

PALLBEARERS

Men of Hill First Baptist Church

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Deacons of Hill First Baptist

FLOWERS ATTENDANTS

Deaconess and Pastor's Aid

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The family of Deacon James Henry Alford, Jr., would like to thank everyone for their kind expressions. Your phone calls, visits, flowers, thoughts, and prayers have all helped greatly during our time of bereavement. May God continue to bless each of you is our prayer.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

ENTRUSTED TO

GARDENVIEW FUNERAL CHAPEL, LLC

605 Olympic Drive | Athens, GA 30601
(706) 546-1125

*"When memories are all you have,
place them in the garden."*



IN LOVING MEMORY OF



SUNRISE
May 4, 1940



SUNSET
May 1, 2025



Thursday, May 8, 2025
11:00 AM

HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
205 North Pope Street
Athens, Georgia 30601

Reverend Dr. Allison Henderson-Brooks, Officiating

IN LOVING MEMORY OF *Deacon James Henry Alford, Jr.*

With profound love and deep respect, we celebrate the life of *Deacon James Henry Alford, Jr.*, a man whose boundless joy, unwavering faith, and extraordinary service left an indelible mark on his family, church, and community. Born on May 4, 1940, in Athens, Georgia, to the late Irene Gonder Alford and James Henry Alford, Sr., James lived a life rooted in faith, compassion, and excellence.

Affectionately called “Fancy” by childhood family and friends, James was known early in life for his sharp style, bright spirit, and outgoing personality—traits that remained with him throughout his life.

Deacon Alford was a 1958 graduate of Athens High and Industrial School where he was a member of the football team and played the trumpet. He was a proud 1962 graduate of Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia, where he majored in Business Administration. Attending on a vocal scholarship and as a member of the Morris Brown Choir, his vocal skills were refined as they traveled around the country lifting their voices. He became a talented soloist known for inspiring songs of praise in churches and in his community. After college, he joined and served his country honorably in the United States Army as a medical specialist in Germany. Throughout his life, he remained a lifelong learner, servant leader, and tireless advocate for equity and opportunity.

Professionally, he taught elementary school, worked for the Georgia Department of Labor as an Employment Counselor, and dedicated over thirty years to public service as the Human Resources Director for the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County while ensuring fairness in employment and helping open doors for countless individuals.

James was a pillar of Hill First Baptist Church, where he was baptized at age 11 and began a legacy of service that spanned more than six decades. From singing in the choir as a child on his mother’s knee to singing in numerous church choirs and serving as Sunday School Superintendent, Trustee Board Member, and as Chairman of the Deacon Board, James lived his faith through action.

It was at Hill First Baptist Church where James met the love of his life. He was singing in the choir, and she was sitting in a pew with her aunt. Their connection began as friendship, built on faith, laughter, and mutual respect. That friendship soon blossomed into a deep and enduring love, leading to marriage and a lifetime of partnership. Together, they built a home rooted in love, faith, and family.

James was the only child of his parents, but he cherished the opportunity to marry into a large and loving family. He embraced his new extended family with genuine joy and excitement, forging deep bonds with his in-laws. He especially enjoyed traveling with and cooking for his nieces and nephews, often tailoring his signature meals just to make them smile—another testament to his heart for service and connection.

