

Celebrating the Life of

# Mother Rosetta Jones James



October 31, 1925 – October 11, 2019

**Thursday, October 17, 2019**  
**12:00 O'Clock p.m.**

**First Missionary Baptist Church**  
**3509 Blue Spring Road**  
**Huntsville, Alabama**

**Reverend Dr. Don Darius Butler**  
*Pastor & Officiant*

**Reverend Dr. Julius R. Scruggs**  
*Pastor Emeritus and Eulogist*

*“ I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help  
cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.” - Psalm 121*



## OBITUARY

After celebrating her 93rd birthday in October 2018, the vibrant Mrs. Rosetta James began showing some signs of slowing down. But this only followed decades upon decades of religious and community service. Mrs. James was always a servant of mankind, first and foremost, preferring actual service and deeds over pomp and circumstance. If seven was her lucky number, then it would take all of seven powerful words to describe her: Dutiful. Industrious. Courageous. Aggressive. Compassionate. Gracious. Servant.

She was a native of Hale County, Alabama, and the popular region known as the Black Belt, where over half of the population is still African-American. Most important, Mrs. James was a Servant, amply displayed by her lengthy volunteerism in the Huntsville-Madison County community, stemming from the time of her move to the Tennessee Valley area in 1973. Prior to her move to the Rocket City, she lived in Long Island, New York, for 27 years. Indeed, she became heavily involved in local civic, educational, religious, and political activities and causes, continuing her life-long commitment to volunteerism after leaving New York.

Once based in Huntsville, she became an earnest presence upon the local scene. She worked part-time for the Madison County Extension Office, while yet supporting her husband, the late Mr. McKinley James, with his burgeoning landscaping business. This business afforded them the opportunity to

meet and engage with many people in the vicinity. It would also lead to her virtual inability to say “no” to volunteer requests that would ultimately make the Huntsville community a better place to live, work and play.

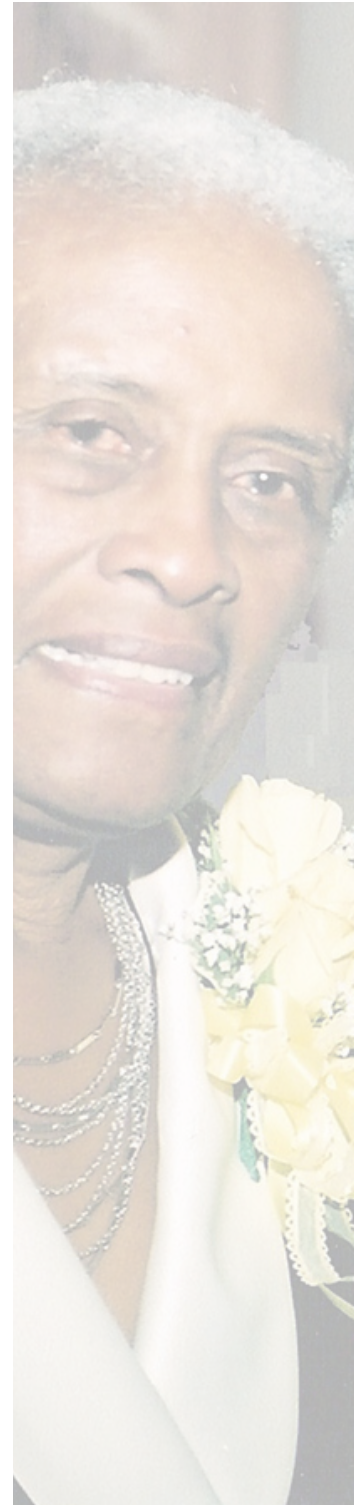
Her greatest local challenge was convincing others to allow her to *lead and serve* the community in diverse capacities, in spite of her mere high school education. In a local environment in which many others were educated far beyond her, Mrs. James responded to skepticism about her ability to lead by taking on responsibility and working harder than everyone else. Enthusiastic and committed to do her best, it was not long before community leaders recognized her abilities and invited her to serve on various boards and committees.

