



THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF

REV. DR. THOMAS HENRY RANKIN, JR.

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Henry Rankin, Jr. was born on September 25, 1945, to the Rev. Dr. T.H. Rankin, Sr. and Mrs. Sallie M. Lewis Rankin in Memphis, TN. He was greeted by his big sister, Agnes. As time passed, the family grew to include Gloria, Calvin, Margaret, Ida, and Kathy. He was a happy and inquisitive child who loved to read and learn. With a competitive spirit, he enjoyed winning any game he played. He had a deep affection for the Boy Scouts of America, starting as a Cub Scout and continuing his journey in scouting until he became a Senior Scout. He was fortunate to attend the National Boy Scout Jamboree in Boulder, Colorado, with his troop.

In 1950, his father, Dr. T. H. Rankin, Sr., accepted a call to pastor Zion Missionary Baptist Church in East Chicago, Indiana. This is where Dr. Rankin, Jr., spent his formative years. He was raised in the church, as the parsonage was attached to it. Sundays were filled with Sunday School, Baptist Training Union (B.T.U.), and evening services, while the rest of the week included prayer meetings and choir rehearsals. At the age of ten, he accepted Christ as his personal Savior and was baptized by his father. During his adolescence, at his father's insistence, he learned Hebrew, the original language of the Old Testament. As an adult scholar, he also studied Greek, the language of the New Testament. Both he and his father were known for incorporating Greek words into their sermons to enhance the listeners' understanding of the text.

Dr. Rankin, Jr. received his education in the public school system of East Chicago, Indiana, graduating from Washington High School in the Class of 1963. He began his undergraduate studies at Indiana University Northwest in Gary, Indiana. However, in 1965, his father accepted a position as pastor of Morning View Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, prompting the family to move to Detroit. Dr. Rankin, Jr. continued his studies at Wayne State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1970. After being called into the ministry, he pursued his graduate studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

In 1974, he delivered his first sermon at Messiah Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and was licensed to preach the gospel. In 1975, he relocated to Newark, New Jersey, to be with his family, as his father became the pastor of the First Zion Hill Baptist Church. He was later ordained and appointed as the Assistant Pastor of the First Zion Hill Baptist Church in Newark. It was during his time at First Zion Hill that he met a lovely young lady named JoAnne Little, who would become the love of his life.

After serving only four months as the Assistant Pastor of First Zion Hill Baptist Church in Newark, NJ, he was called to pastor Clear View Baptist Church, also located in Newark.

On June 9, 1979, Dr. Thomas Henry Rankin, Jr. and JoAnne Little were married. JoAnne was the perfect helpmate, working alongside her husband in ministry while also running her own business, Ms. JoAnne's Kiddie Care. With JoAnne by his side, Dr. Rankin, Jr. faithfully served as the Senior Pastor at Clearview Baptist Church for ten years, during which the church experienced significant spiritual, numerical, and financial growth. Led by the Holy Spirit to embrace a more comprehensive outreach ministry, the Holy Spirit gave birth to the Cathedral of Faith Baptist Church in Newark, NJ. From 1985 until 2023, Dr. Rankin, Jr. served faithfully under divine anointing, leading countless souls to salvation and transforming lives until his health began to decline. He was a remarkable teacher, preacher, and theologian, known for delivering the Word of God with great energy and clarity. His signature leg kicks, and handkerchief tosses became legendary. He was frequently invited to serve as a revivalist, lecturer, and biblical instructor across the United States.



Dr. Rankin, Jr. And JoAnne were married for 46 wonderful and happy years. Together, they raised two incredibly talented sons: Thomas H. Rankin, III and Kurvan D. Rankin. Dr. Rankin, Jr. deeply loved his family and was immensely proud of his sons, who provided great support in his ministry. He was a doting grandfather to his only granddaughter, Chelsea Bernice Rankin. He took pleasure in planning family reunions and gatherings, and he was a wonderful uncle, cousin, brother, and friend. Family meant everything to him, and he will be greatly missed.

Dr. Rankin, Jr. was a multi-talented individual with a remarkable gift for music throughout his life. He was a talented musician, singer, and choir director. Dr. Rankin served on the music staff of the Wolverine Baptist State Choir in Michigan and held positions as Choir Director for St. James Baptist Church and Morning View Baptist Church, both located in Detroit, Michigan. Additionally, he was the organist for Faith Baptist Church and Messiah Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as well as the organist and choir director at First Zion Hill Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey. Under Dr. Rankin's leadership, the renowned T.H. Rankin Ensemble was formed, consisting of eighty-five exceptionally gifted young people from both the church and the surrounding community. As a passionate director, he had a unique ability to bring out the best in his ensemble. Each year, after countless hours of rehearsals, the T.H. Rankin Ensemble presented an extraordinary and electrifying Christmas concert. Observing Dr. Rankin in action as he directed the ensemble became a highlight of the concert, making it an event that people eagerly anticipated.

