



GIVES A

Special Tribute

DR. DAVID RICE HEDGLEY

EVEN IN DEATH, MINISTER CONTINUES TO INSPIRE

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"I have tried to live simply and sincerely, so let me be buried."

-Dr. David Rice Hedgley

Tucked neatly between the pages of his family Bible, the Rev. Dr. David Rice Hedgley, Pastor Emeritus of First Baptist Church, placed his plans for his home going celebration many years ago. He wanted no fanfare, no eulogy, no long remarks.

His only wish was to have hymns and scriptures from the King James Version of the Bible read for spiritual encouragement.

He wanted participation from the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Methodist Church as a testament to his vision of "human brotherhood."

On the bottom of the page on which he typed his order of service were his final words: "I have tried to live simply and sincerely, so let me be buried."

Dr. Hedgley, though quiet and soft-spoken, managed to accomplish much during his 91 years.

His son, Dr. David Hedgley Jr. of Palmdale, Calif. and his twin sister Christine Hedgley Johnson of Sante Fe, New Mexico, have fond memories of him.

"My father was very confident, well organized, intelligent and a very precise man," said his son. He was also a stern disciplinarian.

"My father taught us that God loves everybody, and everything he did was centered around helping

people to learn more about God. It was hard to separate him from his work," Christine Hedgley said. "He was a very firm man. There was no joking or playing around. If he laughed, we knew he really enjoyed it. He knew he had been called by God, and he was always about his Father's business."

Dr. Hedgley was the seventh pastor of First Baptist Church from 1944-1974. Located at 700 North Highland Avenue, the present structure of the church was one of the most enduring contributions Hedgley made to his congregation. When Hedgley retired from the pastorate in 1975, he remained active in the church. Although he no longer sat in the pulpit, he was a strong supporter of his successor, the Rev. William Epps and current pastor the Rev. Wendell Johnson. According to Maybelle Cobb Hedgley, her husband and Johnson forged a strong father-son relationship throughout Johnsons 13-year tenure as pastor.

Dr. Hedgley is often looked to as a role model and mentor for younger ministers. Under his tutelage, six of his members entered the ministry.

He also lead his flock financially, raising more than \$1 million during his tenure.

The church body marched into the new church they designed with Gothic architecture in May 1955 and held the mortgage burning ceremony in 1959. One photograph in the church's pictorial history entitled "A Hundred Year Pilgrimage of Faith 1879-1979," shows Rev. Hedgley with Trustee Clark S. Brown as

they admired the church bell the congregation brought with them from the old building on Sixth and Chestnut Streets. A trustee since 1930, Brown recognized Hedgley as "an unusual pastor, great leader, very compassionate and outstanding in all categories of the pastorate." Brown honored him as a scholar who taught and led his flock well. The Rev. Jerry Drayton, pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church, said he and Hedgley both came to Winston-Salem in 1944 to pastor churches.

Drayton was from Howard University and Hedgley was from Florida A & M University where he taught History of Philosophy. Hedgley gave up life in academia to take on his role as pastor.

"He was a good, dynamic preacher. Anybody can testify that he was a powerful preacher," Drayton said.

Drayton and Hedgley were both active during the civil rights movement. They worked through the NAACP to get blacks registered to vote and also struggled to desegregate downtown stores, to rid the community of separate drinking fountains.

The Rev. Ginny Britt, former executive director of Crisis Control Ministry, noted that Hedgley was on the original charter board that set up the ministry following the vision of the Rev. Ron E. Rice, who worked alongside African Americans in the struggle for equality. Hedgley began volunteering in 1972. When he retired from pastoring in 1974, he went to the Crisis Control Ministry each day that it

did not snow and spent two hours stocking shelves.

"I loved him like a brother," Britt said. "I know of no finer example of Christianity than he and the three men who came aboard with him."

Another ministry that has greatly celebrated the legacy of Hedgley while he lived was Forsyth Jail and Prison Ministries. The Rev. Rodney Stilwell, senior chaplain, recognized Hedgley as one of the two founding fathers of the ministry. Dr. Hedgley and Dr. W. K. McGee were two ministers who worked together in starting the ministry in 1977.

Because one was white and the other black, they were known as "The Salt and Pepper Team." Because of their commitment to the ministry the McGee-Hedgley Chapel was named in their honor. Dr. Hedgley counseled inmates, preached during the worship services at the chapel and take men out of a sponsor pass. He would take them to church, out to eat or to Bible study. He was also on the Board of Directors.