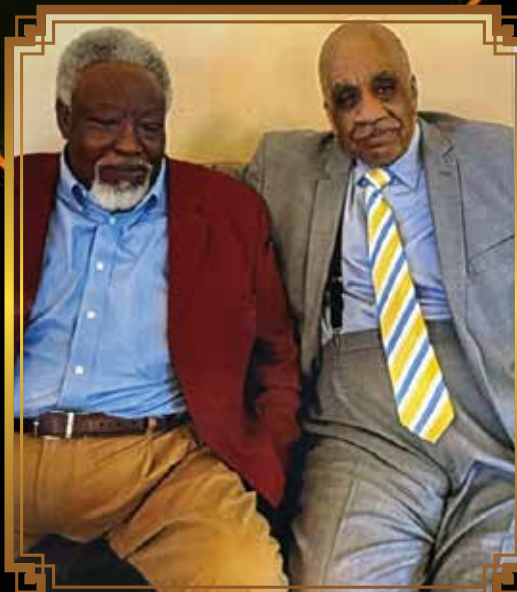
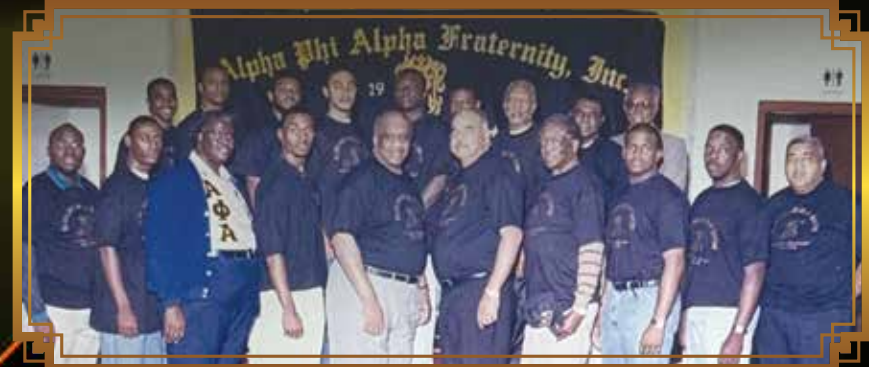
He had an intense love for God, Hill First Baptist Church, his family, his community, the city of Athens, and all people—a love that was not just spoken, but shown daily through his dedication and actions. Whether it was mentoring a young man, lifting his voice in worship, organizing church programs, or advocating for fairness and opportunity, James embodied servant leadership in its truest form.

He was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., where he served as a past chapter president. He also actively participated in numerous civic organizations and boards including the Athens Area Human Relations Council, Girl Scout Council of America, Board of Directors of Boy’s Club, Rotary International, the Optimist Club, Lanier Gardens Board, president of the Georgia Municipal Association, Chairman of the Credit Union, and numerous others. His leadership and voice could be felt in every room he entered.

Beyond his professional and community accomplishments, James was a devoted family man, deeply committed to his beloved wife, his son and daughter-in-law, his daughter, and his grandchildren. He led with love, supported his family with unwavering strength, and created a home full of laughter, wisdom, and warmth.

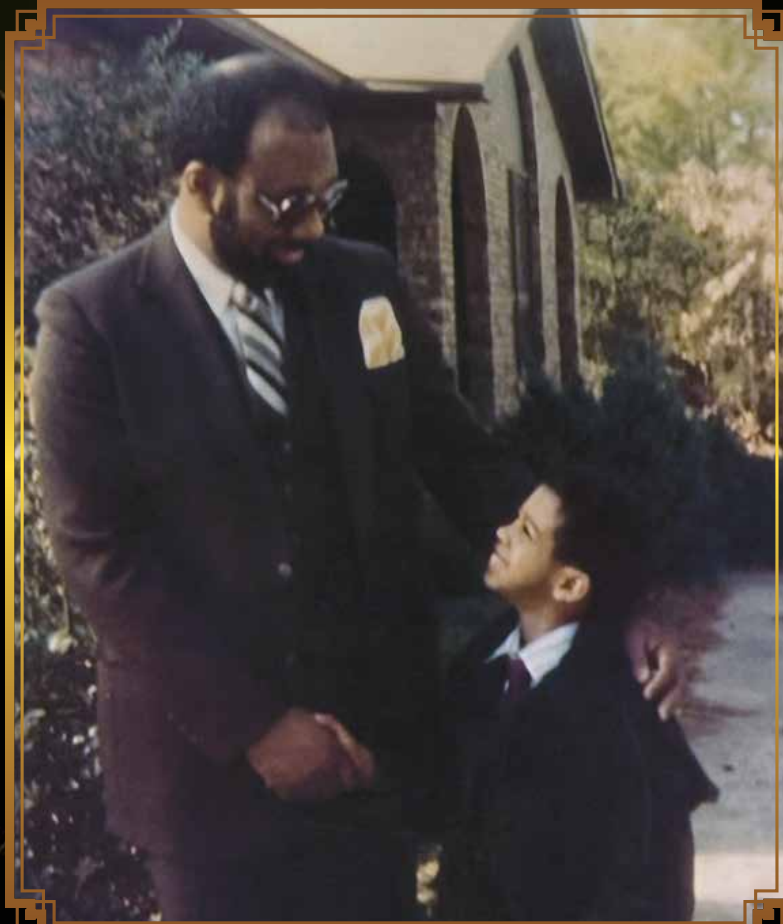
In his retirement, James dedicated his time to traveling to his daughter’s basketball games, where he proudly served as the Tip Off Club President. His support didn’t end at her graduation—he continued attending games, cheering on the new players with the same enthusiasm and pride. He remained deeply committed to fatherhood throughout his life and even served on the Parent Advisory Board at her college. He was the biggest supporter of his

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children, being the first to praise his son for producing and directing his first movie—making sure he had numerous copies to distribute to his network.

