

Rev. James Harry Neely

August 23, 1940 - February 8, 2018

A Tribute to a Great Man

Rev. James Harry Neely, 77, of Richmond, Virginia, my beloved husband, departed this life on Thursday, February 8, 2018. James was born in St. Augustine, Florida on August 23, 1940 to the late Ella Mae Oxendine and Charles Blake Neely, Sr. He was the second oldest of six siblings.

At the age of ten, James moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to live with his father and older brother. He attended public schools in both Philadelphia and St. Augustine.

James' employment in the field of addictions and treatment began in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1974 as an Outreach Worker with Gaudenzia, Inc. He was later employed as a Counselor at ACT (Achievement Through Counseling and Treatment) from 1976 - 1980.

In September of 1977, James visited the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church and following several visits, confessed the Lord as His Savior in October 1977. Little did James know that at this church he would find the love of his life and an unbelievable partnership. With the guidance and nudge by the Holy Spirit, James and Geraldine were engaged on May 12, 1978 and married on October 14, 1978. James truly spoiled me for 39 years. He called me "the

Babes." We knew that our marriage was made in heaven and we depended on the Holy Spirit to keep us.

Sionne, our first born, stole her Dad's heart from the beginning. Yes, she quickly became a Daddy's girl and any first developmental milestones occurred with him; he tenderly and affectionately called her "Beedum."

In 1980 James acknowledge his call to the ministry under the leadership of Dr. Charles Walker and the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia. In preparing for ministry, he attended the American Baptist College in Nashville, Tennessee, and was awarded the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theology in 1984. While enrolled at the American Baptist College, James was called to serve as Pastor of the Mount Zion Baptist Church in Columbia, Tennessee. He remained there for two and a half years. In 1984 James, Sionne, and I relocated to Richmond, Virginia where he pursued additional studies at the School of Theology at Virginia Union University and Virginia Commonwealth University (Rehabilitation Counseling).

His passion for work in that field continued in Richmond, Virginia with employment at Rubicon, Inc. from 1984 - 2017. He functioned in several capacities including: Counselor (Residential and Outpatient), Facility Coordinator, Director of Program Operations, and Affiliate Liaison to the LHRC, advocating for client rights. He received his certification as a Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) in 1992, and after thirty three years (1984-2017), James retired from Rubicon on April 4, 2017.

After we moved to Richmond, we had the wonderful joy of having a son. What a gift- a girl and a boy! James was ecstatic about Joshua's birth and cried in the delivery room. He was appreciative of the opportunity to be an example for a son. When greeting Joshua, it was with "Hi Son" and a touch on the shoulder.

Together, James and I joined Ebenezer Baptist Church in May 1985 in accordance with his wedding vow to me on October 14, 1978 that "as for our House, we will follow the Lord." Over the years, he served as: Associate Minister, co-teacher of the Christian Growth and Fellowship Church School class, Minister of Evangelism and Visitation, and facilitator of workshops, and seminars in evangelism, prayer and stewardship. With a love of the Word and a commitment to the people. James led the mid-week Bible study at Ebenezer for over 25 years.

"JH," as I called him, possessed a green thumb as evidenced by the variety of plants found in our home, He was also a serious "thrift store" shopper and was able to acquire many great "buys." James was an excellent cook and loved jazz. "Bubba," as he was called by many family members, was a whiz at the meaning of words which gave him an unfair gain in solving puzzles. James loved traveling and spending time with family and friends, attending Family Reunions, and creating a top notched Family Christmas Letter. We would go back and forth for days as if that Christmas Letter was being considered for a national award. The final production had to reflect facts and laughter. He enjoyed his grandchildren and was as excited as they were when it was time to go on trips. This man did not like to waste his time on trivial matters, arrive anywhere late, engage in gossip. or ay outrageous prices for anything.

He was a unique man and not easily forgotten in his many roles. Whenever we were on errands, it was common for someone to walk up to him and say, "Hi, Mr. Neely" and then a "Thank-you." James was a "servant," a giver, and he was always excited about the opportunity to volunteer; and he did so for three days prior to his death. James H. Neely was a Great Man who lived a Fruitful Life for God and man. We honor him today in this Celebration of Life!

