



Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr

September 16, 1939 - November 9, 2020

Benjamin Cornell Saunders, Sr. was born on September 16, 1939, to Mary Etta Eason Saunders and Oscar Cross Saunders. Raised in Sunbury, North Carolina, he joined St. John African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church as a youth and was a lifelong member.

Benjamin graduated from T. S. Cooper High School in 1957. Even at that young age, “Scrappy” was a leader, acting as the Senior Class President. After graduation, he attended Elizabeth City State University, where he finished with a Bachelor of Science in Education in 1962.

Shortly after college, Benjamin was drafted into the military. He spent the next two years of his life in Munich, Germany serving his country as a military policeman in the United States Army. Not long after his honorable discharge in 1965, his life would change forever.

On August 20, 1966, Benjamin was joined in holy matrimony with Emma Aileene Modlin from Perquimans County (Winfall), North Carolina. They were acquaintances at Elizabeth City State University. She was his backbone and he credited her for his success and the rearing of their children.

Through a connection from Aileene, Benjamin started his career as an educator with Pitt County Public Schools. After a year in Pitt County, he returned home to a position at T. S. Cooper Elementary School as a science and math teacher. After 13 years in the classroom, Benjamin was elevated to principal, where he served for the next 27 years. “Mr. Saunders” was passionate about education and wanted the best for his students and staff. He

created a strong sense of pride for TSC and was tenacious in acquiring funding to support the best possible education for his students.

Benjamin strived to reach unimaginable heights during his time with Gates County Public Schools. This required furthering his education. Since his alma mater did not offer the additional certifications that he desired, he attended East Carolina University. There he earned a Master of Arts in Education and an Educational Specialist Degree. The latter was referred to as the “superintendent’s degree.” Along the way, he also received various certificates, including one for completing the “Principals Executive Program” at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Benjamin was involved in many clubs and professional affiliations. They include the Noble Clan of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated (Life Member), Pride of Sunbury Masonic Lodge #401, American Legion Post #426, ECSU General Alumni Association (Life Member), Viking Varsity Club (Charter Member), National Education Association (NEA) (Retired Life), North Carolina Association of School Administrators, Gates County Social Services (Board Member), First Citizens Bank – Sunbury, North Carolina (Board of Directors) and College of the Albemarle (Board of Trustees).

Benjamin Cornell Saunders, Sr. was predeceased by his father, Oscar Saunders; mother, Mary Saunders; and sister, Sylvia (Charles) Dark.

Benjamin is survived by his loving wife of 54 years, Aileene; sons Jeffrey Johnson (Carolyn) and Benjamin, Jr. (Tiffany); daughter, Cynthia Cheatham (Eddie); and brother, William Kershaw Saunders (Mary). Five grandchildren; Terrell Johnson, Brittney Toribio (Aris Mendy), Edward Cheatham, Shauna Cheatham, and Jaylin Johnson and three great-grandchildren; Jamiyah, Keyorri, and Jameel.

Visitation will be on Friday, November 13, 2020, from 3:00 PM until 7:30 PM. There will be NO VIEWING on Saturday, November 14, 2020.

Cemetery Details

ST John AME Zion

Sunbury, NC

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **13**. 3:00 PM - 7:30 PM (ET)

Hertford County Undertakers
416 S Main St
Winton, NC 27986
(252) 358-3141

Grave Side Service

NOV **14**. 2:00 PM (ET)

ST John AME Zion
Sunbury, NC

Tribute Wall



“ *Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*

November 09, 2022 at 12:28 PM



“ *My condolences to the family!*



Darletha Griffin - January 28, 2021 at 04:00 PM



“ *Elaine Baker Jones lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Elaine Baker Jones - November 20, 2020 at 01:45 PM



“ *Ben will be missed by the many students, teachers and parents he served throughout his professional career.. He was loved and admired for good reason - he expected only the best and he made it happen.*

Robert Hahne - November 15, 2020 at 10:51 PM

SA

“ Cupcake and family send our deepest sympathy to the family and may God forever bless and be with you'll and forever in our prayers. With love Mr.&Mrs. Louis Smith Jr./ Cupcake .



sarah - November 14, 2020 at 01:47 PM

AH

“ Antoinette Holley lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Antoinette Holley - November 14, 2020 at 10:08 AM

RH

“ Rev. Donald Holley lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Rev. Donald Holley - November 13, 2020 at 11:03 PM

WB

“ Thoughts and prayers to the family of Mr Saunders. He was my math teacher at TSC then the principal for my oldest son. Always wanted the best out of and for his students.

Wanda Hofler Brothers - November 13, 2020 at 10:13 PM

JW

“ *Mr. Saunders was a very nice and polite gentleman. I remember him from coming to the board.*



Julia Riddick Wilkins - November 13, 2020 at 08:58 PM

PL

“ *To the Family
Sincere sympathy and condolences to all.*

*Patricia Ligon
Tyqwan Johnson
Timira Johnson*



Patricia Ligon - November 13, 2020 at 05:16 PM

PL

“ *Sincere condolences to the family. We hope that you are surrounded by the warmth and support of so many who care about the Cheatham Family. We want them to know how sorry we are about your loss. We all care about all of you and we'll be keeping all of you in our thoughts and prayers.*

The AB Girls of Bethany Baptist Church



Patricia Ligon - November 13, 2020 at 05:13 PM

NS

“ Naomi Smith lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Naomi Smith - November 13, 2020 at 03:50 PM

CS

“ Charmont Hall Stephen lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Charmont Hall Stephen - November 13, 2020 at 01:11 PM

MB

“ Murray & Glendale Boone sent a virtual gift in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Murray & Glendale Boone - November 13, 2020 at 12:32 PM

