

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

What a Mighty God we serve. To God Be the Glory!  
We deeply appreciate your helpful, giving ways,  
your generous heart and your unselfishness displays.  
We thank you for your kindness; we will not forget.

**May God bless and keep you in His loving care.**

## INTERMENT

Monday - September 28, 2020  
11:00 A.M.

Manasota Memorial Park  
1221 53rd Avenue East Bradenton, FL 34203



## ARRANGEMENTS BY

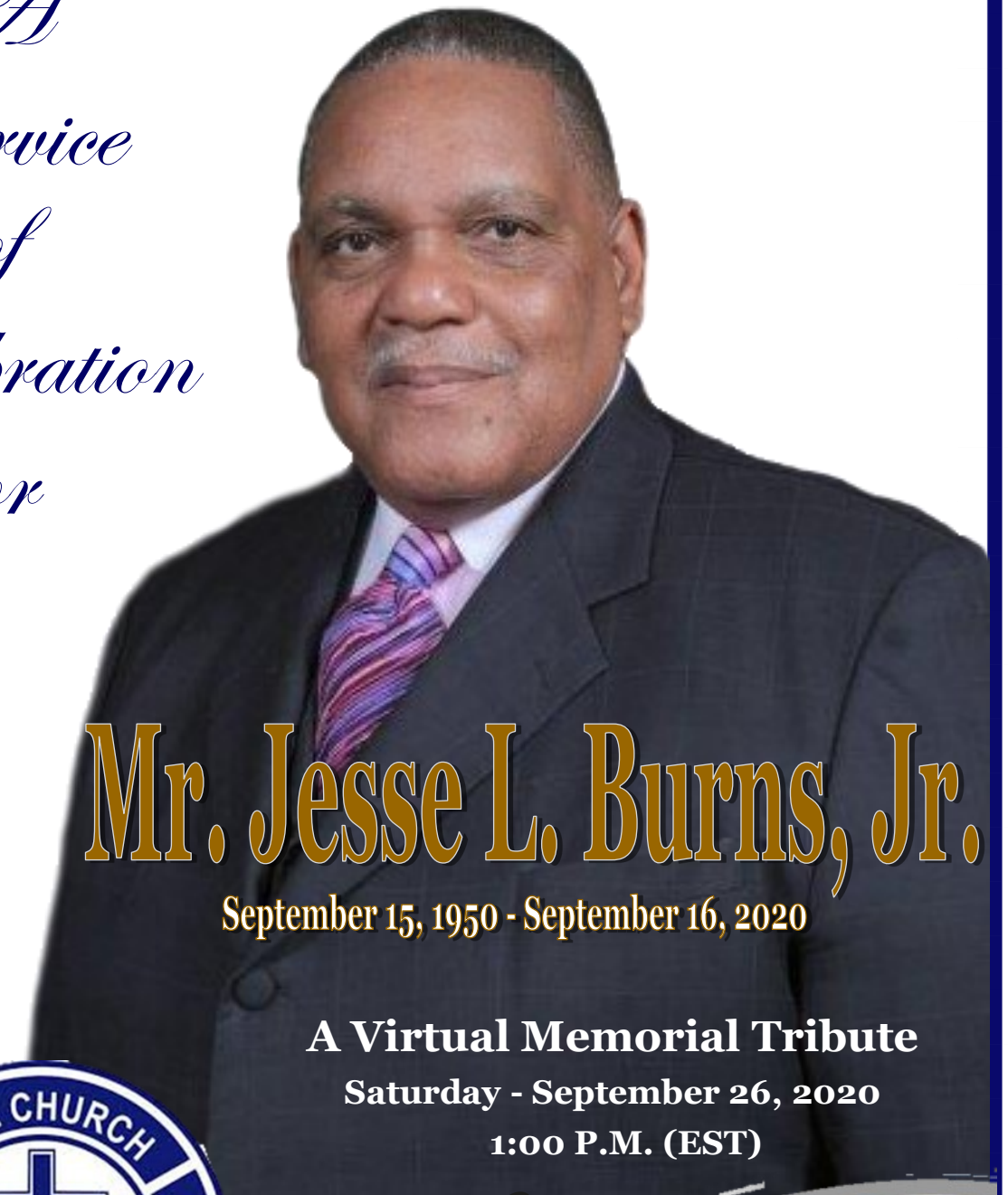
**Postell's Mortuary**  
811 North Powers Drive Orlando, FL 32808

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Memory of  
Brother Jesse Burns should be given to  
Saint Paul AME Church, PO Box 2223  
Ocala, FL 34478  
or Givelify: <https://giv.li/mnebz1>.



