

## *The Bridge Builder*

*An old man going a lone highway,  
Came, at the evening cold and gray,  
To a chasm vast and deep and wide.  
Through which was flowing a sullen tide  
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,  
The sullen stream had no fear for him;  
But he turned when safe on the other side  
And built a bridge to span the tide.*

*"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,  
"You are wasting your strength with building here;  
Your journey will end with the ending day,  
You never again will pass this way;  
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide,  
Why build this bridge at evening tide?"*

*The builder lifted his old gray head;  
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,  
"There followed after me to-day  
A youth whose feet must pass this way.  
This chasm that has been as naught to me  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;  
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him!"*

*By Will Allen Dromgoole*

### *Honorary Pallbearers*

Deacons of Rising Daughter Baptist Church

### *Active Pallbearers*

Independence Lodge #69

### *Floral Attendants*

Ushers of Rising Daughter Baptist Church

### *Interment*

Rising Daughter Baptist Church Cemetery

### *Requiem*

Mt. Orum Baptist Church

66 Mount Orum Lane, Waverly, GA 31565

### *Acknowledgements*

The family of Richard Wilson wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to our many friends for every act of kindness, love and sympathy shown during our loved one's illness and our bereavement.

Please continue to pray for us.

May God bless you always.

The Family

### *Final Arrangements Entrusted to:*



#### **Darien Funeral Home**

(912) 437-4123

1000 C A Devillars Street • Darien, Georgia 31305

#### **Royal Funeral Home**

(912) 427-4254

P.O. Box 163 • 247 W. Pine Street • Jesup, Georgia 31598

# *Loving Memory* of **Richard** **"Professor" Wilson**



*Friday, August 19, 2016*

**11:00 am**

*Rising Daughter Baptist Church*

29570 N. Hwy 17

Waverly, Georgia 31565

*Rev. Michael Rivers, Pastor, Eulogist*

## Obituary

Richard Wilson, 90, a native of McIntosh County and former resident of Camden County passed away surrounded by his family Friday, Aug. 12, 2016, at the Senior Care Center in Brunswick following a lengthy illness.

Richard Wilson, who was simply, but respectfully and affectionately known as "Professor," was a man of perpetual movement. He used his God-given talents, acquired knowledge and inherent compassion to touch the lives of his neighbors near and far, but, most especially, in the small communities of coastal McIntosh and Camden counties in Georgia. There was no place he enjoyed being more than here.

He was born Oct. 8, 1925, in Meridian to the late Sister Rosa Lee Sams and late Joe Wilson. Richard accepted Christ as his savior and guide at an early age and was baptized at the First African Baptist Church of Meridian, where he remained active throughout his life. It was in this church, when he was still a teenager that Richard's leadership skills began to flourish, when he served as secretary of the Sunday. Richard later joined Rising Daughter Baptist Church in Waverly after moving there to teach school.

Richard's love for learning was nurtured by his first teacher, Mrs. Ophelia Young, who taught 25 students in grades 1- 7 in the one-room Hudson Elementary School. He graduated from Todd Grant High School in Darien, then went off to learn welding through President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal National Youth Administration (NYA) program for youth 16 to 25 years old. NYA was part of the Works Progress Administration, which helped put Americans back to work after the Great Depression.

After completing his welding training, Richard worked as a welder at J.A. Jones in the shipyard in Brunswick before he was drafted to serve his country in World War II.

At age 19, Richard entered the United States Army on March 28, 1944, and left with an honorable discharge and rank of corporal on April 22, 1946. During these two years, he served as a dispatcher in the China-Burma-India Theater of war helping to rebuild supply routes.

In 1946, with the war over and support from the GI Bill, Richard entered Savannah State College and graduated in 1949 with a bachelor's degree in history. He earned his first master's degree in 1950 from Florida A&M University in Tallahassee and a second master's degree in 1971 from the University of Maryland.

In the early 1950s, he was hired by Camden County Board of Education to teach at the Waverly Colored School. The school was one of those schools constructed in the early 20th century, throughout the rural South, by philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, founder of Sears and Roebuck department stores. The Rosenwald Schools were built for African-American children who were barred from attending the white-only county-supported schools during the Jim Crow era. Richard taught at this school until the 1960s when it was

consolidated with Bowles Elementary School in Tarboro.

At Bowles Elementary School, Richard served as the principal. He also continued to teach and was often seen driving the school bus to ferry students between home and school. Here, he instituted one of the nation's first school breakfast programs because he knew that hungry students could not learn.

When the Camden County Board of Education desegregated the schools in 1971, Richard was appointed assistant principal at Woodbine Elementary School. After being passed over for a principal position, he filed an employment discrimination complaint with the Office for Civil Rights in the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare (now the U.S. Department of Education). He waited through a long investigation, which found that, indeed, Mr. Wilson's rights had been violated and he had been the best qualified candidate for the job. He was awarded back pay and, at the first opportunity, was appointed principal at the St Marys Elementary School and later as principal of the Woodbine Elementary School.

After nearly 40 years of service with the Camden School Board of Education, Richard Wilson retired in 1989. In all those years, he did not miss more than five days from work for illness or personal leave. He was devoted to his students. He cared about them and was always there to inspire and support them and their families long after he ceased being their teacher. He eagerly followed current events, reading at least five newspapers regularly.

Mr. Wilson was a deacon at Rising Daughter Baptist Church. He was raised in the Independence Lodge No. 69 in Woodbine. He became a 33rd degree Mason in 1981 in Tampa, Fla. He was the second commander-in-chief elected at the John Wesley Dobbs Consistory in Folkston where he served for a period spanning 15 years in the 1970s and 1980s. He was a Shriner in Lodge No. 21 in Savannah. Mr. Wilson was a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

Richard married Beatrice Delores Ketterer from Baxley. Mrs. Wilson, also an educator, taught business education in Woodbine. This union was blessed with three children. He lost his beloved wife in 2010.

He leaves to cherish his memory: one daughter, Seketta Z. Skoloda of Fredericksburg, Va.; two sons, Robert F.K. Wilson of Valdosta and Richard K. Wilson of Kingsland; four grandchildren, Raekwon Wilson, Quentin Wilson, Adam Skoloda and Zoe Skoloda; one brother, Robert Sams, of Bolden; two sisters, Margaret Baker and Blanche Tillman, both of Meridian; son-in-law, Albert Skoloda; sister-in-law, Annie C. Putman, of Washington, D.C.; five nieces, Lovelle Baker, Joyce Grant, Brenda Jones, Gwen Sams Lynch and Jennifer Tucker; five nephews, Jerard Baker, Barry Jones, Michael Putman, Anthony Skipper and Leon Skipper; and a host of other grieving relatives and dear friends.

## Order of Service

Reverend Johnny Wrice Presiding

Processional

Final Viewing

Selection.....*Amazing Grace*.....Choir

Prayer.....

Scripture

Old Testament..... Jerard Baker

New Testament..... Reverend JJ Thomas

Solo ..... *If I Can Help Somebody*..... Reverend Johnny Rice

Chairman of Deacon Board ..... Deacon Oren Wrice

Tribute..... Mrs. Beverly Hudley

Reading ..... Reverend Wayne Anderson

Eulogy ..... Reverend Michael Rivers

Resolution .....

Recessional