Mrs. James became an effective community organizer, a proactive champion for children, the elderly, the incarcerated, the abused, neglected and disenfranchised. For some 40 years, Mrs. James served numerous community organizations as a volunteer. Among these were: Church Women United, Board Member; HELPLINE, Board Member; Huntsville-Madison County Senior Center, Board Member; Madison County Day Care, Board Member; Pathfinders, Board Member; Alabama

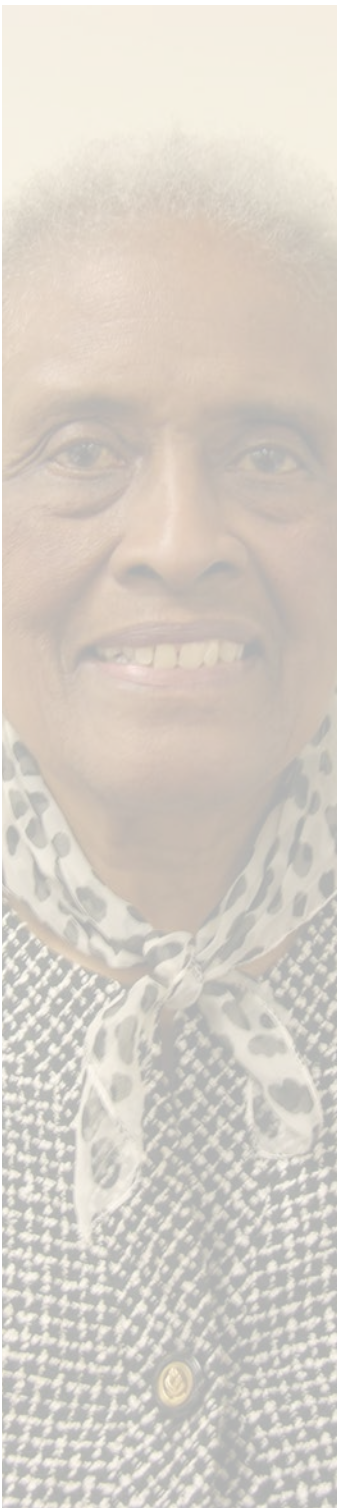


Democratic Conference, Board Member; NAACP, Board Member; Huntsville City Schools Advisory Committee; Operation Nehemiah, Union Hill Personal Growth Center, Volunteer (five years); and First Baptist Church – Jail Ministry and Missionary Worker.

Her lengthy volunteerism and community service included the following organizations and agencies: Huntsville-Madison County Senior Center – Board of Directors; First Missionary Baptist Church – Member; Missionary Circle # 3 - Membership Chairperson; Joint Missionary Society; Congregational Care – Lay Minister; Jail Ministry – member for past 30 years; Mustard Seed Ministry - Missionary Work for Africa – Local Coordinator; Church Women United – Chairperson, Nominating Committee; Alabama Citizens for Constitution Reform, Member; NAACP – Lifetime Mem-







ber, Golden Heritage Member; Huntsville Madison County Chapter – Alabama Democratic Conference, Member; Madison County Democratic Party – Member; Madison County Board of Elections – Clerk; AARP - Member for past 16 years; and Madison County Democratic Women – Member.

Because she believed in serving the community as a whole, her community service epitomizes the proverbial ‘taking the bull by the horns’ approach. Her political volunteerism led to the registration of at least 6,000 Madison County voters, and she single-handedly registered hundreds of individuals to vote, often taking ballots to churches and civic organizations, as well as making available absentee ballots to home-bound and elderly citizens.

After organizing countless voter registration drives, her demonstrated commitment led the Madison County Chapter of the Alabama Democratic Conference to re-name its annual membership breakfast “The Rosetta James Membership Breakfast,” as well as to her appointment as Madison County’s first Deputy Voter Registrar. During the primary and election seasons, she often worked 12-14 hours daily to meet her commitments.

As a Court-Appointed Juvenile Advocate (CAJA) for several years, she was selected by former legislator and Judge Hartwell Lutz. CAJAs are volunteer advocates who work on a one-to-one basis with abused and neglected children who

enter the juvenile court system. She was a strong force in obtaining tuition assistance for promising at-risk students and, coupled with her personal jail ministry for female inmates, Mrs. James made a marked improvement in the lives of hundreds of teens and young adults, especially women.