EW

“ May HIS peace be with you Till we me again
Till he reach that distant shore And you shed
a tear no more May HE give you strength to
endure Till we meet again



Evelyn C. Wingfield - November 13, 2020 at 08:42 AM



“ *European Sympathy Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr.*



November 13, 2020 at 07:36 AM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr.*



November 12, 2020 at 08:33 PM



“ *Patricia Eason Powell lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Patricia Eason Powell - November 12, 2020 at 07:28 PM



My prayers & condolences are with you family may God's riches & best be yours Rev Sam Buck Jr

Samuel L Buck - November 16, 2020 at 06:58 PM

UH

“ *Urania Harrell lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Urania Harrell - November 12, 2020 at 05:58 PM

NL

“ *Our sincerest condolences to the Saunders family on the passing of Bro. Benjamin Saunders, Sr. A life well lived. Johnnie and Natalie Lassiter*



Natalie Lassiter - November 12, 2020 at 05:53 PM

DB

“ *Condolences to the family of Mr. Benjamin Saunders. We are praying that God will give you peace during this time of your loss.*

*Donell & Shirley Bacon
Bethany Baptist Church
Syracuse, New York*

Donell Bacon - November 12, 2020 at 01:39 PM

KH

“ *Kristen Hall-Whitehead sent a virtual gift in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Kristen Hall-Whitehead - November 12, 2020 at 12:42 PM

JJ

“ *Condolences to the family of Ben Saunders. I co taught with him at T.S. Cooper School. He was knowledgeable and fair to everyone. Students really liked his class and he had a good relationship with students and peers. Working with him was a pleasure. He left his mark on the education arena that will never be forgotten. RIP Mr. Saunders!*



Jacqueline Jones - November 12, 2020 at 12:41 PM



“ *Floor Plant for Sympathy was purchased for the family of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr.*



November 12, 2020 at 10:03 AM

SH

“ *Sandy Holley lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Sandy Holley - November 12, 2020 at 09:24 AM

KS

“ I was heartbroken and deeply saddened to learn of Mr Saunders' passing. He was one of my two favorite teachers (the other being Mrs Saunders). Not only was he a teacher to me, but in the community he was a mentor to me as well. His insights has carried me well over the years. One thing that I remember him saying to me, "There's always something to do".

To the Saunders family, know that my prayers and condolences are with you.

Karl A "Tony" Sims

Karl Sims - November 12, 2020 at 06:46 AM

RW

“ Rest in peace faithful soldier. Our condolences to the Saunders family.

Reginald and Fannie Wiggins

Reginald and Fannie Wiggins - November 11, 2020 at 08:22 PM

DH

“ Delores Harvey sent a virtual gift in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Delores Harvey - November 11, 2020 at 05:59 PM

SH

“ *Shelia Harrison_Beamon sent a virtual gift in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Shelia Harrison_Beamon - November 11, 2020 at 05:48 PM

AW

“ *ANTHONY K WILSON lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



ANTHONY K WILSON - November 11, 2020 at 05:29 PM



“ *Red & White Sympathy Standing Spray was purchased for the family of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr.*



November 11, 2020 at 03:41 PM

PR

“ *To The Saunders' Family,*

We were saddened to hear of Cornell's transition. His kindness, respectfulness, and caring, while Paul did his Student Teaching at T.S. Cooper Elementary School will always be remembered. Thank you, Mr. Saunders, for your guidance and leadership!



May God continue to be a comforter to all of you during this most difficult time.

*With Heartfelt Condolences,
Paul and Jackie (Wolfrey) Robertson*

Paul and Jackie Robertson - November 11, 2020 at 03:05 PM



“ *Floor Plant for Sympathy was purchased for the family of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr.*



November 11, 2020 at 08:49 AM

WC

“ *My condolences to the family*



Westelle Cherry - November 11, 2020 at 12:05 AM

MB

“ *Condolences to the family on the loss of your love one. He was a great man, educator, and principal! He touched my children and many more!*



Mr. & Mrs. Leslie S. Byrum - November 10, 2020 at 10:37 PM

CS

“ *Condolences to the family on the loss of your love one.*

Gilbert and Charmont Hall Stephen



Charmont Hall Stephen - November 10, 2020 at 03:11 PM

SH

“ *Sandy Holley lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Sandy Holley - November 10, 2020 at 02:47 PM



“ *Red & White Sympathy Standing Spray was purchased for the family of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr.*



November 10, 2020 at 11:14 AM

EJ

“ Ernest & Minnie Jordan sent a virtual gift in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Ernest & Minnie Jordan - November 10, 2020 at 08:47 AM

SE

“ Sherry Elliott lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Sherry Elliott - November 10, 2020 at 08:26 AM

KE

“ Kelly Eure lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Kelly Eure - November 10, 2020 at 01:45 AM

SH

“ Sharon Hayer lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr



Sharon Hayer - November 09, 2020 at 10:50 PM

ML

“ *Min. Catherine Lane lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Min. Catherine Lane - November 09, 2020 at 08:25 PM

ML

Condolences to Aileene, Ben, Cynthia, grandkids and the complete family of Benjamin Saunders. May God give your heart peace and comfort knowing he has gone home to be with the Lord. Love you all and send hugs❤️❤️❤️

Min. Catherine Lane - November 09, 2020 at 08:27 PM

MB

“ *Mattie Briscoe lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Mattie Briscoe - November 09, 2020 at 08:23 PM

FH

“ *Fred & Gloria Harvey sent a virtual gift in memory of Benjamin Cornell Saunders Sr*



Fred & Gloria Harvey - November 09, 2020 at 07:54 PM



“ *Fred & Gloria Harvey*

Fred & Gloria Harvey - November 09, 2020 at 07:51 PM