



## Rev. William Samuel Henderson III

June 30, 1946 - January 26, 2025

Rev. William Samuel Henderson, III passed away peacefully at home in Gainesville, GA on Sunday, January 26, 2025 after a long bout with cancer. He is predeceased by his parents, William Samuel Henderson, II and Ruby Sue House Henderson; his sisters, Suzanne Henderson Haulbrook and Janet Henderson Pratt; and his nephew, Eddie Henderson.

Known as Sam by his friends and family, he was born on June 30, 1946 in Chattanooga, TN. He attended Brainerd High School where he enjoyed playing baseball and football before graduating in 1964. He went on to attend Carson-Newman College and earn a bachelor degree in psychology at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. In 1967-1968, Sam served as youth minister at Signal Mountain Baptist Church where he met and married his beloved wife, Debbie.

Sam worked in sales and management for several companies in Chattanooga. He was ordained at Ridgedale Baptist Church in Chattanooga in 1978. While earning a Master of Divinity degree at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, he dedicated himself full-time to the service of God, pastoring churches in Kentucky, Michigan, Tennessee and Georgia. He actively participated in a variety of Christian mission work including disaster relief and a trip to preach and support pastors in Cuba. He retired from Berea Baptist Church in Commerce, GA in May of 2023. Sam's

faithfulness to God, integrity, passion for studying and teaching the Word of God and his compassion for all who God placed in his path impacted many lives during his lifetime and over four decades of professional ministry.

Sam will be remembered as a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He shared a deep love with Debbie and was proud of their 56-year marriage and partnership in ministry. He cherished his children, grandchildren and great-grandson, playing an active part in their lives throughout the years, always making time to attend their sporting events, concerts and plays. He shared his love of the outdoors with them, taking them on camping trips and teaching them how to fish. Most importantly, his Christian guidance and embodiment of God the Father's love was a blessing to his family and will be his most lasting legacy.

Sam is survived by his loving wife, Debra Faith Harris Henderson, his children: Debbie Anne Henderson Van Amberg (Mike) of Newnan, GA, Amy Elizabeth Henderson Holland (Greg) of Gainesville, GA and William Samuel (Bill) Henderson, IV (Tabitha) of Winter Garden, FL, seven grandchildren: Josh Holland (Haley), Owen Holland, Ian Van Amberg, Sarah Van Amberg, Peyton Henderson, Ben Henderson and Kate Henderson, his great-grandson James Holland, his brother Joe Edward Henderson (Sally) and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be at 3 PM, Wednesday, January 29 at Berea Baptist Church with Rev. Chris Burns officiating. The family will receive friends at the funeral home Wednesday from 1 until 2:30 PM. Interment service for his family will be held at 1 PM on Thursday, January 30 at Chattanooga Memorial Park, Chattanooga, TN.

The family wishes to express deep gratitude to Berea Baptist Church of Commerce and Northeast Georgia Medical Center Hospice. Sam has

respectfully requested that all flowers be omitted. Contributions may be made to the Paul Anderson Youth Home, P.O. Box 525, Vidalia, GA 30475 or to Berea Baptist Church, 545 A.C. Smith Rd., Commerce, GA 30530.

Little-Ward Funeral Home, Commerce is in charge of arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

## Chattanooga Memorial Park

501 Memorial Drive  
Chattanooga, TN 37415

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 29. 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM (ET)

Little-Ward Funeral Home  
115 State Street  
Commerce, GA 30529  
(706) 335-3175  
lwfh@windstream.net  
<https://www.little-wardfuneralhome.com/>

## Service

JAN 29. 3:00 PM (ET)

Berea Baptist Baptist Church  
402 Berea Church Rd  
Commerce, GA 30530

# Tribute Wall

TS

“ *Calling him Uncle Sam, I always told our kids the story of how Uncle Sam married me and their dad, going on almost 43 years of marriage now. Sam’s presence in our Harris family comforted and supported us through celebrations and sadness. We were so very fortunate to have him and Aunt Debbie supporting us. Sam will be missed, and we pray for Debbie’s comfort at this difficult time. We cannot be at Sam’s funeral, but we will be with everyone in spirit. With love and sympathy, Andy and Tracy Straw*

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**Tracy Straw** - January 29, 2025 at 09:13 PM

MA

“ *I remember Sam was a minister for Hudson River Baptist Church. He made sure he always had a smile on his face. I called him when I was diagnosed with cancer the same that my mom had. He was an inspiration for talking to me and praying for my recovery. Marcia Ayers*

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**Marcia Ayers** - January 29, 2025 at 12:16 PM

MA

*Prayers for Debbie, Anne, Amy and Bill!*

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**Marcia Ayers** - January 29, 2025 at 12:18 PM

CC

“ *Sam, Divine Father’s blessing to us all, is now back in the arms of his Beloved Creator. We who were privileged to know him experienced goodness and gladness in his presence. Cannot imagine a world without him. One thing is for certain, every time I think of him, I’ll be smiling. Thank you, Sam. Thank you Divine Father.*

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**Carol Harris Capps** - January 29, 2025 at 12:03 PM

BG

“ I did not know Sam well. My sister attends Berea Baptist Church. When she was sick he visited her and called checking on her. He impressed me as a true man of God with love, care and concern for his flock. My sympathy for the family.

*Brenda Garrison*

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**Brenda Garrison** - January 29, 2025 at 09:07 AM

MM

“ Materials Management purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Rev. William Samuel Henderson III.



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**Materials Management** - January 28, 2025 at 03:29 PM

MM

“ From: Materials Management planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Rev. William Samuel Henderson III.

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**Materials Management** - January 28, 2025 at 03:29 PM

WS

“ I knew Sam from his stint with Central Baptist Church in Newnan, GA. I liked him, and his wife Debbie. Debbie and I sang a duet together once. She was (is) a lovely person. I did not know their children, but I know Anne now. She sings in our choir. She too, is kind and gentle, much like her mother. I was sorry when they left Central Baptist Church. I'm sorry that Sam had to endure that ugly thing called cancer. My deepest condolences to Debbie and her family.

*William Starnes*

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**William Starnes** - January 28, 2025 at 09:45 AM

LM

“ I have known Sam since elementary school in Eastdale where all of us lived. We played together shared meals and went to school together. We graduated from Brainerd in 1964. I lost track of him until he came to preaching our church Avondale Baptist. Sam was a friend and I am sad that he is gone. My prayers are Comfort and peace to Debbie and the family. Once antebellum always a Rebel. TIP my friend.



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**Lee McClure** - January 27, 2025 at 10:47 PM

LH

“ Sam was more than my uncle. He was a steady light in our family whose beaming smile each time we crossed paths warmed your heart and soothed your soul. He was the family anchor when he lead the services for both our father and mother (his sister). I shall always cherish my memories of Sam.

*Les Haulbrook*

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**Les Haulbrook** - January 27, 2025 at 04:07 PM

AW

“ April W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Rev. William Samuel Henderson III.

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**April W.** - January 27, 2025 at 11:05 AM