

OBITUARIES

Russell
Funeral Home
 822 Carl Russell Ave.
 722-3459

LEAK

Dr. Flenzie Alexander Leak was called from this earthly scene Dec. 16 at Springwood Care Center to be with Christ, our Savior.

Dr. Leak was born July 15, 1912, in Hamlet, N.C., to the late Whitfield Leak and the late Katie J. Leak. He had resided in Winston-Salem since 1934.

He was active in civic and religious activities in and around the city.

He attended Hampton Institute in Hampton, Va., and Sperry's Gyroscopic Institute in New Orleans, La. He received his master of divinity degree, doctor of laws degree and honorary doctor of divinity degree from Miller University in New Brunswick, N.J.

He received a citation in 1956 from the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce as Man of the Year in Winston-Salem. He was a past president of the Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity, a past moderator of the Yadkin-Davie Association and a retired pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Yadkinville.

Upon retirement, he joined Zion Memorial Baptist Church, where he served as associate minister, a member of the Sunday school department and a member of the Pastor's Aide.

He leaves to mourn their loss: his devoted wife, Mrs. Mildred Coleman Leak of the home; two sons, Mr. Charles (Colleen) Leak of the city, and Rev. Alfred (Ellen) Leak of Atlanta, Ga.; two stepsons, Mr. Vernon (Malissa) Bennett of Kernersville and Mr. George (Ann) Leak of the city; a sister, Miss Catherine Leak of New York, N.Y.; one brother, John Leak of Port Murray, N.J.; one sister-in-law, Mrs. Mildred Leak of Greensboro; six godchildren, Mrs. Marline (Arwisters) Taylor of Kernersville, Mrs. Barbara (Raphael) Harriett, Miss Shan Bynum, Mrs. Barbara West, Ms. Jane France and Mr. Rick Byrd of the city; four devoted cousins, Mr. Benjamin (Viola) Davis of Raeford, N.C., Mrs. Ruth S. Johns of Philadelphia, Pa., Mrs. Lucy Pate and Mrs. Rhoda (Edward) Hines of Hamlet; one brother-in-law, Mr. Walter (Elsie) Coleman Jr. of Red Springs; two special friends, Mr. John (Alene) Davenport and Mr. Harold (Mary) Springs of the city; 12 grandchildren; and a host of other relatives and friends.

The funeral of Rev. Dr. Flenzie Alexander Leak of 5035 Butter-

field Drive was held Dec. 20 at 2 p.m. at Zion Memorial Baptist Church. Dr. Joseph Jones, pastor, officiated. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

The family wishes to thank the Springwood Care Center and Hospice and Palliative Care Center for their dedicated care.

Russell Funeral Home directors were in charge of services and arrangements.

MANN'S

Mr. Daniel Boone Manns of Martinsville, Va., passed away Dec. 16 at Winston-Salem Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center. He was a member of Mayo Missionary Church in Ridgeway, Va.

Surviving are devoted aunts, Mrs. Lucy Wilson of Winston-Salem, Mrs. Jannie Joyce of Madison, N.C., Mrs. Elsie Frazier, of Stokesdale; and a host of cousins and friends.

The funeral was held Dec. 21 at noon at Mayo Missionary Baptist Church in Martinsville, Va. Burial was at Carver Memorial Gardens in Martinsville, Va.

The family would like to express heartfelt thanks to Christopher M. Herman, M.D., and the nurses and staff at Winston-Salem Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center and Forsyth Medical Center for the exceptional care given to Mr. Manns.

Russell Funeral Home was in charge of services and arrangements.



Members of the NFL alumni, with Tierra, Cierra, Kierra, Jasmine and their grandmother, Debra Spencer, take a break from building the house.



The triplets with older sister, Jasmine, and great-grandmother, Luerene Thomas.

Former professional football players build home for woman, her great-grandchildren in Dallas

BY CHERYL SMITH
 DALLAS WEEKLY

DALLAS (NNPA) — Luerene Thomas has lived in the same house on Hamilton Street for 45 years, until last month, when the house was reduced to a pile of debris. Fortunately for Thomas, she was prepared for the demolition and she still gets excited when recalling the day she received word that her home had been selected for a "make-over."

Over a three-day period, she watched leveling of the house where she and her husband reared their two daughters and another home taking shape in its place. It was all thanks to "Holiday House V," a joint effort between the City of Dallas Housing Department and former professional football players.

"The former NFL players are a great group of guys, and I applaud their efforts," said Dallas City Councilman Leo Chaney Jr. "I'm very pleased that they are giving back to the community."

Chaney says he hopes to provide more programs that will benefit even more senior citizens in his district. "The commitment and joy and happiness that it will bring (Thomas) can't be measured," said Chaney.

A visit to the site found Thomas sitting outside watching every brick laid as contractors built her four-bedroom, two-bath home.

Sure she didn't need a home that size. After all it's just Thomas, who is in her senior years, and her husband. But not really.

Thomas and her husband are raising their five great-grandchildren: Anthony, Jasmine and triplets — Kierra, Cierra and Tierra.

Not an easy feat, even for

someone half her age, but Thomas is committed to providing a safe, healthy, happy home for her "great-grands" and their dog, Kelsey. She also needed help. Her home needed major repairs. She applied for a program with the city of Dallas and a delay in paperwork caused her application to be denied. But she reapplied and remodeling efforts began.