James was also a lifelong Georgia Bulldogs fan, and his loyalty to the red and black ran deep. As a younger man, he proudly traveled with the team, helping to recruit top talent and building lifelong memories alongside the program he loved. For many years, he held season tickets and prided himself on never missing a game. When he could no longer attend in person, he transformed his Georgia Dawgs-themed man cave into his game-day sanctuary, where he cheered on his team from his big screen TV with the same passion and pride that defined so much of his life.

A true grillmaster, James loved firing up the grill for family gatherings. He took pride in serving up perfectly seasoned ribs, chicken, and other favorites, all with a generous helping of laughter and good conversation. For James, grilling was another form of fellowship, and he used it to bring people together with warmth and joy.

Those who knew James will remember his joyful spirit, booming laughter, and warm, outgoing personality. He made every space brighter, every conversation richer, and every soul he touched felt seen and loved. One of his favorite songs, “If I can help somebody as I pass along, then my living will not be in vain,” perfectly embodied the way he chose to live.

He leaves behind his devoted wife of over fifty years, Vivian Alford; loving son, James Henry Alford III (Kezia); cherished daughter, Dr. Jessica Alford; he also leaves behind his beloved grandchildren, Mykel, Jayson, and Hannah; he is also survived by his sisters-in-law, Christine Craig (Wallace), Beatrice Prather, and Stephanie Hart (James); as well as brother-in-law, Danny Ward (Crystal); in addition, he is survived by his godchildren, Justin Scott, Dr. Jeremy Scott, and Schnea Kelly; lifelong friends, Reverend James Sims and Edward Thomas; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family, dear friends, fraternity brothers, and fellow church members who were all blessed by his life and legacy.

He will be dearly missed, but his legacy of love, service, faith, family, community, and Bulldog pride will continue to shine in the lives of all who knew him.



ORDER OF SERVICE

Musical Prelude

Processional

Scripture Readings:

Old Testament Reverend Ben K. Willis

New Testament Reverend James Alford III

Prayer Deacon Quinton Jackson

Musical Selection Mr. Reginald Willis

Remarks *Two Minutes Each, Please*

Dr. Talmadge Guy
Trustee Mabel Mitchell
Deacon Harry Sims

Trumpet Selection Mr. Julian K Smith, Jr.

