JB

“ *Jean Banks lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



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**Jean Banks** - July 18, 2019 at 08:51 PM

FC

“ *May you find comfort in God's word & the memories that you shared with Bruce. Love You Family.*  
*Floraine Young Cunningham*



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**Floraine Young Cunningham** - July 18, 2019 at 08:23 PM

WJ

*A kind, thoughtful and devoted husband, father, grandfather and friend has gone to be with his Heavenly Father. He will be missed but not forgotten. Bill and Cheri James*

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**William James** - July 25, 2019 at 09:14 PM

EV

“ *To the Family of my Brother Bruce, please except my deepest condolences. Bruce was like a Brother growing up. May our Ancestors open the Pearly Gates and receive him with open arms. Rest well my Brother, see you on the other side.*

*Love You Bra*

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**ernest veney** - July 18, 2019 at 07:26 PM

WF

“ *Praying For The Burton Family & The St. James Baptist Church (Milford) We will really miss our Pastor and we're constantly praying for our First Lady*



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**Walker "LT" Childs & Family** - July 18, 2019 at 07:08 PM

EV

“ Ernest Veney lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.



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**Ernest Veney** - July 18, 2019 at 07:00 PM

GC

“ Gertrude Johnson /Mt. Tabor Baptist Chur lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.



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**Gertrude Johnson /Mt. Tabor Baptist Chur** - July 18, 2019 at 04:52 PM

RF

“ Robert & Gloria Fortune lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.



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**Robert & Gloria Fortune** - July 18, 2019 at 04:03 PM

RC

“ Family, thank you for sharing Bruce with VUU/STVU and so many others. Bruce and I shared a love of God, commitment to our Alma Mater & and at one point a last name. Every single time we saw each other our greeting was the same. "Hey Cousin!". Bruce captured many significant moments on film. Through these we can see the world through his smiling & twinkling eyes. To his spirit, "Thank You...Rest On Cousin. See you in the morning"



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**Reverend Dr. MarQuita Carmichael** - July 18, 2019 at 03:56 PM

RS

“ Rev. Donnie Smith lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.



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**Rev. Donnie Smith** - July 18, 2019 at 03:27 PM

TH

“ Thelma Johnson Howerton lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.



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**Thelma Johnson Howerton** - July 18, 2019 at 03:04 PM

DG

“ *My deepest Condolences. My prayers are with the entire family.*



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**Deborah Grimes-Bass** - July 18, 2019 at 02:38 PM

AS

“ *Abiodun O Solanke lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



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**Abiodun O Solanke** - July 18, 2019 at 08:53 AM

PH

*To the Burton family you have our condolences. Reginald & Pauline Holmes.*

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**Pauline Holmes** - July 18, 2019 at 10:42 AM

AB

“ *Antoinette Brown lit a candle in memory of Reverend Dr. Bruce Burlington Burton Sr.*



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**Antoinette Brown** - July 17, 2019 at 03:07 PM



“ We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.

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**March Funeral Homes** - July 17, 2019 at 12:07 PM

RT

*Mary, please accept our prayers of peace, hope and love for you and your beautiful family. It was about almost thirty years ago that we met your family at Saint James. Bruce was always the one bright star that made our Sunday School Class lively and flowing with love. We really grew together in class and church. I went on to become the first female deacon at RMZBC and Bruce was there. Marching on Bruce became a deacon and more. He shared with us when William was licensed to preach as well. So many memories to hold on to! We pray for your strength and comfort at this time as well as for your family. Smile on Bruce, your tour here is complete. Mary, hold on to your memories and may they comfort you along with our mighty Savior Jesus Christ 🙏❤️  
Renita and William Thornton, Jr*

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**Renita Thornton** - July 22, 2019 at 09:31 AM