

*A Celebration of Life and Service
for the Late*



Walter Lee Owens

Sunrise: March 25, 1920 ~ Sunset: July 14, 2008

*Saturday, July 19, 2008
11:00 am*

*Dr. Walter L. Johnson, Jr., Pastor
Dr. Danny R. Hollins, Officiating
Mr. Rudolph Williams, Program Guide*

Hope Spring Missionary Baptist Church ~ 5190 Livingston Road ~ Jackson, Mississippi 39213

Obituary

*"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens."
Ecclesiastes 3:1*

"A time to be Born"

Walter Lee Owens was born March 25, 1920 in Hazlehurst, Mississippi to the late Annie Harris and Charlie Owens. Five sisters preceded him in death: Vivian Thompson, Margie Thomas, Mrs. Charlie Collins, Mrs. Cleotha Lanham, and Clara Taylor; two brothers: Barnis Owens and Hoyt Owens and a loving sister-in-law, Mrs. Mary Bell Poindexter.

"A time to Plant"

Deacon Owens received his early education at St. Matthew's School. He was a hard worker and a master mechanic and carpenter. The two wood podiums that adorn our church today are the fine craftsmanship of his handiwork. He joined the armed services and was a decorated World War II Veteran.

"A time to Love"

Upon returning home with a honorable discharge, Walter married the love of his life, Mrs. Florence Hicks Owens. They were married for over 62 years. She preceded him in death on August 29, 2006.

Although he and his wife had no biological children, they raised the following as their own: Mrs. Johnnie Owens Collins, Dr. Bettye Parker Smith, Mrs. Bertha Elaine Smith, Mrs. Sadie Maxine Ware, Earnestine Cage, Walter Lee Davis, Lillie Mae Davis Jackson, and Otha Lee Ware.

Shortly after his union in marriage, Bro. Owens professed his faith in Jesus Christ. He was baptized by Rev. R.W. Crawford and Deacon Pete Woodcock under the leadership of Rev. James McClenty. When asked in what capacity he desired to work in 1946, Bro. Owens chose to sing in the choir. Only a few years passed before he was elected vice-president of that choir.

Bro. Owens joined the Sunday school and was elevated to a teacher in the late 40's. He taught class #5, where he found great joy in working with the young men of Hope Spring. A couple years later he was elected Assistant Sunday school Superintendent under the leadership of Bro. Oliver Williams. Upon the resignation of Bro. Williams a year later, Deacon Owens was elected Sunday school Superintendent. He served in this position until November 1997, a period of 44 years.

With a *"made-up-mind"* to serve God for the *"balance of his days,"* Deacon Owens was crowned a deacon in 1955, along with Haven Williams. Hope Spring had only five deacons at this time. With this ordination, Hope Spring now had seven dutiful deacons.

In keeping with his deep spiritual nature, Deacon Walter L. Owens, joined the Baptist Training Union (BTU) because he was eager to learn more about God's word and to work more effectively on God's program. Because of his intense desire and firm commitment to service, he was elected Director of the BTU in less than one year. Under his leadership, the "Union" took on a new life and grew from three

classes to seven classes for all age groups. Deacon Owens served as Director of the BTU, (later renamed NBC, Nurture for Baptist Churches), until November 1977, when he was hospitalized.

Deacon Owens served as church treasurer, he was instrumental in opening the church's first checking and saving account. He remained a faithful steward over the church's finances for many years.

Deacon Owens was appointed Director of Christian Education and Vacation Bible School. He was involved in many of the church's choir trips, conventions, and camps. He loved people, and young people had a very special place in his heart.

During Deacon Owens tenure, he witnessed the re-completion of two church buildings. He witnessed church growth and declines. He saw the church experience times of prosperity and times of meager existence. He witnessed times of turbulence and times of peace. Regardless of the situation, Deacon Owens believed in the scriptural text wherein Jesus Christ instructed his disciples that *"Upon this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

During times when this church was without a pastor, Deacon Owens headed the Pulpit Committee and gave sound directions to all auxiliaries of the church. He served as Chairman of the Deacon Board, and at times filled the void when we were without a pastor. When we were discouraged, he had words to brighten our day. He told us that we are not orphans, *"God is with us where-so-ever we go. He will protect us and strengthen us."* Deacon Owens was strongly rooted and grounded in the word of God. He challenged us to read the Bible and pray daily.

When asked if he was satisfied with his life, his remark was, *"If I had to relive my life, I would not do things differently, I would choose the same path I am in today, for there is no greater joy than being in the will of God."*

Deacon Owens was known as a master mechanic in the West Jackson area of Lynch Street in the 60's. Many family, friends, and church members visited him at his shop for some type of *"car repair"* with a *"pay me later"* understanding.

Mr. Owens was honored with *"This Is Your Life"* by his church family and was inducted into the Church Hall of Fame.

A life well spent in His Service, Mr. Owens leaves to cherish his memories: two sisters: Thelma Young, and Katie Mangum (Rev. Arie Mangum); one brother, Johnny T. Owens (Jeanette); sister-in-law, Rachael Owens; brother-in-law, Lee Davis Thompson, and a host of nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Order of Service

Processional.....Ministers and Family

Song..... *"I know it was the Blood"* Hope Spring Mass Choir

Scripture

Old TestamentReverend Arie Mangum

New Testament..... Dr. Arthur Harris

Prayer..... Reverend Leroy Smith

Expressions

As A Neighbor Brother Charles Lawson

As A Friend and Church Member.....Deacon Harrison Matory, Sr.