Remarks Reverend Larry Dunning

Mr. Greg Marshall
Dr. Jessica Alford

Musical Selection Athens Voices of Truth

Eulogy Reverend Dr. Allison Henderson-Brooks,

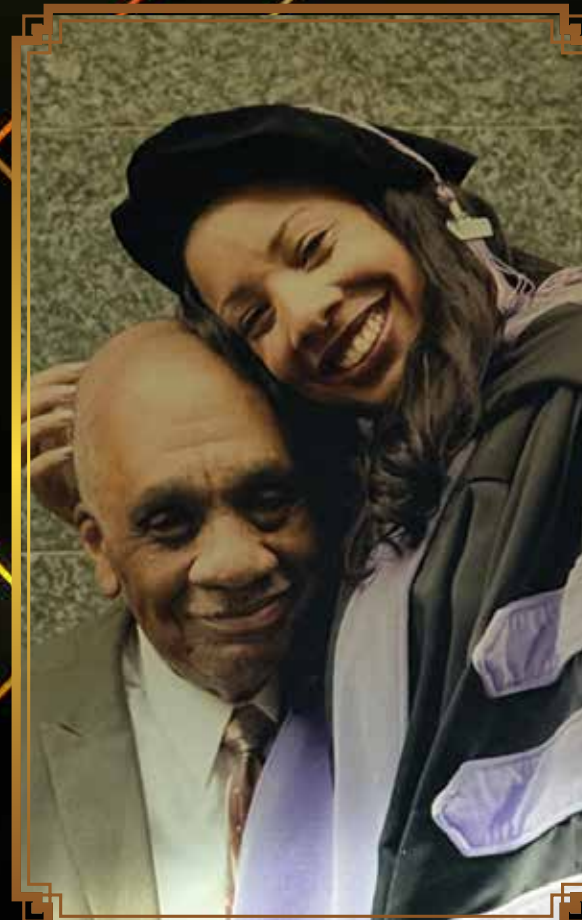
Pastor, Hill First Baptist

Acknowledgements Grandview Funeral Chapel

Recessional

Interment
Evergreen Cemetery

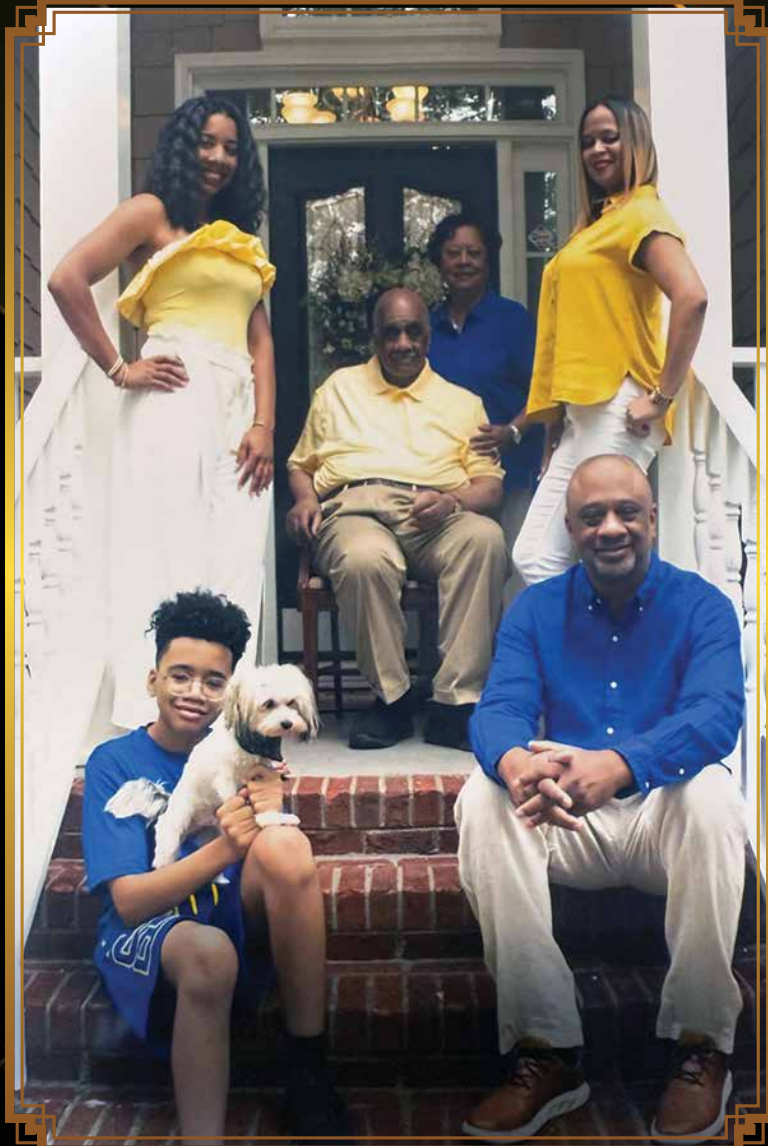
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Home

*Take pause for just a moment
And look up to the skies
I want to show you heaven
As seen through joyful eyes*

*The moment I arrived here
I saw the sweetest sight
All those who'd gone before me
Surrounded by His light*

*They reached out and embraced me
And instantly I knew
That I'd fulfilled my purpose
And one day you will too*

*It's natural you are sad now
But try to let that go
There's overwhelming peace here
And beauty all aglow*

*We have no pain or suffering
No thought of right or wrong
No one here's an outsider
Each one of us belongs*

*There is no sense of judgment
His light reveals our soul
Each one unique and perfect
We make each other whole*

*So when you really miss me
Just cast your eyes above
Remember, I am home now
And sending you my love...*

Donna Schilling © 2023

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