Dr. Thomas H. Rankin, Jr. lived his life as a servant leader. He held several notable positions, including Recording Secretary of the Baptist Ministers' Conference of Newark and Vicinity; President of Rankin's Theological Clinic in Newark, New Jersey; and Professor of Doctrinal Studies and Homiletics at the Christian Love Bible Institute in Irvington, New Jersey. Additionally, he served as the First Vice-President of the Congress of Christian Education for the United Missionary Baptist State Convention of New Jersey, Inc.

Dr. Rankin, Jr. was a dedicated advocate for justice and equality, shaped by his upbringing during the Civil Rights Movement. He was recognized for his civic and social activism aimed at improving the lives of others. His work included collaborating with Choices, Inc., a residency program for women struggling with drug and alcohol addiction, along with their children. He also contributed to the Salvation Army's residency rehabilitation program for men dealing with addiction.

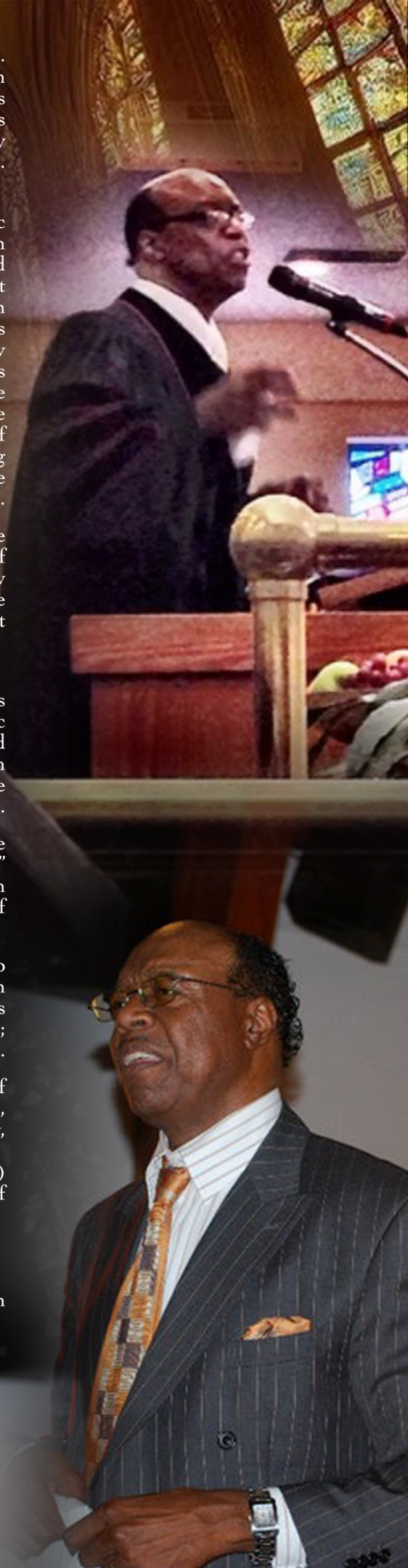
Dr. Rankin, Jr. received numerous awards and accolades, including: "The Key to the City of Newark" from the Mayor's Office; "The Distinguished Recognition Award" from the Newark Municipal Council; and "The Governor's Proclamation," which designated August 15, 1977, as "The Rev. Thomas H. Rankin, Jr. Day" in the State of New Jersey.

On June 27, 2025, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Henry Rankin, Jr. was called from labor to reward after a life of dedicated service to building the Kingdom. He was preceded in death by his parents, Dr. and Mrs. T.H. Rankin, Sr.; his son, Kurvan D. Rankin; his sister, Gertie Rankin Rawley; his brothers, Thea Arthur Rankin and Calvin Rankin; and his nephews, Thomas Floyd Rankin, Vandee Rankin, Jr., and Omar D. Pleasont.

He leaves behind cherished memories with his loving wife, Mrs. JoAnne Rankin of Auburndale, FL; his beloved son, Thomas H. (Kiyata) Rankin, III of Woodbridge, NJ; his precious granddaughter, Chelsea Bernice Rankin; his dear daughter-in-law, Kyeisha Rankin of Roselle, NJ; his devoted siblings: Vandee (Lucy) Rankin of Memphis, TN; Agnes (the late Hilton) Duckworth of Cincinnati, OH; Gloria (William) Pleasont of Lynwood, IL; Margaret Scott of Cincinnati, OH; Ida (Silas) Townsend of Delran, NJ; and Kathy (Marlon) Brown of Montclair, NJ; and a supportive brother-in-law, Tobias (Kitty) Little of Auburndale, FL. He is also mourned by supportive brother-in-law, Tobias (Kitty) Little of Auburndale, FL.