Program created and designed by  
**Patricia Wright - EEDLO President #8**

# A Service of Celebration for



# Mr. Jesse L. Burns, Jr.

September 15, 1950 - September 16, 2020

**A Virtual Memorial Tribute**

**Saturday - September 26, 2020**

**1:00 P.M. (EST)**



## Saint Paul A.M.E. Church

718 NW Seventh Street Ocala, FL 34475

Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson, Jr. - Presiding Prelate

The Reverend Henry L. Postell - Presiding Elder

The Reverend Jeffrey J. Dove, Pastor

The Reverend David L. Green - Eulogist

LEADERSHIP  
is the  
CAPACITY  
to  
TRANSLATE VISION  
into  
REALITY

*“When I can read my title clear To mansions in the skies. I’ll bid  
farewell to every fear, And wipe my weeping eyes.  
Should earth against my soul engage, And fiery darts be hurled,  
Then I can smile at Satan’s rage, And face a frowning world.  
Let cares like a wild deluge come, Let storms of sorrow fall!  
May I but safely reach my home; My God, my heaven my all.  
There shall I bathe my weary soul In seas of heavenly rest,  
And not a wave of trouble roll Across my peaceful breast.*

Jessie Burns will be remembered as a stalwart member of the A.M.E. Church committed to the Lay Organization at all levels. For years, I watched him move from his local church in Bradenton, FL to the President of the Connectional Lay Organization with much tenacity.

His love for our “Zion” was deeply rooted.

**Tyrone L. Presley**  
Former Treasurer of the CLO and  
Former Chair of the CLEDC



Jesse was my brother. We engaged in discussions that stretched into amiable debates, mused about church machinations, and laughed until we cried. I admired his keen intellect and in matched leadership skills. May his soul rest easy until we meet again.

**Sandra Jo Bonner Hadley**



## Tributes of Love

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  FINANCE DEPARTMENT

To our brothers and sisters in Christ of St. Paul AME Church and family:  
The Connectional Finance Department, Delorse, and I extend our deepest sympathies to you as we share in your grief and sorrow today. Please know that we are praying *for* and *with* you as you celebrate the life of your devoted servant and our dear friend, **Mr. Jesse L. Burns, Jr.**

As a fellow lay member, Jesse's work on the academic and connectional levels of leadership are well documented. I admired his astute capabilities and faithful service. Edward Waters College and the AME Church Lay Organization has have benefited greatly from his dedication and ministrations. We will fondly remember and strive to continue his legacy and unwavering dedication to God, the AME Church, and church family.

Excerpted from a letter from Richard Lewis Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer of AME Church

To the Family & Friends of President Burns  
**The Fourth Episcopal District  
Lay Organization**  
expresses our deepest sympathy on the passing  
of our Brother, Friend and Former  
Connectional President Jesse Burns

We recognize his work and service to the laity of the Eleventh Episcopal District and most importantly the Connectional AME Church. President Burns served with distinction as an International Christian leader of laity in African Methodism. Through his leadership, the Lay Organization ministry is still alive and well in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through his work, we stand as leaders forging ahead in love and service. We are grateful that his touch made the difference in the lives of many and as he has moved from labor to reward; we know he has reached his new home—heaven.

**Jerry Turner - President**



May the spirit of our Savior provide peace and power.... May the love of the Lord allow us to celebrate our brother's legacy and now his liberation. Let us remember Brother Jesse, reflect on his vision and now rejoice for his eternal victory!!!

As Always,  
**Reginald “Reggie” McGill**



Jesse Burns, to me, was a passionate leader as President for the CLO, incredibly generous with his time. No matter how overwhelmed or busy he was in his life, he was willing to answer inquiries for you to accomplish your tasks. One of Jesse’s goals in life was to make the CLO a better organization; in his own way, he achieved that goal. He will always hold a position of influence in the Lay Organization and also in my heart. It was a joy to work closely with Jesse Burns.

Peace,  
**Florence J. Warren - 2nd Episcopal District**  
Former Connectional Director of Lay Activities



