

*A Celebration of the Life and Legacy  
Of  
Mr. James Nelson Cotten*



Friday, January 15, 2010

2:00 p.m.

Terrell's Creek Missionary Baptist Church  
3419 Old Greensboro Rd.  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27516  
Reverend Brian E. Wright, Pastor

Ms. Ja'Cin ta Bynum Frazier, Eulogist



1:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m.

The Family Visitation (1:00 p.m. until 1:30 p.m.)

The Family Visitation (1:00 p.m. until 1:30 p.m.)

The Call to Worship.....Reverend Brian E. Wright

The Call to Worship.....Reverend Brian E. Wright

The Prayer of Consolation.....Reverend Brian E. Wright

The Prayer of Consolation.....Reverend Brian E. Wright

## Old Testament

## New Testament

Solo .....Pamela Bynum Edwards (Ms. Pam, Nelson's granddaughter)

Solo ..... Pamela Bynum Edwards (Ms. Pam, Nelson's granddaughter)

## The Obituary (To be read silently)

## The Obituary (To be read silently)

Troy Lindsay Cotton ( Dubbs, Nelson's grandson)



Solo..... Krysterpher Farrington (Nelson's great grandson)

Eulogy.....Ja'Cin ta Bynum Frazier  
(Stringbean, Nelson's granddaughter)

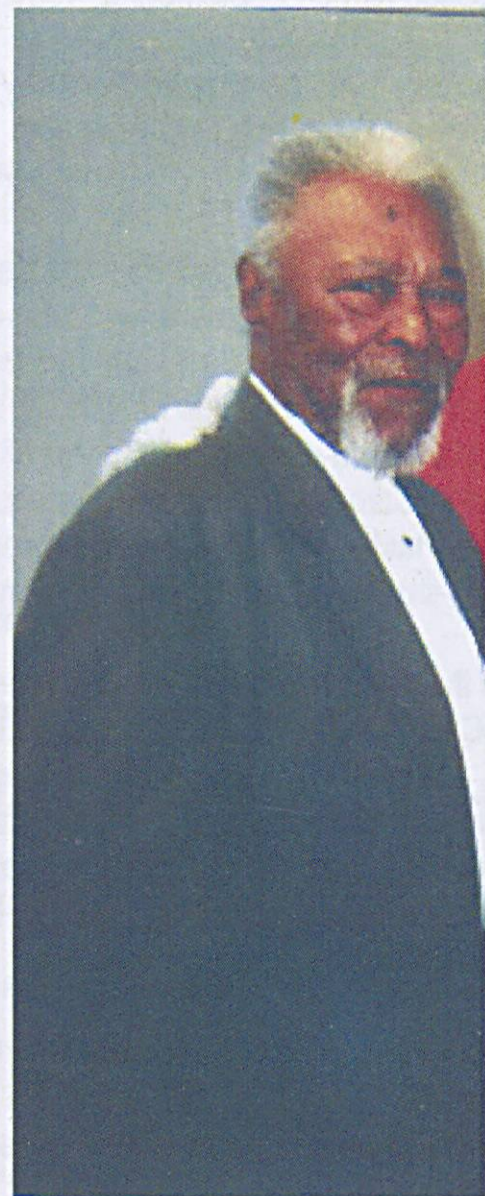
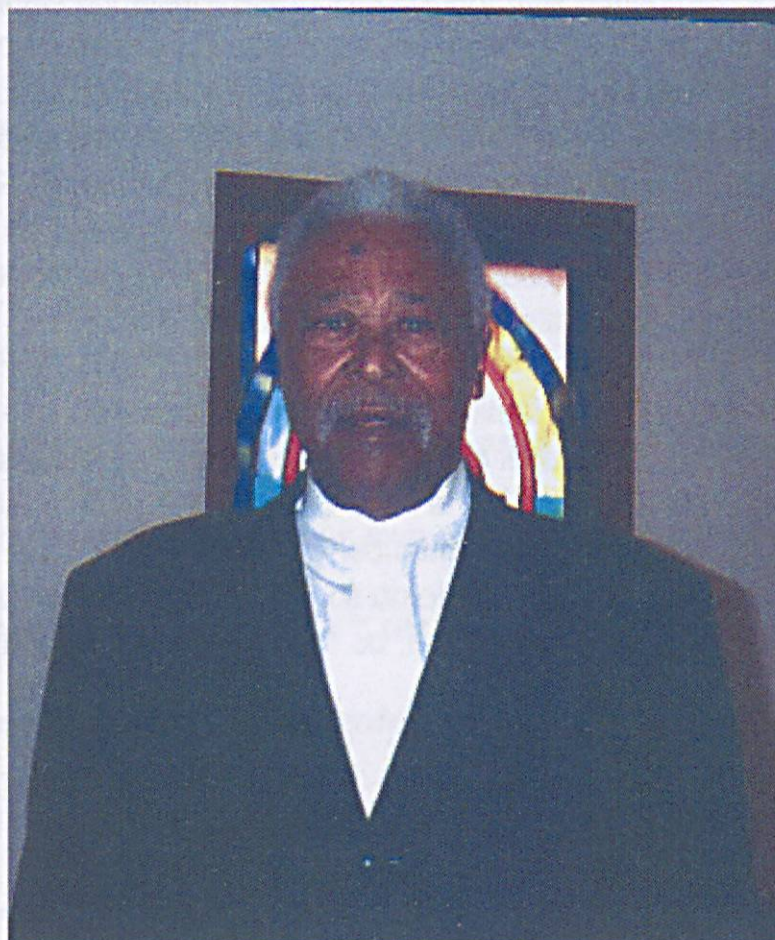
The Recessional Selection.....Bobby Clark

