



## Rev. James Solomon Gadsden Sr.

June 12, 1930 - June 19, 2017

Rev. James Solomon Gadsden, Sr., affectionately known as Jim to many, was called home to his heavenly reward Monday, June 19, 2017, in Columbia. Jim, the ninth child born June 12, 1930, to the late William and Rosa Rollerson Gadsden, was a graduate of the Boylan-Haven Mather Academy Class of 1950 in Camden, SC. Jim earned an A.B. degree from Claflin College (now University) in Orangeburg, SC; a Master of Divinity from Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA; and a Doctor of Divinity from Interdenominational Theological Center of Atlanta.

A bright scholar and leader at a young age, Jim was in the top ten of his class at Mather Academy. While at Claflin, he was president of his class for four years, and graduated summa cum laude in History and Religious Studies. At Gammon, he was third in his graduating class, received the Smith-Taylor Award for writing and academic growth, and was a member of the National Honor Society of Alpha Kappa Mu.

Jim was licensed to preach in 1948 in the Berkeley District on the recommendation of Bethel Church in St. Stephen, SC. He was admitted on trial in 1951, ordained deacon in 1953, ordained elder in 1957, and received into full connection in 1957. A ministerial member of the South Carolina Annual Conference, Jim served numerous appointments including: Associate Editor of Youth Publications at the Board of Discipleship and United Methodist

Publishing House in Nashville, TN (1967-1978); Greenwood District Superintendent in Greenwood, SC (1978-1984); and the Conference Council Director of the SC Annual Conference (1985-1989).

As a pastor, he served in the following appointments: Walterboro (1952); Summerville (1953); West Anderson Charge (1954-1957); Lamar (1957-2958); Sumter (1959); Camden (1960-1966); Florence (1989-1990); and two congregations in Columbia [Virginia Wingard Memorial (1990-1993) and Wesley United Methodist (1993-1996)]. In 1990, Jim was named senior pastor of Virginia Wingard Memorial - an 800 member, predominately white United Methodist congregation. He was one of a select group of five pastors across South Carolina who were asked to cross the Sunday morning racial divide and lead a congregation of a different race or ethnicity, which he did for three years.

Throughout his ministry, Jim experienced his share of being a trailblazer. In addition to his Virginia Wingard appointment, he served as the first black: editor of the Youth Publications; district superintendent of the Greenwood District; Associate Council Director; and Council Director of the SC Annual Conference.

In addition to congregational ministry, Jim was an author and editor. He authored two books: *Can Blacks Be Christian?* and *Black Pilgrimage in America: The Christian Perspective and Experiences*, as well as editing publications such as *Struggles and Hopes of the Black Church*; *Explore*; and *Confirming My Faith* (the official confirmation resources for the United Methodist Church).

For 44 years, Jim's dedication to ministry and service were evident as a congregational pastor, supervisor and evaluator of pastors, and as a leader and member of numerous local and national organizations. He served on the

board of directors of Hinton Rural Life; the SC Region Department of Mental Retardation; Claflin University Board of Visitors; the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry; and many others. He was a supporter of Oliver Gospel Mission, as well as a long-time member of Rotary International. Throughout his ministry, Jim received numerous awards and recognition for his work, including the honor of being selected as a delegate to the denomination's General Conference and Southeastern Jurisdiction in 1980, 1984, 1988, and 1992.

Jim retired from the ministry in 1996, but continued to preach and teach occasionally, and lead by example daily. Throughout his ministry he was known for his caring and loving spirit, and astute council. Through school, the church, and the community, Jim made a lifetime of friends and acquaintances. He was a great storyteller and great listener; however, it is Jim's quiet demeanor, friendly smile, easy laugh, and unwavering faith that will live on in the memory of those he influences, as well as those that loved him.

Jim was a devoted husband to the former Thelma Curtis as well as a devoted father to four children, a proud grandfather, and a devoted brother. In addition to his parents, Jim was preceded in death by his beloved wife Thelma and two sisters, Eloise Middleton and Alice Rosa Lee Perkins.

Jim leaves to cherish precious memories his children: James Jr., Cynthia, Jessica, and Curtis; his granddaughter Andrea; his siblings: Evelyn Williams, Matilda Gadsden, Martha (Warren) Gant, Estelle Sellers, and William Gadsden; and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.

# Cemetery Details

## Memorial Gardens of Columbia

Columbia, SC

# Previous Events

## Family Visitation

JUN 23. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Palmer Memorial Chapel - Columbia  
1200 Fontaine Place  
Columbia, SC 29223  
(803) 786-6300  
palmermemorialchapel@gmail.com  
<https://www.palmermemorialchapel.com>

## Public Viewing

JUN 24. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Francis Burns United Methodist Church  
5616 Farrow Road  
Columbia, SC, SC 29203

## Celebration of Life

JUN 24. 1:00 PM (ET)

Francis Burns United Methodist Church  
5616 Farrow Road  
Columbia, SC, SC 29203

## Graveside service

JUN 24 (ET)

Memorial Gardens of Columbia  
Columbia, SC

# Tribute Wall



“ *Rev. James Solomon Gadsden Sr.*

October 04, 2023 at 11:33 AM



“ *James & Cynthia, you are in my thoughts and prayers... Love, Peace & Blessings,*



**Joyce Bentley** - June 30, 2017 at 08:00 AM



“ *MAY THE PEACE OF GOD BE WITH THE FAMILY DURING YOUR TIME OF SORROW. I WILL BE PRAYING FOR YOU.*



**ROOSEVELT G, BLANDING** - June 24, 2017 at 11:19 AM



“ *I have appreciated Jim's gracious and professional spirit my entire pastorate, as he was one of my mentors in residency. He stood with me at ordination. He always had time and a smile for a young learner like me trying to be a pastor. It has been a joy knowing him and now celebrating his journey to Heaven.*

*Steve Patterson*

**Steve Patterson** - June 24, 2017 at 07:49 AM

KS

“ Kendrick Swinton lit a candle in memory of Rev. James Solomon Gadsden Sr.



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**Kendrick Swinton** - June 23, 2017 at 06:07 AM

CJ

“ Jim's influence will live on forever. He planted so many seeds of faith, and helped grow the kingdom of God through his humble service. What a legacy he leaves with us all. Many prayers to all the family. In Christ, Rev. Dr. Cathy Jamieson, Columbia DS

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**Cathy Jamieson** - June 22, 2017 at 09:14 PM

JH

“ One of the finest, most gracious men I ever knew. Thankful for his life.  
Jim and Kathryn Hunter

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**Jim Hunter** - June 22, 2017 at 05:00 PM

RG

“ It was my privilege to work with Jim in many aspects of conference life. He was a thoughtful Christian gentleman in every respect and a colleague, friend, and advisor to many. I was especially pleased that he accepted an invitation to join the Board of Directors of the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation in 1991. He served until 2011, a period of twenty years. relinquishing his seat solely due to health concerns.

*On behalf of the Board, I extend our sincere Christian sympathy to his family.*

*Roger M. Gramling, D. D.*

*President*

*The South Carolina United Methodist Foundation, Inc.*

*Columbia, South Carolina*

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**Roger M Gramling** - June 22, 2017 at 04:58 PM