

Journey of a Life

On Sunday, February 8, 2026, **Mr. James E. Nelson** peacefully transitioned at the remarkable age of 104. His life was a testament to faith, perseverance, service, and generational love.

James E. Nelson was born on July 15, 1921, to the late Mrs. Irene Murphy Nelson and James Nelson. He was one of six children and was preceded in death by four of his siblings. He was also preceded in death by his beloved son, Bernard Nelson; his cherished granddaughter, Niicy; his wife, Hattie Nelson; and his devoted companion of over 40 years, Ms. Effie White, who preceded him in death in 1995.

He leaves to cherish his memory his loving son, Lawrence Nelson; one devoted sister, Mrs. Hattie Nelson Richardson McKenney; nine grandchildren; nineteen great-grandchildren; a number of great-great-grandchildren; and a host of loving nieces and nephews who adored him deeply, including his nieces Sabina Richardson Brown and Vanessa Richardson Murphy and nephew James Richardson. Among those honoring his legacy is his oldest living granddaughter, Reeshemah, along with generations who continue to rise because of the foundation he laid.

From an early age, James understood discipline and determination. Since there were no high schools available to him in Lugoff, South Carolina, he walked miles to attend Jackson High School in Camden, South Carolina. Education was mandatory in his household, and he carried that principle of responsibility throughout his life.

After graduating, he joined the United States military, where he faithfully served for many years. His service reflected the character he lived by – honorable, steady, and committed.

He later married Hattie Miles Nelson, and their union was blessed with two sons. Years later, he shared a loving and faithful companionship with Ms. Effie White for more than four decades. In 1987, he returned home to Camden, South Carolina, where he purchased a home and continued building the legacy that now spans five generations.

Faith was the cornerstone of his life. James reunited with his childhood church, St. Matthew Baptist Church, where he served faithfully in numerous capacities: Superintendent of the Sunday School, Church Recording Secretary, Member of the Senior Choir, Member of the Concert Choir, and Member of the Male Chorus. At the time of his passing, he held the distinguished honor of being the oldest member of St. Matthew Baptist Church.

One treasured memory shared by his granddaughter recalls weekends at Granddad's house. After church, Effie would prepare a large Sunday dinner followed by a big chocolate or lemon cake. The rule was simple: vegetables first, dessert after. As a young girl who didn't like vegetables, she would secretly pass them to her twin brother. One day, Granddad noticed. When she admitted the truth, he laughed, gave them both dessert, and said, "That's how you take care of your sister – so she can get what you get."

His constant words throughout life were: "Keep God first and keep moving." "You can do anything with God in front of you." "Take care of your children and be happy."

Because his children and grandchildren did not live in the immediate area, he relied on extended family members to assist with his care. The family extends heartfelt gratitude to all of his loving nieces and nephews. Special thanks to Sabina Richardson Brown, Vanessa Murphy and James Richardson for their support and devotion. A very special appreciation is given to his faithful long-term caregiver, Ms. Ladell Middleton. For the last six years of his life, Ms. Middleton served as his daytime nurse and compassionate caretaker. Even after leaving the agency, she continued to return morning and night to care for him, despite the challenges within her own life. Her unwavering dedication helped extend his years and ensured he was cared for with dignity and love.

Special words in his honor will be shared by his great-great-granddaughter, Deshona M. Melvin, and by Ivy Shema Guyton.

James lived 104 extraordinary years. Because of him, there is family. Because of him, there is faith. Because of him, there is strength that will continue long after his earthly journey has ended.



Order of Service

Pastor James O. Williams, Presiding

PRELUDE WITH MILITARY HONORS

PROCESSIONAL Clergy, Officiants & Family

GREETINGS.....Pastor James O. Williams

SELECTION "Jesus Keep Me Near The Cross"

SCRIPTURE READING
OLD TESTAMENT Minister Thomas Montgomery
NEW TESTAMENT.....Reverend Nora Wimberly

PRAYER OF COMFORTReverend Charles Davis

SELECTION St. Matthew Baptist Church Choir

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... Mrs. Charlene White-Martin

REFLECTIONS Deacon Clifford Gripper
(Limit 3 minutes, please)
Cyndi Butcher

Deshona Melvin, *Great Granddaughter*

Reeshemah Guyton, *Granddaughter*

SELECTION St. Matthew Baptist Church Choir

WORDS OF COMFORTPastor James O. Williams

SELECTION St. Matthew Baptist Church Choir

RECESSIONAL..... Henrietta Qualls
"Resting Easy"

INTERMENT
St. Matthew Baptist Church Cemetery

COMMITAL, CLOSING PRAYER & BENEDICTION

Acknowledgement

The Family of James E. Nelson gratefully acknowledges and extends sincere appreciation for all prayers, acts of kindness and comforting expressions of love and sympathy bestowed upon them during this time of bereavement. We thank you and Pray God's richest blessings upon each of you.

The Nelson Family

In Tribute



Pallbearers

Grandsons & Nephews

Floral Bearers

Nieces

The Twenty-Third Psalm

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:*

*He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;
and lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge him,
and he shall direct thy paths.*

Professional Services Entrusted to



Collins Funeral Home

**714 West Dekalb Street
Camden, South Carolina 29020
Phone: 914-664-8500
Fax: 914-664-3223
www.georgecollinsfh.com**

*In Loving Memory
of*

Mr. James E. Nelson

*Sunrise:
July 15, 1921*

*Sunset:
February 8, 2026*



Saturday, February 14th, 2026 • 1:00 p.m.

St. Matthew Baptist Church

749 Longtown Road
Lugoff, South Carolina 29078

Reverend James O. Williams, Officiating Pastor