Much to her chagrin, workers discovered a broken gas line and work ceased immediately. Thomas said city officials told her that they were going to have to tear the house down.

"They told me it would cost just as much to rebuild as it does to remodel," she recalled.

Thomas was very fond of the house she lived in for more than half her life but said she still has great memories.

"It was a good, strong house," she admitted, adding that it was time for it to go. "You can have it now, I am ready to move into my new house!"

Thomas recalled that for the last seven months that she lived in the house, they didn't have gas service and the family cooked on hot plates. They also had to heat water for their baths on the hot plates. She's ready to move into her new home and cook her first meal.

Thanks to Thomas' brother, who lives in East Texas, she will have a big pot of greens on the stove.

"My brother came and brought me a bunch of fresh turnip greens," she exclaimed. "I can hardly wait to get them started."

Fortunately for Thomas, the Retired Players division of the National Football League Players Association stepped in and "adopted" the family,

selecting her family as the 2002 recipient of a new home.

This is the fifth year the former players have provided resources and manpower to build a home for a "deserving family" as part of their Holiday House Project.

The project, according to former Dallas Cowboy Pettis Norman, was designed to help families with children. City workers referred the Thomas family to the organization.

Former Houston Oiler Jerry Broadnax said he looks forward to the annual event because he likes giving back.

"When you can help people who are appreciative of it, it's a wonderful thing," said Broadnax. "I love it. Everything I can do to help make a difference and bring some joy into someone's life, I am going to do."

Jim Ray Smith played with the old Cleveland Browns and Dallas Cowboys. He agreed with Broadnax that working with the project is fulfilling.

"I look forward to this every year," said Smith. "We try to find families that are in dire need and we are very pleased with this year's selection. Mrs. Thomas is a wonderful person."

Norman echoed those sentiments as he explained the work that was taking place over a three-day period. It is spearheaded by Mike Connelly, who played for the Los Angeles Rams, Pittsburgh Steelers and Dallas Cowboys, and Gary Hammond, a stand-out at SMU who went on to play for the St. Louis Cardinals.

"We come in and work with contractors to build a home in a short period of time," explained Norman. "We get everyone together and come out here from sunup until sundown, until we get the job done."

Fortunately on the three days they worked on the Thomas home, the weather was sunny and warm. The weather also contributed to the work climate as neighbors and relatives stopped by to visit and see the work in progress. NFL players, young and old, autographed T-shirts and caps during their breaks.

"We're having a good time because we're helping others," said Connelly, as he moved around the property operating a forklift and directing traffic. "We get just as much out of it as the families we help."

John Teltschik feels Thomas is very deserving of the groups' efforts. "She's taking care of her extended family, and it's really uplifting to be around her," said the former Philadelphia Eagles punter. "She's had a rough time of things."

Rough is putting it mildly, says her daughter, Debra Spencer. Until the house is ready to move into, after all appliances have been added and inspections completed by the city, Thomas and the five great-grands are living with Spencer and her husband in Frazier Courts.

Spencer's daughter, Latricia, is the mother of Anthony, Jasmine, Kierra, Tierra and Cierra. Latricia is now in a nursing home following a shooting that left her incapacitated.

"When my granddaughter got hurt, people asked what was I going to do," recalled Thomas, who balked at the queries, saying, "We're gonna take them and take care of them and do the best we can!"

Thomas said as long as she has her health and strength, everything is going to be OK.

Born and raised in Frankston, Texas, Thomas said she has no problem tak-

ing in her great-grandchildren.

"Their mother was my buddy," she said. "And my mother had 11 kids, so I've always been used to big families. It doesn't bother me a bit!"

And 2003 is looking very bright for the Thomas clan. They plan to be in the house before year's end and her husband, who has been very ill and in a rehabilitation facility for nearly two months, will be able to come home for a day.

It has been hard on him for the past 14 years, said Thomas, and the house suffered because of his illnesses.

"When he was well, he did everything," she explained.

"After so many years, things began to go down."

But now they have a new home, beautifully landscaped, carpeted and equipped with central heat and air conditioning.

The children are just as excited as they watched their new house being built.

"I've already picked out my room," said Anthony, as he took time out from visiting with the former players, many of whom said they look forward to mentoring him.

"We're going to keep our room clean," chimed in the triplets. Said Thomas, "This is a blessing, a dream come true!"

Group says PBS being criticized for show on Muhammad

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON — The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a Washington-based Islamic civil rights and advocacy group, has learned that PBS is receiving heavy pressure from those who object to the positive portrayal of the prophet Muhammad in the documentary "Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet," to be broadcast beginning tonight on that network.

"We urge American Muslims and other people of conscience to contact the network to offer thanks for the decision to air the program and to urge that PBS not buckle under the pressure being exerted by bigots and Islamophobes," said CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad.

A San Francisco Chronicle

review of the documentary called it "riveting, informative and inspiring." The reviewer said: "Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet" should almost be required viewing for non-Muslims. It sets the record straight about a man who has been demonized by those who know little to nothing about the substance of his life or his message. And it makes clear that Islam is a peaceful religion followed by people who are devoted to faith and helping others, even if some adherents (such as Osama bin Laden) distort its teachings...."

On the other hand, in the New York Post last week, Daniel Pipes, a commentator who many Muslims say has a long history of Islam-bashing, suggested that the network be sued for its positive portrayal of Muhammad.