Solo..... Reverend Spencer Houseworth

Words of Encouragement Dr. Walter L. Johnson, Jr.

Obituary *Read Silently* Soft Music

Acknowledgements

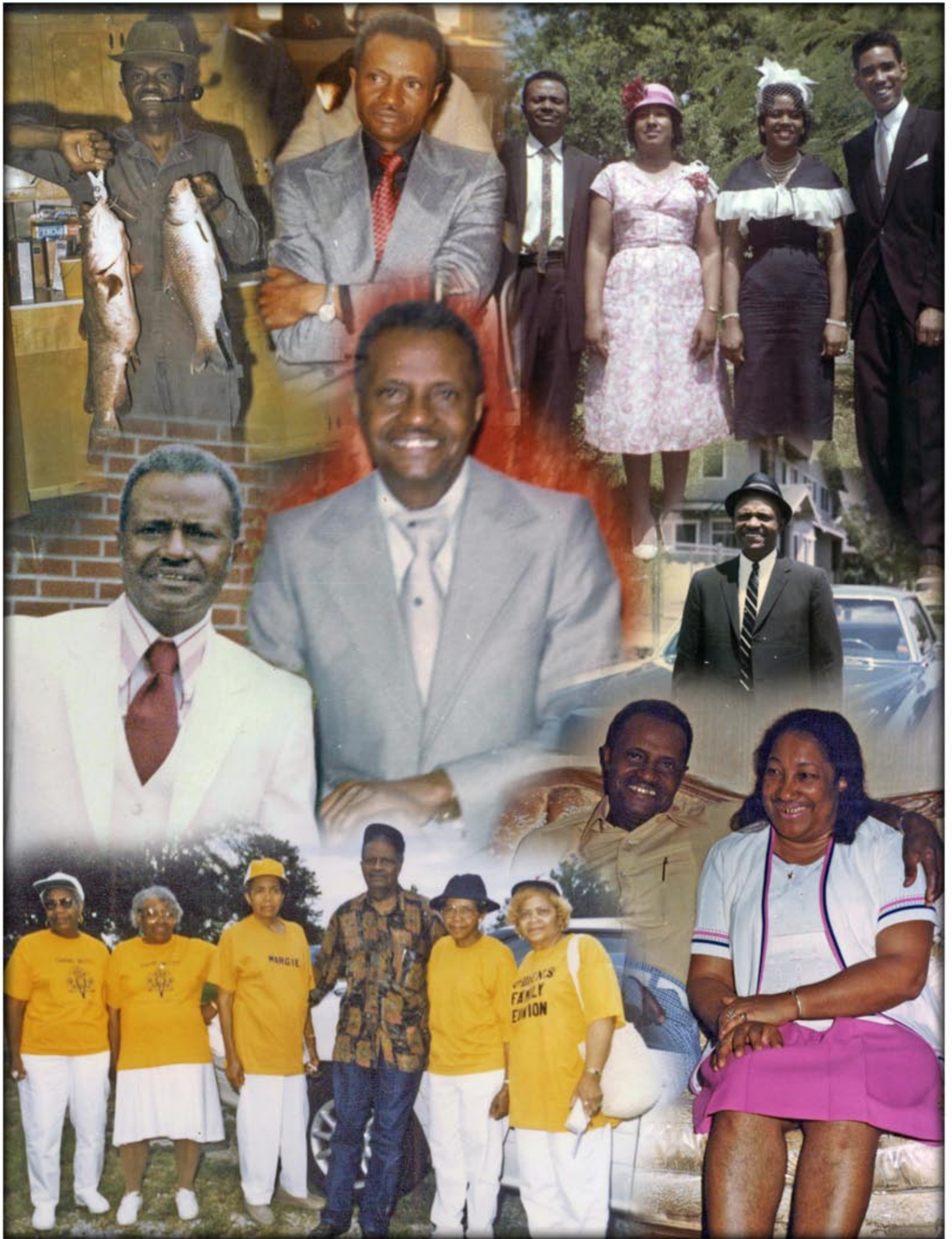
Solo..... Brother Charlie Bruce

Eulogy.....Reverend Danny R. Hollins

Funeral Directors in Charge

Recessional





Acknowledgments

The family of Mr. Walter L. Owens, extends sincere gratitude to friends, far and near, for all expressions of kindness during the homegoing of our loved one. If you bowed to ask God's blessings, we thank you for your prayers. If you telephoned or visited, we thank you for remembering. If you sent flowers, cards, food or extended other courtesies, we received them with sincere thanks. If you interrupted your busy schedule to participate in, or attend the services, we are eternally grateful.

A very heartfelt and very special thanks to the staff at MS Veterans State Home and VA Medical Center. A special relative, Mr. Andrew Harris who came nightly to visit with Mr. Owens, and another relative, Mrs. Thelma Smith (his oldest cousin) who grew up with him.

Honorary Pallbearers

Deacons and Trustees of Hope Spring M.B. Church

Active Pallbearers

Lee Nathan Matory
Walter L. Davis
Mark L. Jackson
Kendy Owens

Harrison Matory, Jr.
Henry Ainsworth
Alexander Mumford
Edwin Smith

Otha Ware

Flower Bearers

Bailey Avenue Garden Club
Hope Spring Mass Choir

Interment

Hope Spring Cemetery
Forest Avenue Extension

Repast

Hope Spring M.B. Church
Reverend R.L. White Fellowship Hall

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Smith Mortuary
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Clinton, MS 39056
Phone (601) 924-6300

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