In addition to his parents he was also preceded in death by his sister, Mary Alice Oxendine, and brother, Charles B. Neely, Jr.

Rev. James Harry Neely is survived by his loving and devoted wife, Geraldine T. Neely; daughter, Dr. Sionne R. Neely; son, Joshua B. Neely; grandchildren, Jordan M. Neely and Jasiah C. Neely; sisters, Patricia D. Curtright, Kathleen M. Oxendine, and Catherine L. Dortch; brother, Lorenzo A. Neely; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Cemetery Details

Forest Lawn Cemetery

4000 Pilots Lane
Richmond, VA 23222

Previous Events

viewing

FEB 18. 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

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

Service

FEB 19. 11:00 AM (ET)

Ebenezer Baptist Church
216 W. Leigh Street
Richmond, VA 23222

Tribute Wall



“ *Rev. James Harry Neely*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Antoinette Crawley - February 20, 2018 at 08:05 AM



Mr. Neely's retirement party April 2017. Holding his gift; a copy of the Rubicon Philosophy presented to him by Barbara Thornhill.💕💕

Antoinette Crawley - February 20, 2018 at 08:11 AM



I remember James Neely so well. In 1976 I went to work at Achievement through Counseling and Treatment as a counselor. It was my first job after getting my Master's Degree at Temple University. I was completely wet behind the ears but I was also very fortunate to have James as my next door neighbor. I can see James so strong and so devoted to working with the multitudes of souls who were dealing with their drug addictions. Very slowly James and I who were from totally different backgrounds as I am of Jewish descent and a native of Philly and James of course had a totally different background. I grew to love and respect my dear friend James. First I would mosey into his office and begin a chat when I really needed some of his advice and support. He was always willing, always listened so generously with a smile and he had such strength and wisdom. Eventually we would go running together in the park after work. I always felt so lucky to have met this man and was so touched by his friendship. I remember attending his wedding at his church which was obviously so foreign to my experience but my friends and I who attended thoroughly enjoyed our time. He was so happy and on his way to having the job I knew he was perfect for. I also recall seeing his baby and the pride he had on his face and was touched that he allowed me to hold his precious one that day so many years ago. I eventually moved to CAifornia but through all these years i wondered what happened to my friend James. In recent years I would sometimes google his name but never had any luck. Tonight at 11 pm on a Monday I googled Pastor James Neely and found that he had passed away last year. I am so sorry for your loss. . Having known the man that James was I know your loss is large but I also know that he has definitely touched many in such a powerful and authentic way. I wish I could have talked to him one more time and I too am sad for that. His old friend, Mark Poloway

Mark Poloway - September 24, 2019 at 02:04 AM

JT

“ To Mrs. Nelly and the family. You have my deepest condolences in the temporary lost of a 'True Angel' on earth. Kind words of encouragement was his nature. Peacefully walking daily was his demeanor. Holistic care for the well being of others was his calling. Your strong relationship with our true 'Father's 'will allow you to shed tears as often as needed, laugh and smile at the many memories and most importantly taking great care of those grandchildren he loved so dearly. You will see him again. Much love and respect to the entire family. Jacinta Troublefield

Jacinta Troublefield - February 19, 2018 at 11:16 AM

JB

“ Dearest Gerri and Family, Larry and I extend our deepest condolences to you and pray that God's peace, grace, and wonderful memories will undergird you until you see Rev. Neely again. Know that you are each blessed and loved,

Larry and Jackie Branche

Jackie Branche - February 18, 2018 at 05:17 PM



“ Thanks for your selfless service.
Nancy B.

Nancy Bray - February 18, 2018 at 05:07 PM

MK

“ My thoughts and prayers go out to 'Gerri' and all of her family.

Mary Kornegay---fellow North Carolina Central Univ alumni.

Mary Kornegay - February 18, 2018 at 01:42 PM

DH

“ Dorothy A Hamilton lit a candle in memory of Rev. James Harry Neely



Dorothy A hamilton - February 18, 2018 at 01:24 AM

MP

“ Michael Price describes Mr. Neely with this bible passage:

Matthew 16:18 King James Version (KJV)

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

RIP my friend

Michael Price - February 17, 2018 at 07:44 PM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Rev. James Harry Neely.



