



Rev. John William Laney

September 9, 1929 - July 28, 2020

Born in 1929 in Hickory, NC, John spent his formative years in the nearby cotton mill town of Brookford, NC. John died peacefully on 7/28/2020 at his home in Asheville, NC (his home for the past 10 years) surrounded by his loving family.

John was educated in North Carolina public schools—graduating from Hickory High School. He graduated from Maryville College in Tennessee (B.A.) and Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania (M.Div)--just after Martin Luther King, Jr. graduated from the same seminary.

John served as Minister of Education at Bethesda First Baptist Church in Bethesda, MD for 5 years, then as an American Baptist pastor for more than sixty years. In 1956, he was the founding pastor of Twinbrook Baptist Church in Rockville, MD, where he served as pastor for thirty years. He also pastored in upstate NY for 5 years. In retirement, he served as interim pastor for 14 different churches in MD, DE, VA, NY and TN. John participated in numerous regional, national and international church positions-- including serving as President of the International Baptist Peace Fellowship.

He is survived by his wife of 16 years, Joan Nowell Yarborough; children George Laney, Falling Waters, W.V.; Mary Anne Rogers (Wes), Murray, KY; and Charles Laney (Kelley), Greenville, SC. Step-children Rev. Julie Yarborough (Rev. Jeff Markay), Chatham, NJ; Susan Jorjorian (Byron), Franklin, TN; Jim Yarborough (Sheila Cain), Beidweiler, Luxembourg; and chosen son Fairborz Rakhshan (Leila), Rochester, MN. Grandchildren Lane

Greenbank, Marny Britt, Elijah Laney, Jonathan Rogers, Holly Constantino, C.J. Laney, William Laney, Matthew and Elizabeth Markay, Katelyn and Ryan Jorjorian, Piper and Liam Yarborough, Kourosh and Anahita Rakhshan, and 3 great-grandchildren. John was pre-deceased by his siblings Richard Laney, Myrtle Franklin and Mary Alice Heath.

John is remembered for affecting the lives of many families through his ministry. He was known for his ecumenical efforts, civil rights, women's rights, peace, environmental awareness, LGBT rights, advocacy for immigrants and the homeless, economic fairness, and social justice. In 1963, John participated in the March on Washington where Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech. John's progressive thinking was truly ahead of his time. His sermons challenged many and his life no doubt made a positive difference in this world.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Baptist Peace Fellowship at www.bpfna.org/donate

Tribute Wall



“ *Rev. John William Laney*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *I fondly remember John as a devoted disciple of Christ who embraced everyone as a sister and brother, and whose life was committed to creating a more beloved community where every basic human need would met and every human right respected.*

John was a strong and effective ally in ecumenical and interfaith work focusing on the needs of the marginalized and opposed. His spiritual grounding made him sufficiently strong as to be a gentleman. I was privileged to have him as a trusted friend for decades.

My condolences are extended to Joan and extended family. May the fond memories, abiding faith and eternal love provide comfort and strength.

Mansfield “Kasey” Kaseman - August 07, 2020 at 02:08 PM



“ *John was our pastor at Twinbrook Baptist Church during our years as a young family, He led us by his example of Christian love through Social Justice and Inclusiveness. His words and examples still resonate in us today in this time of turmoil and injustice and reminds us there is much work for good people to do. RIP, John and Thank you. We send our deepest condolences to Joan and his family.*

Earl and Elaine Gross

elaine gross - July 31, 2020 at 11:47 AM

CC

Rev Laney inspired me growing up in TBC, along with so many other young people, to see injustices, learn with and be open to all people, and engage in actions to foster peace and social justice. John's life is magnified in all the minds challenged and all the hearts changed by his words and example. Thank you, John, for lighting the path forward. We will carry on.

Camy Clough - August 07, 2020 at 04:21 PM

MA

*I too grew up at the church with Reverend Laney. I loved being there and the message I got was "love everyone." He was extremely instrumental in my spiritual search for love, and I fondly remember him as the beginning of finding the truth in God in my own way. I am so glad he continued to support the Twinbrook Baptists as a welcoming congregation, up to the end. His vision carries on—Love one another.
Martine Paran Palmiter*

martine - May 28, 2023 at 06:45 AM

Never Again



“ To Joan and all the family -

John was a gentle soul who taught me much about how to be a better person and follower of Jesus. Along with his gentle spirit was a firm determination to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). I will miss him greatly. You and your family will be in my prayers.

James Garrison

James Garrison - July 30, 2020 at 12:41 PM

TP

“ So many memories but my favorite sermon of his was the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. His leadership in diversity and The Word, in general, was a true blessing for us.

Tim Parris - July 30, 2020 at 10:47 AM