He is also mourned by a host of other relatives, friends, and the Cathedral of Faith family.

"His Lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'"
Matthew 25: 23 NKJV





ORDER OF *Service*

Sunday, July 20, 2025
Visitation 5PM-7PM | Funeral Service 7PM
AGAPE FAMILY WORSHIP CENTER
501 East Hazelwood Ave. Rahway, NJ 07065
Rev. Conway C. Johnson Jr., Presiding
Bishop Anthony W. Gilyard, Officiant
Dr. Lawrence Powell, Host Pastor

MUSICAL PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

PRAYER OF COMFORT

Bishop Hezekiah X. Walker

OLD & NEW TESTAMENT READING

Dr. Silas Townsend

SELECTION

Church Medley
A'Zamar

SPECIAL REMARKS & REFLECTIONS

Agape Family Worship Center – Dr. Lawrence Powell
City of Newark, NJ – Rev. Louise Scott-Rountree
Perry's Funeral Home – Sam Arnold
Christian Love & Bible Institute – Gail White
The Rankin Theological Clinic – Rev. Stephanie McKay

SELECTION

"You Brought Me From A Mighty Long Way"
Tiffany Andrews

CLERGY REMARKS

Dr. Allen Potts
Pastor Tommy Miles
Dr. Brian Rawls
Pastor Darrin Monroe
Pastor Hilton Rawls Jr.

SELECTION

A'Zamar

CATHEDRAL OF FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH

Trustee Bobbie Robinson
Trustee Bernice Gass
Yvette Peak

SIBLINGS TRIBUTE

Dr. Gloria Rankin-Pleasant

A TRIBUTE TO MY POPPOP

Miss Chelsea B. Rankin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & CARDS

Dominique Little

SELECTION

"Safe In His Arms"
Ida Rankin-Townsend

OBITUARY READING

Min. Nichelle Bowes

SERMONIC SELECTION

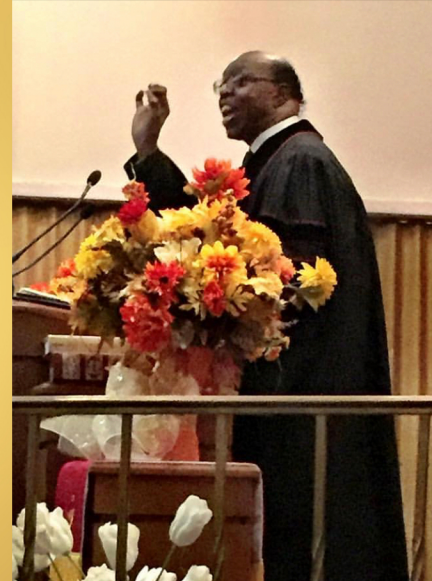
"Things Will Work Out For Me"
Voices of Judah

EULOGY

Bishop Anthony W. Gilyard

RECESSIONAL

A'Zamar





TO THE LOVE OF MY LIFE,

Where do I begin? You were my loving husband, my best friend, my confidante, my protector, my hero, my everything. God created you for me and me for you and blessed us with 49 years of unconditional love. I can honestly say I have no regrets. We traveled this journey called life together, and although you are no longer physically here, I know in my heart that you haven't left me. We were inseparable and did everything together as a team.

When faced with problems, we settled them together by talking it through, and we never went to sleep angry — no arguments. Not many people can say that.

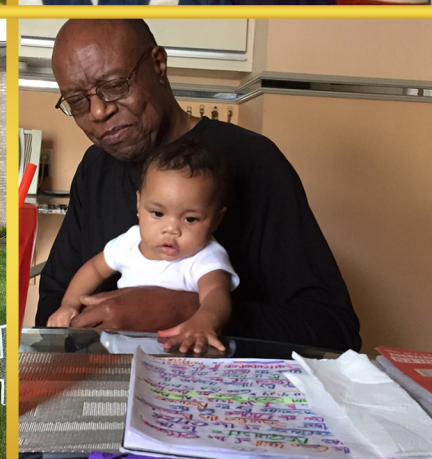
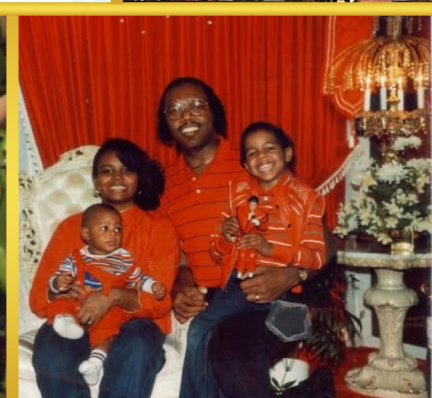
I supported you, and you supported me. One story I will share is that when we met and our relationship became serious, some of my sorority friends felt that because I was marrying a minister, they couldn't invite me to some of the places we used to go. Not only did you defend me, but you asked them to please not exclude me, explaining that you were not God, just a man. You didn't want me to feel left out, and our mutual trust allowed you to know that I would never do anything that would make you uncomfortable or compromise your call to the ministry.