In 2007, her life-long commitment to volunteerism led a group of community citizens to organize a non-profit foundation in her name. The Rosetta James Foundation ([www.rosettajamesfoundation.org](http://www.rosettajamesfoundation.org)) flourished in its mission, and it earned non-profit status by the Internal Revenue Service. The annual ‘Rosetta James Honoring Our Elders’ celebration continues to honor local citizens who are at least 70 years old and who are still active in the community as volunteers. Foundation resources are largely reserved for providing scholarships annually to local college students who are actively involved in the community as volunteers. An endowed scholarship in the amount of \$10,000 was presented to Alabama A&M University in 2007. Since its inception, the Foundation has provided over \$150,000 in scholarships locally.

Mrs. James was a dedicated member of First Missionary Baptist Church, where she counseled and advised individuals about challenging and relevant ‘life choices and life lessons.’ She was frequently stopped on the streets by women whose lives she helped to change—an incredible legacy. She also served as Chair of the Joint Missionary

Society at FMBC. During her lifetime, she received over 50 honors, awards, and commendations from organizations and agencies, including the Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship Martin Luther King, Jr. Award, WEDC, AAMU, NAACP, ADC and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Award from the Delta Theta Lambda Education Foundation, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

In March 2016, a room was dedicated in her honor at FMBC’s Child Development Center and Academy. Also, in tribute to Mrs. James and the 10th anniversary of the Foundation that bears her name, a Legacy Room was dedicated to preserving her life’s work at the Huntsville Bible College. Most recently, she was honored by the 100 Black Men of America-Greater Huntsville Chapter (December 2017) and the Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship.

Mrs. James was preceded in death by her husband, the late Mr. McKinley James; her brothers, Mr. Marvin Jones and Mr. Herbert Jones, both of Akron, Ala.; and one sister, MaryLou Aaron, Brooklyn, New York. She leaves to cherish her memory two sisters: Mrs. Alma Madison of Hempstead, New York, and Mrs. Pearl S. Reeves of East Elmhurst, New York; a “devoted cousin,” Dr. Annie Grace Robinson; loving, dedicated and supportive friends, Ms. Maggie Willis, Ms. Johnnie Cochran and Ms. Ruby Hughes; and a host of nieces, nephews and cousins.







**TRIBUTES**

Family: Mr. Elihu Jones  
 Church: Ms. Julie Peters  
 Community: Dr. Parker Griffith

**SELECTION** ..... First Missionary Baptist Church Choir  
*"For Every Mountain"* Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, Arranger

**EULOGY** ..... Reverend Dr. Julius R. Scruggs  
*Pastor Emeritus*

**CLOSING PRAYER** ..... Reverend Troy Garner  
*Pastor, The Fellowship of Faith Church*

**CLOSING SONG** ..... First Missionary Baptist Church Choir  
*"Goin' Up Yonder"* Lady Tramaine Hawkins, Arranger

**RECESSIONAL**



*“ ... Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” - Matthew 25:21-23*

## **Active Flower Bearers**

Missionary Circle No. 3  
Deaconesses - First Missionary Baptist Church

## **Honorary Flower Bearers**

Ms. Linda Burruss  
Mrs. Nell Carodine  
Mrs. Johnnie Cochran  
Mrs. Rosa Cook  
Mrs. Gloria Dawson  
Mrs. Thelma Fuqua  
Mrs. Earnestine Hall  
Ms. Ruby Hughes  
Mrs. Irene Jolly  
Dr. Harriett Littlepage  
Mrs. Grace Love  
Mrs. Bernice Massey  
Mrs. Virginia Pugh-Gilchrist  
Dr. Annie Grace Robinson

## **Active Pall Bearers**

Mr. Marshall Clayton  
Mr. James Allen Huston  
Mr. William L. Huston, Sr.  
Mr. Elihu Jones  
Mr. Herbert Jones, Jr.  
Mr. Jerome Saintjones  
Mr. Gary T. Whitley, Jr.

## **Honorary Pall Bearers**

Board of Deacons – First Missionary Baptist Church

## **Interment**

Burroughs Family Cemetery  
Greensboro, Alabama

## **Acknowledgements**

The family of Rosetta Jones James wishes to express our sincere gratitude to each of you for your words of sympathy and kindness, your prayers, and your many gestures of kindness during this time of bereavement.  
- The James and Jones Families

## **Funeral Arrangements Entrusted To:**



Nelms Memorial Funeral Home  
2501 Carmichael Avenue, N.W.  
Huntsville, AL 35816  
(256) 539-8189

*"We can not erase the sting of death, but we can make it easier."*