**Wonderful Friend and Brilliant Visionary - The Leader**

Florida brags of bearing good fruit... and **Jesse L. Burns** was evidence of that. Zeroing in on his work in the Connectional Lay Organization, I thank God for his belief that mustard seed faith was enough. As the 10<sup>th</sup> President of the Connectional Lay Organization, serving for six years, furthering the mission was accomplished via the **Brown-Williams Mentoring Program** and **“Envision 5,000”** – a membership growth plan. The business sessions were enhanced with a “swat force” called the Executive Team producing **Action Summaries** to give delegates an outline of action items to implement back at the local church. In 2005 - the **“Black Tie Affair”** – a Presidential reception, along with a concert served to raise funds to support selected AME colleges and schools (**\$50,000 at the inaugural event**). Administrative excellence happened with developing standards/**procedures for the Nominating Committee** in 2005 and the **Budget Oversight Committee** for real time budget monitoring. Of note, is his determination to respect the administration of former President James L. Williams, by making **AMEV-Alert** a "high" priority that honors the legacy of African Methodism. Global outreach led to an **African excursion to Johannesburg** in 2006. A social justice theme led to the first **AMEs On the Hill** in 2007 during the Biennial Convention in Washington, DC where the keynote speaker was the newly minted Speaker of the House, the Honorable **Nancy Pelosi**. In 2009, the **T.A.A.G** was introduced (Transition At A Glance) to provide each delegate with a complete record of transactions at the 29<sup>th</sup> biennial session. Jesse Burns prayed and walked out on faith believing in the power of prayer! I am grateful God ordained that our paths would cross and stay connected until death. In fact, on May 31<sup>st</sup>, in the midst of his health challenges, Bro Jesse planned and executed the **first local Lay Day with a Connectional flavor in this COVID19** pandemic season at St Paul AME in Ocala with focus on Social Justice. He didn’t have to do it, but he did – with excellence as only our friend and soldier of the cross would.

I will always remember **Jesse, my friend**, who never let you go through tough times without making sure you knew that he cared. A refreshing comment and offer to help kept you from wallowing in pity, only to have him redefine the problem bringing dignity to an obvious debacle. Later, when he reminded you that he had been “right,” what could you do, but smile. Then, it was never mentioned again.

Jesse, **thank you for modeling excellence in lay witness/lay ministry**. Then **"living while Black,"** you managed to **love unconditionally**. We have grabbed the baton to carry on, never letting your vision end until it is passed on... to continue the race you ran so well!

Sistah “Jackie”

**Jacquelyn Dupont - Walker I Director**  
Social Action Commission – AME Church and  
Chair – AMEV-Alert Committee

*The Order of Celebration*

*The Reverend Jeffrey Dove - Presiding*

**MUSICAL PRELUDE**

**THE PRAYER** Mr. Nicholas Causey - East Conference Lay President, EEDLO

**THE READING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE**  
Ms. Adrian McWilliams - Central Conference Lay President, EEDLO

**THE MUSICAL SELECTION** “Great is Thy Faithfulness” Mr. Jamarien Moore  
Min. of Music, Bethel AME - Tallahassee

**REFLECTIONS OF JESSE**

*From the Leadership*

**BISHOP ADAM J. RICHARDSON, JR. - SENIOR BISHOP**

**BISHOP E. EARL MCCLOUD - CLO COMMISSION CHAIR**

**MR. M. ABEDNEGO MAKITI - CONNECTIONAL LAY PRESIDENT**

**MS. PATRICIA WRIGHT - ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT LAY PRESIDENT**

**RESOLUTIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** “I Can Only Imagine” artist: Tamala Mann

*About his Leadership*

**MR. JOHNNIE TELLIS FORMER CLO 3RD VP - TENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**

**MR. SIMEON RHODEN FIFTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT LAY PRESIDENT**

**PHOTOGRAPHIC TRIBUTE**

*About his Friendship*

**MR. CARL DAVIS TENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**

*About his Stewardship*

**MRS. MARIE DIXON JONES CLASSLEADER - SAINT PAUL A.M.E., OCALA**

**THE MUSICAL SELECTION** “May the Work I’ve Done Speak For Me” Mr. Jamarien Moore

**THE WORDS OF COMFORT** The Reverend Dr. David Green  
St. Stephen AME Church - Jacksonville, FL

**THE CLOSING PRAYER/BENEDICTION** The Reverend Dr. Marvin Zanders, II



## Mr. Jesse L. Burns, Jr. - The Life



"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; Jeremiah 1:5

Jesse L. Burns, Jr. was born on September 15, 1950, to the late Mr. Jesse Lee, Sr. and Mrs. Marie Kinzy Burns in Bradenton, Florida. He departed this earthly life on September 16, 2020, at age 70, one day after the biblical promise of threescore and ten. He and his late sister Janice were raised in a household that held a firm belief in "God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Holy Spirit our Comforter and Humankind our Family." The African Methodist Episcopal Church was both his foundation and springboard.

Jesse always stayed true to his AME heritage. Reared in Ward Temple AME Church Bradenton, Florida, in 1968, Mrs. Marie Burns and her children Jesse and Janice, moved their membership to St. Stephen AME Church in Bradenton, where her husband was already a member. It was in St. Stephen that Jesse accepted the Lord as his Savior, and began his very active life as a churchman. He found his niche as a member of the Young People's Division (YPD) and later went on to become YPD President at both the Conference and Episcopal District level. It was also in St. Stephen where he met and came under the tutelage of local lay president Mrs. Jessie Pryor and began his monumental journey in the organized Lay Organization.

