



## Dr. Leo Richardson

December 19, 1931 - July 23, 2023

Dr. Leo Richardson spent a lifetime devoted to education, athletics and community service. His accomplishments include a career in higher education, and a second career in social service working to mitigate inequality and poverty. Leo taught high school and university level science and health subjects, while founding, directing and coaching athletic programs and teams. He was the University of Buffalo's first African American head basketball coach.

Leo was born December 19, 1931, in Gresham, South Carolina. He played football, baseball, and was recruited by hall of famer Taft Watson to play basketball for Loris Training School in Loris, South Carolina. Leo earned a degree in Biology from Morris College, and subsequently worked as a high school teacher and coach before enlisting in the U.S. Army. Leo played for the Army's football team and coached the Battalion basketball team. He returned to Wagner, South Carolina where he started the first football program at A.L. Corbett High School. He also coached basketball and baseball, and taught physical education, math and biology.

In 1961, he earned a Master of Education (Science Education) at Tuskegee Institute. In 1985, Leo earned a PhD at the State University of New York at Buffalo, becoming a Doctor of Philosophy, specializing in Educational Administration, Organization & Policy. Leo earned graduate fellowships in

Ecology at Indiana University and University of Delaware, Oceanography and Ecology at Oregon State University, Ecology, Embryology & Behavior at Williams College and Radiation Biology at Tuskegee Institute.

From 1961-1964 Leo worked in the Department of Health, Physical Education & Recreation, and as the Athletic Director at his alma mater, Morris College. He went on to become a professor and Men's Head Basketball and Football Coach at Savannah State University. From there, he became Assistant Coach and then Head Basketball Coach at the State University of New York at Buffalo while working as a Professor in Health Education.

In 1979, Leo transitioned to academic administration at SUNY Buffalo, first as Associate Director for Presidential Endowment with budgetary responsibilities and then as Assistant to the Vice President for Affirmative Action and Human Relations, developing programs to improve Community-University relations and strategies to involve and support minorities in higher education. Leo also served as Assistant Director of Community Affairs and as Associate Director for Alumni Affairs.

In 1984, Richardson returned to South Carolina where he was appointed Special Assistant to the Commissioner at the South Carolina Department of Social Services in Columbia. In this capacity Leo developed the AFDC Youth at Risk, Teen Pregnancy Reduction and sponsored the Child Support Enforcement legislation. He continued his work with the South Carolina Department of Social Services as Assistant to the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for Planning, Management and Research. He oversaw six divisions including The Institute on Poverty and Deprivation and Individual and Provider Rights, subsequently becoming the Director for these two divisions. In 1997, he became Executive Director of the South Carolina Institute on Poverty and Deprivation.

During this time Leo taught undergraduate courses in Environmental Sciences at Limestone College in Gaffney, South Carolina and at South Carolina State University, Orangeburg.

Leo also developed and managed various grants with the goal of addressing teen pregnancy and extending educational opportunities for at-risk and homeless teens, as well as for women and minorities. He became a Licensed Master Social Worker, Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (2000, Morris College) and was awarded Distinguished Alumnus Award for Outstanding Service (2004). Below is a full list of his awards and collegiate coaching accomplishments:

- SC Order of the Palmetto Award
- Man of the Year Award 2006 (Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity)
- GEM Award for Outstanding Service 2005 (Richland Sertoma Club, Columbia, S.C.)
- Distinguished Alumnus Award for Outstanding Service 2004 (Morris College's National Alumnae Association, Morris College, Sumter, S.C.)
- Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters 2000 (Morris College, Sumter, S.C.)
- Licensed Master Social Worker 1990 (State of South Carolina Board of Social Work Examiners)
- Who's Who Among Black Americans 1986
- Community Service Award 1984 (The Black Educators of the Niagara Frontier, Buffalo, N.Y.)
- Community Service Staff Award 1994 (Buffalo Community Advisory Council, Buffalo, N.Y.)
- Educational Service Award 1983 (National Columbus Day Committee, Buffalo, N.Y.)

## Professional Community-Related Achievements:

- SC Pharmacy Board
- SC Rotary
- Appointed to the Transportation Study Commission, 2007-2009
- Executive Board Member for the Institute on Poverty and Deprivation's Task Force on Hunger and Nutrition, 1987-Present
- Staff member on the South Carolina Commission on Child Support, 1987-Present
- Served as the Chairman of the South Carolina Low Income Housing Coalition, 1990-1998
- Managed the Health and Human Services Program at Denmark-Olar High School's Teen Life Center in Denmark, South Carolina, 1989
- Previous President, Planned Parenthood