The Recessional

Interment..... Terrell's Creek Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery

**At The Terrell's Creek Cemetery**

The Gathering of the Cotten Family and Friends  
The Ritual of Consignment  
The Prayer of Benediction  
The Final Departure





## *The Obituary*

James Nelson Cotten, fondly known as James Nelson, Nelson, Cotton-Eye-Joe, Daddy, Poppa, Dub, The Ice Cream Man, was born on Tuesday, June 18, 1918 to Willie and Hester Louise Eubanks Cotten in Chatham County, NC. He is the oldest of the nine children born to this couple. He was predeceased by his parents, brothers; Willie Banks, Harvey Lee, Joseph Wesley and Bobby Lee; and by his sisters Mary Kate, Dorothy Lee and Maggie Leona; a sister, Flonnie Belle of New York City, NY survives him.

His birth date, June 18, 1918 and his death date, Saturday, January 9, 2010 are very important dates (June 18, 1918 - January 9, 2010). The most important fact about these dates is the small "dash" between them. His "dash" will reveal 91 years, 7 months and 9 days of which he was alive on earth. His "dash" started in Chatham County. During his early childhood, he, his parents and siblings moved to Orange County. This allowed him to be educated at the Sunny Side School which was located on the grounds of the Terrell's Creek Baptist Church. His teacher was the late Ethel Stanfield.

During his youth and early years, he worked on many community farms as a farm hand, particularly the Lloyd and Ivey farms. He also worked with many pulpwood companies cutting pulpwood throughout North Carolina.

On April 21, 1938, he married his Sunny Side School sweetheart, the love of his life, the one who would become the mother of his children, Hazel Mae Fearington. To this union five children were born. "Mae" as he affectionally called her, predeceased him on September 2, 1987.

January 1945 he entered the Army of the United States. He was stationed in Calvert County, MD. While serving in the Army, Private Cotten received American Theater Campaign and Victory Medals. He received a Honorable Discharge in January 1946. He was an Army Veteran serving during WWII.

After being discharged from the service, he trained with the J. C. Burnette Plastering Company of Chapel Hill, NC and became a Master Plasterer. He later was employed by the Irvin Moore Plastering Company of Burlington, NC. The owner was his best friend. This afforded him the opportunity to plaster different buildings all along the Eastern shore board. He helped to plaster many buildings in Norfolk, VA, buildings at the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair, NY, the World Trade Center, AIG building and numerous amounts of other buildings in New York City, buildings on Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, buildings at the North Carolina Memorial Hospitals, Chapel Hill and even his own home. As a plasterer, he affiliated himself with the Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association, Local #660. After his retirement as a plasterer, he worked part-time as a "handyman" for John S. Harder Associates, Chapel Hill, NC until 2000.

In the early 1960s he moved his membership from his family church, Hamlet Chapel Church, Pittsboro, NC to Terrell's Creek Missionary Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, NC. At Terrell's Creek he was baptized (by the late Reverend T. J. Foster, Jr.) and became a member. There he sang in the Male Chorus, Mixed Choir, served as an ordained Deacon, he was a member of the Layman's League, Trustee Board, a member of the Pastor's Aide. He attended Sunday School and Vacation Bible School until his health no longer allowed him to do so. He received numerous certificates, awards and honorable mentions. He spent much of his life serving in his church, as he truly loved the Lord. At his death, he was the oldest male member of the church.

After his retirement from the workforce, he started to attend the Northside Senior Center, Chapel Hill. There he met new friends. He continued to attend the senior center after it merged with the Chapel Hill Senior Center to become the Robert and Pearl Seymour Center. He attended until his health no longer allowed him to do so.



His hobbies were squirrel and rabbit hunting, farming, giggling (a type of fishing), making, eating and selling homemade ice cream, eating and sleeping, sleeping and more sleeping.

Nelson and Hazel had five children. Because of his love and affection for his family and their pets, each family member and pet will be named. **Son, James William** (Carol) of Irvington, NJ and their family: daughter, Cynthia C. Newkirk (Charlie) of Pittsboro, NC. Their children are LaVar Cotten, Charlie Newkirk, IV, LaChae' Newkirk and Dior Norman, Louisburg College, Louisburg, NC.. Their granddaughter is LaVar's daughter, Lauren Olivia. Sons, Todd Scott of NJ and Troy Lindsay of Jamaica. His children are Troy J., Todd Lindsay and Tailyn. Taylor Lindsay predeceased his grandfather. Daughter, Twana of Irvington, NJ. Her children are Sherond Monique, Tiffany Shada and Scott Al'Lee. Her grandchildren are Shaquan Lamar, Niquan Isaiah, Sharena and Aihyna. Daughter, Christina Ray of Irvington, NJ. Her children are Andre and Jamora. Daughter, Jennifer Ray of Irvington, NJ.