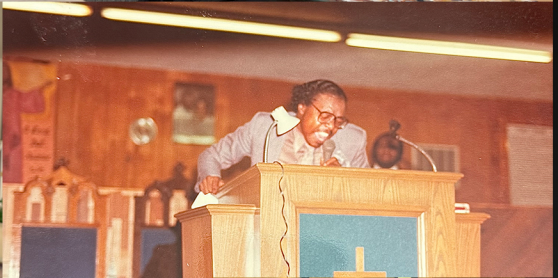
I will not say goodbye because I will carry you in my heart forever. You taught us that obedience is better than sacrifice, so in obedience to God's will, I accept that you have finished your course and that God has called you home.

Your loving and forever wife,

JoAnne



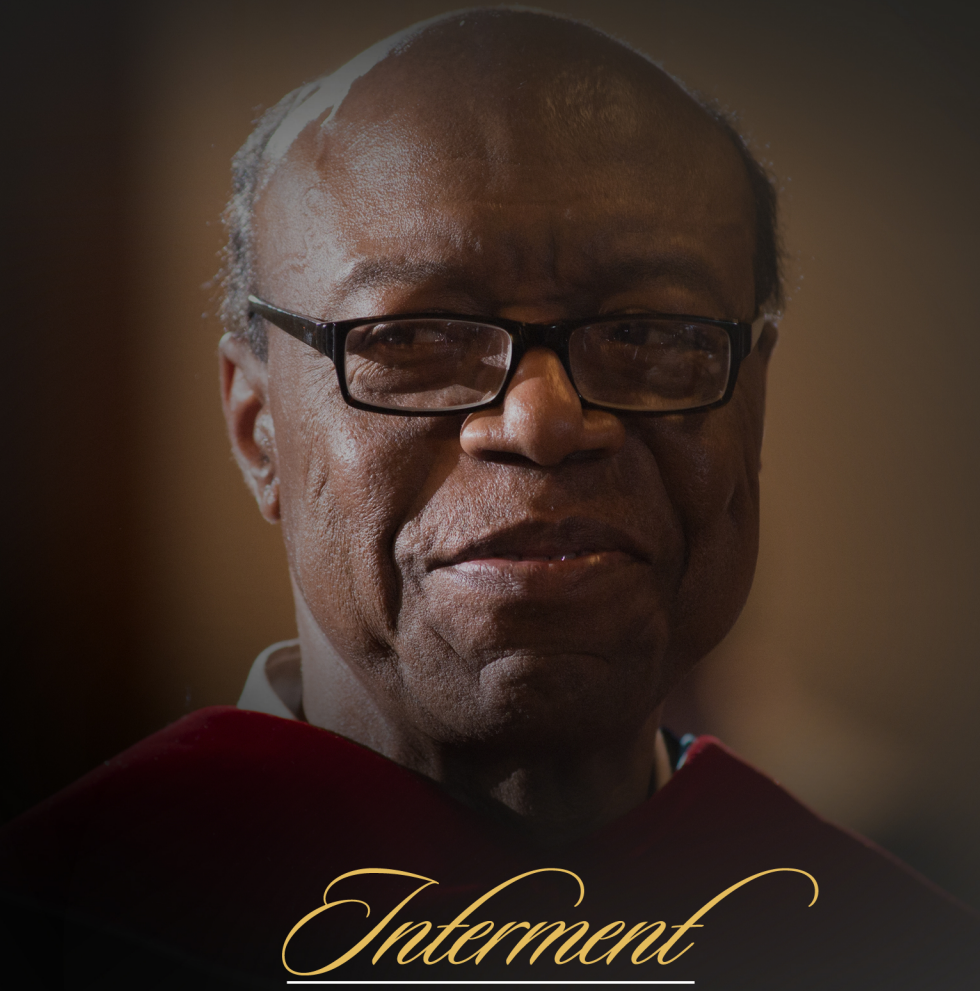




Acknowledgements

The family would like to express their deep and sincere gratitude for the many expressions of kindness, sympathy and support. We are humbly grateful for your remembrances which have helped us to endure our time of sorrow.

The Rankinn Family



Interment

Monday, July 21, 2025
10AM

Fairmount Cemetery, Newark, NJ



THE FERGUSON-RAYAM FUNERAL HOME

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