According to Daniel W. Andrews Jr. who was Senior Choir director at First Baptist for 15 years. Hedgley loved music, especially hymns. Although Hedgley was not a lead singer, his baritone voice could be heard during congregational singing. Andrews sang the solo "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" during the services.

"For me he was a very inspiring, motivating person, and he had the loudest, most sincere AMEN I have ever heard," Andrews said.



Church member Evelena Clayborn received her 50-year pen from First Baptist during the same ceremony with Hedgley. He baptized her in 1944, the first year he became pastor.

"He was a man of few words but what he said, he meant," Clayborn said. According to Clayborn, Hedgley offered his full support to the ministers who came to pastor the church. One sermon Clayborn recalled immediately was one titled "If We Could Hear the Heart." He spoke about how God looks on the heart although man does not have the ability to discern what is in the heart.

Dr. Barbara Phillips, a member of First Baptist since 1953, remembers how Hedgley's sermons would coincide with his music. He would have the minister of music teach the congregation a different hymn each month. She also remembered that every October, Hedgley would preach the same sermon on Tithing. When she asked him why, he said that "Until you act upon it, you have not learned it," he said.

VANCE H. CHAVIS

GIVING BACK TO GREENSBORO

By DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

A memorial service was held last year for Vance H. Chavis, one of Greensboro's best known educators and civil rights leaders.

The 92-year-old died at Moses Cone Hospital after a lengthy bout with cancer.

Family and friends from all walks of life packed into quaint St. James Presbyterian Church, where Chavis was a member, to pay their last respects to the astute man.

"He was a person who was very interested in people," said his widow Mary Chavis. "He was very conscious of the injustices that involved his people." Throughout the service, heads were held high and smiles crossed faces as people took the podium to reflect on Chavis's life.

"I could give many examples of uncle Vance's life," said his nephew,

Dr. Theodore Patterson. "He wanted to do it all and he did most of it."

That statement epitomized the person that Chavis was.

After graduating from Johnson C. Smith University in 1929, Chavis began teaching at Dudley High School. In 1955 he was named assistant principal at Lincoln Middle School and was promoted to principal in 1957. He served in that capacity until retiring in 1969.

While working in the school system he continued to fight the injustices of the Jim Crow South and the myriad problems that faced segregated schools.

"He was always in a constant struggle to make things better for his race," Mary Chavis said. "He wanted to improve race relations (and) was always ready to speak out."

Chavis married the former Mary Jackson, his second wife, in

1992. For 57 years he had been joined in wedded bliss to the late Anne C. Chavis, who died in 1989.

Chavis was a man of the community and served on a number of committees.

He was a member of the Democratic State Executive Committee, Greensboro City Council, Greensboro Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Directors at Hayes-Taylor YMCA.

His tireless dedication to the community garnered him many honors. The Southeast Branch Library in Greensboro was renamed in Chavis' honor.

A Golden Bull to the core, Chavis continued to reach out to his alma mater and make a difference in the lives of the young people.

"People were irresistibly drawn to him," said JCSU President Dorothy Cowser Yancy. "The

Johnson C. Smith family will have a hard time replacing him."

"Johnson C. Smith University has lost a son. In many ways he was Johnson C. Smith. We would like to thank the Chavis family for letting us have him."

Chavis was present at the school for many historical firsts.

He was there at the university when it changed its name from Bidle Institute to Johnson C. Smith. He was also on hand when the first black college gymnasium in the state was erected on Smith's campus.

"(JCSU) was his extended family," Yancy said. "He believed in education. He believed in preserving this educational institution."

Yancy, a Smith alumni who has served as president since 1994, first met Chavis as a 16-year-old on the JCSU campus.

Looking back Yancy, now 54, says Chavis was very inspiring.

"We were very active in the civil rights movements with Chavis' blessing," Yancy said.

Age nor sickness kept Chavis from attending events this year such as homecoming and commencement exercises. It was during these times over the years that he continued to forge relationships with the students of a younger generation.

Because of his unselfish giving, he was awarded an honorary doctorate last May.

"He was special," Yancy said smiling. "Those who knew him loved him."

Mary Chavis echoed these sentiments.

"He was a master teacher a good administrator and great husband and friend. I'm going to miss him terribly."

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