**Daughter, Julia Marie Leigh** of Rocky Hill, CT. Her daughter is Pamela and her grandchildren of Hartford, CT.

**Daughter, Ruby Violet Bynum** (Donald) of Chapel Hill, NC. Their daughter is JaCin'ta Bynum Frazier (James) of Bloomfield, CT. Their children are Janae of Elon University, Elon, NC and James Tre'. Their pet cats are BeBe and CeCe. Daughter, Pamela Bynum Edwards of Graham, NC. Her daughter, Asia. Daughter, Monisia Bynum Farrington (Ryan) of Graham, NC. Their child is Kysterpher of Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, NC. Their pet dogs are Koby and Keng. Ruby and Donald's pet dog is Tano.

**Daughter, Phyllis Ann Cotten Fearington** of Chapel Hill, NC. Her child is Lamont of Durham, NC. Lamont's children are Chandler of Atlanta, GA and McKenzie. Phyllis and McKenzie shared pet dogs are Polkadot and DeOoGe. They also shared Mr. August "AugE" a rescued potbellied piglet. He was adopted by the Durham Museum of Life and Science and is a part of the Petting Zoo.

**Son, Nelson Junior** of Durham, NC. His children are Andre' Jermaine and Angela Renee.

He is also survived by in-laws, Earlene (wife of the late Henry) Fearington of Philadelphia, PA; Mary (wife of the late Bobby) Cotton of Statesville, NC and Pete (husband of the late Maggie Cotten) Farrington, VA. He is survived by aunts; Grace Lynn Avery, Chapel Hill, NC and Evelyn Lynn Faulk of Pittsboro, NC. He is also survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

He was a generous man and had a life long devotion to a circle of friends and his extended family to whom he left this poem.

### ***I Am Gone***

***You can shed tears because I am gone or you can smile because I lived.***

***You can close your eyes and pray that I'll come back***

***Or you can open your eyes and see all that I have left.***

***Your heart can be empty because you can't see me, or you can be full of the love we've shared.***

***You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.***

***You can remember me and only that I have gone, or you can cherish my memory and let it live on.***

***You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back***

***Or you can do what I want; smile, open your eyes, love and live on.***



*As you read this poem, please allow yourself to reflect on the obituary*

### *The Dash Poem*

This poem is a beautiful reminder about what's really important in life.  
At a funeral of a friend, a man spoke making reference to the date on a  
tombstone from beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came his date of birth then the death date.  
But what mattered most of all was the "dash" between the dates.

For the dash represents all the time he spent alive on earth.  
And how only those who loved him know what the little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own; the cars, the house, the cash.  
What matters most is how we live and love and how we spend our dash...  
So think about this long and hard. Are there things you'd like to change?

For you never know how much time is left, that can still be rearranged.  
If we could just slow down enough, to consider what is true and real.

And always try to understand, the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger and show appreciation more.

And love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

Remembering that this special "dash" might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash  
Would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your "dash".



*A Town Called Don't You Worry On the Banks of the River Smile*

*There's a town called Don't you Worry on the Banks of the River Smile*

*Dad Nelson has gone to a town called Don't You Worry, on the Banks of the River Smile*

*Where he and Mom Mae can reunite just like their first date when they  
knew it was love at first sight,*

*She'll be near the never grumble flowers blossoms beside the fragrant tray, resting on the  
bench that's quite enticing.*

*You'll find on every vine clinging a fervent earnest prayer.  
Dad Nelson we are in mourning for you but goodbye is not we say.*

*It's see you later because we  
will meet again just not today.*

*But in the town called Don't You Worry on The Banks of River Smile.*



*Your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great great grandchildren.*





*Honorary and Active Floral Attendants*

Terrell's Creek Missionary Ministry  
&  
Family Friends

*Honorary and Active Casket Attendants*

Terrell's Creek Deacons and Trustees  
&  
Family Friends  
&  
U.S. Military

*Acknowledgment*

We, the Cotten family, were so blessed and we offer thanks to UNC Hospitals nurses and staff, the Brian Center's nurses and staff, Durham, NC, UNC Home Health, UNC Hospice nurses and staff (Andrea, Social Worker, Nancy Jo, nurse) of Pittsboro, NC, Department of Social Services of Hillsborough, NC (Anne, Social Worker), ResCare HomeHealth (Pandora, CNA) of Chapel Hill, NC, Chapel Hill Internal Medicine's nurses and staff, (Dr. Brown and Dr. Brothers) and all of our friends and family. We thank you for your support, love, concern and prayers which have been a source of strength and encouragement.

The Family

**Professional Services Entrusted To**

*Knott's Funeral Home*

**113 North Graham Street  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27516  
919-968-7780**

**[www.knottsfuneralhome.com](http://www.knottsfuneralhome.com)**