Later in life as he resided in different places, he always stayed connected with the AME Church. Jesse L. Burns, Jr. worshipped wherever he lived and wherever he lived, he served. He became a member of Greater Bethel AME Church, Gainesville, Florida, and St. John AME Church where he served as steward, treasurer, and chairman for the Commission on Stewardship and Finance. At the time of his death he was a member of Saint Paul AME Church in Ocala where he was actively engaged as a steward, musician, local lay president, and church school teacher.

It was in the church where Jesse received his first and most lasting training. It was in the church where he experienced some of his most profound blessings. A delegate to the General Conference since 1976, Jesse served as a member of the General Board in 1976 and 1988. Additionally, he was a member of the Episcopal Committee in 1976, 1980, 1984 and 2000.

Always an ardent lay person, he rose through the ranks to its highest office, being appointed as the Connectional Lay President in 2003 after the death of Connectional President Arthur Brown and elected to the position in 2005. As a precursor, he served as local lay president at St. Stephen A.M.E. Church in Bradenton, Florida, president of the Ft. Myers District Lay Organization and president of the Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization. At the Episcopal level he rearranged the committee system, spearheaded successful membership recruitment drives, established the Episcopal District Lay Organization Economic Development fund and reactivated the Bahamas Conferenced Lay Organization. He has left a pathway strewn with accomplishments and contributions that will be long held and heralded as exemplars for years to come. Under his watch the first Connectional Lay Summit/Retreat was held in Orlando, FL, in 2004, and the Brown-Williams Mentoring Program was instituted. Jesse spearheaded a task force to rewrite the Lay Study Guide.

Educated in the public schools of Manatee County in Bradenton, Florida, Jesse went on to become a graduate of Stetson University with a degree in Business Administration and later St. Petersburg College Program of Mortuary Science. His past employment history includes time as the Director of Human Resources for Tropicana Products, Inc., the multinational company that specializes in the production of orange juice in Florida. His civic affiliations include being a life member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and a member of 100 Black Men.

Mr. Jesse L. Burns, Jr. will be sorely missed by those who loved him, yet remembered as a stalwart Layman Soldier, strong in unity and love. Those who remain to celebrate his transition include his church family, dear friend, Mrs. Marie Dixon Jones, extended family members: Sarah Burns Davis, Dorothy Burns, Clinton Burns, and many sorrowing friends and fellow laypersons.



## From the Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization

*All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages.*

William Shakespeare

From the time he was a young man to the end of his life Jesse Burns remained concerned with the well-being of the Lay Organization and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It can be said from the womb to the tomb Jesse Burns was AME. He was an encourager and supporter. I counted him as a thought partner and sounding board. Upon hearing he had been hospitalized I called him. During our last conversation as he struggled for each breath, he had the presence of mind to say, "Pat, I'm going to be alright."

God gave him three score and ten years. He played his part and has now exited the stage. Alas, the next act is beginning...I do believe that Jesse is going to be alright!

### Patricia Wright - EEDLO President #8



It was an honor to observe Jesse Burns' leadership style from a distance. He lead with confidence, clarity of purpose and commitment to the Lay Organization on all levels of the church. Rest well Mr. President and we will see you in that great getting up morning.

Until then, farewell!

### Charlie Nichols - EEDLO President #7



Today is a day for celebration as we, the members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District Lay Organization, remember the life of Mr. Jesse L. Burns, Jr. Jesse lived a life full of happy moments, and for that we are glad that we got to be part of his life, and he got to be part of ours. Jesse, a great layman soldier, rest in peace.

**Dr. Rodrick Moore**  
10<sup>th</sup> District Lay President



## Memories of Jesse

It is truly an honor to pay tribute to President Jesse Burns. He was a great asset in the development of lay persons. We were especially blessed here in Texas. Through his leadership, discipleship, and inclusiveness, many of us learned more about the connectional church and were afforded the opportunity of higher service. I was his administrative assistant, and the journey was unprecedented. He was a "rocket" in service. He took laity higher and enabled us to perform beyond the norm. His commanding style has been missed and now we say good bye. I always say that when a true servant passes a way it is as if a library closes its doors for good or burns. You no longer can access its pages or learn from its indexes or books. Yet we take what we have and pay it forward.

We go higher with the foundation that we were blessed with and to God be the Glory.  
Good bye Jesse L. Burns; we will miss you.

**Pam Tilley - 10th Episcopal District**