February 15, 2018 at 10:25 PM

AC

“ Antoinette Crawley lit a candle in memory of Rev. James Harry Neely



antoinette crawley - February 15, 2018 at 06:39 PM

IW

“ *Irma Welch lit a candle in memory of Rev. James Harry Neely*



Irma Welch - February 15, 2018 at 04:16 PM

IW

“ *Mr. Neely, we met in the 80's when you were on Grace Street, ever since then you were a great friend in my life. The talks we would have were always so encouraging and real. You put human dignity FIRST. I will truly miss you and I thank GOD for allowing you to be in my life and the knowledge you share with me and everyone. Rest Mr. Neely you deserve to be at home with your FATHER in heaven. Love you dearly.
To the FAMILY: My Condolences. What a GREAT MAN HE WAS.*

Irma Welch

Irma Welch - February 15, 2018 at 04:12 PM

KH

“ *Proud to have known and seen the walk of such a good man. A legend to many.
God Bless*

Kelvin Henderson - February 15, 2018 at 06:56 AM

JM

“ *He was a good preacher and a wonderful soul.
Jim McCrary, D.Min*

Jim McCrary - February 14, 2018 at 04:31 PM

DH

“ My condolences to the Neely family . When I first came to Richmond I went straight to 314 west Grace in 1989. Mr. Neely was the director from that day forward he was like a father to me I could talk to him about anything and he would always find time to help me. . My heart is heavy I feel I have loss the greatest man on earth. Where would I be today if it was not for him by my side. Mr. Neely you will be truly missed go home and get some rest because you did a great job on earth in helping a bunch of sick people become productive citizens I love You.

Dorothy A hamilton - February 14, 2018 at 01:35 AM

AF

“ My Heartfelt condolences to his Family.
Mr Neely was like a Father to me ..I met Mr Neely when I was 21yrs old .HE gave me hope at a time in my life when the world was closing in on me.I turn 52 February 8.
My Heart is saddened by your Loss thoughts and prayers are with you & your family.



Alexa Edwards and Family. - February 13, 2018 at 10:30 PM

AC

“We believe that each of us can, with trust in and love for the family of man, triumph over the enemy within; that in our development we shall move toward and achieve the summit of human dignity.”
Rubicon, Inc.

Mr. Neely made it a point to try and visit every unit at Rubicon when he came on campus, which was everyday. He ALWAYS took time out to see how we were doing. He cared and he always knew how to lift you up if you were feeling down. He could be rather comical to at times too. He made it a point to check on the clients, and made sure that things were running as smoothly as possible. Oh, he would get on you if you did something wrong, but he had a forgiving heart. He was always present at staff/client events, and he knew the TRUE meaning of unconditional love. Before he fully retired, he told me that he had to go because the family feeling is gone and it's not the same anymore. He said that he only stayed around until the transition so that he could see how we, (Rubicon Staff), would turn out. I learned a lot from Mr. Neely and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to meet such a wonderful man. He had a passion for recovery and the Rubicon Philosophy was his ROCK.

Thank you Mr. Neely, you ran the race and finished. Job well done my friend.

*Love you,
Antoinette Crawley*

Antoinette Crawley - February 13, 2018 at 10:06 AM

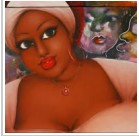
KW

“ To the Neely Family,

You have our deepest sympathy during this time. Rev. Neely was a really nice person and I will miss our discussions about jazz music! Be comforted knowing he is in a good place with the Lord.

*Sincerely,
Keith, Catherine and Christopher Willingham*

Keith Willingham - February 13, 2018 at 09:28 AM



“ To The Neely Family,

Our prayers go out to the entire family. Reverend Neely has been such a wonderful spiritual influence in all of our lives. We thank God for his time as an excellent example of true man of God. We love each of you and are praying for comfort during this time.

*God Bless you,
Silas, Valerie, Evan and Caelon Colvin
(Kenneth, Kaleb and Nova)*

Valerie Colvin - February 13, 2018 at 09:14 AM



“ 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.

March Funeral Homes - February 12, 2018 at 12:25 PM