## Athletics:

- Southern Inter-Collegiate Athletic All Conference Tournament (SIAC); third place; Men's Basketball Team, 1972
- Won the Southern Inter-Collegiate Athletic All Conference Basketball Championship; Named Basketball Coach of the Year, 1970
- The Championship Basketball Team led both the NAJA and NCAA small colleges in scoring 106 points per game, 1970
- Won the Southeastern Athletic Conference's Basketball Championship; Named Basketball Coach

of the Year, 1969

- Won the Southeastern Athletic Conference's Football Championship; Named Football Coach of the Year, 1967

- Won the Middle Georgia Basketball Classic in Fort Valley, Georgia, defeating Bethune-Cookman

College and Florida A&M University, 1967

- Basketball team represented the Southeastern Athletic Conference in the NAJA District 26

Championship Playoffs in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1966

- Won the Southeastern Athletic Conference's Basketball Championship; Named Basketball Coach

of the Year, 1965-1966

- Served as Vice-President for the Southeastern Athletic Conference, 1965-1966

- Basketball team led the NAJA in Free Throw Shooting, 1964-1965

- Won the Southeastern Athletic Conference Football Championship; named Coach of the Year, 1963-1964

He was preceded in death by his parents the late Isaiah and Ethel Richardson, his loving wife Mary Jane Frierson Richardson, three sisters Mary Lewis, Wanda Jackson and Doris Richardson and one brother Alonzo Richardson.

As he transitions to his eternal rest, Dr. Richardson is survived by his loving daughters, Sandra Richardson of Charlotte, NC, and Beverly Byrd of Englewood, NJ, as well as his devoted son, Alfred Richardson of Atlanta, GA. And his cherished granddaughter, Morgan Richardson of Atlanta, GA.

He leaves behind three sisters: Hazel Lattimer of Hampton, GA, Betty Johnson of Charlotte, NC, and Hilda Mitchell of North Hanover, NJ, along with

his brother, Cleo Richardson of Trenton, NJ.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that you make a donation in Dr. Richardson's name to one of the following scholarship funds:

Morris College Office of Alumni Affairs

100 West College Street

Sumter, SC 29150

- OR -

Leo Richardson Athletic Scholarship Endowment Fund

Savannah State University

in C/O Honia Johnson

University Advancement Office

3219 College Street Box 20439

Savannah, GA 31404

# Previous Events

## Public Viewing

JUL 29. 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Palmer Memorial Chapel  
1200 Fontaine Place  
Columbia, SC 29223

## Live Streaming

JUL 29. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Palmer Memorial Chapel  
1200 Fontaine Place  
Columbia, SC 29223

*A link to the streaming will be provided as soon as it is available. Thank You*

## Receiving Friends

JUL 29. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Palmer Memorial Chapel  
1200 Fontaine Place  
Columbia, SC 29223

## Lie in State

JUL 30. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

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

## **A Celebration of Life**

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JUL 30. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

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

## **Live Streaming**

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JUL 30. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

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

*A link for the livestream will be provided as soon as it is available. Thank You*

## **Entombment**

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JUL 30. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Greenlawn Memorial Park  
Columbia, SC

# Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. Leo Richardson*

October 04, 2023 at 11:33 AM



“ *S.I.P. Leo, you were a Good man, firm and to the point, and that's what GOD is pleased with...Sleep on and take your Rest...You fought a Good Fight!!*

*Alice Goodman Smalls,*



**Alice Smalls** - August 22, 2023 at 12:44 AM



“ *My condolences to the family. He was quite an accomplished gentleman. Again, to daughter Sandra and the family, my prayers of comfort to you.*

**Dorothea E Speight** - August 09, 2023 at 09:11 PM



“ *Sending heartfelt condolences on the loss of your father Leo. I will always remember him as one who was willing to share information for the enlightenment and betterment of others. Cousin Deirdre Frierson-Evans.*

**Deirdre Frierson-Evans** - August 01, 2023 at 08:37 AM

EJ

“ Dr. Richardson was one of the most Energetic, Intelligent, Considerate and Charming man I've ever known. His Passion for his work, family and the community was amazing. He was a true friend and confident. I shall miss that beautiful smile those encouraging words of wisdom he always had to give. God has claimed a beautiful soul who's legacy will live forever.

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**Erma J Johnson** - July 31, 2023 at 01:09 PM

JW

“ Dr. Leo was a man of integrity. He did not allow personal feelings to interfere with his using good judgment! Jacqueline Wright-Canty

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**Jacqueline Wright-Canty** - July 30, 2023 at 04:12 PM

VK

“ Our beloved Dr. Leo Richardson was loved by everyone at A. L. Corbett High School and in the community of Wagener, SC. He encouraged us to be the best that we could be and to go to college. Many of us did that. We love him and we're going to miss him so much. Sleep on in the arms Jesus, Dr. Leo.

JoAn and Perrie Kitchings 🙏  
A. L Corbett Public School Alumni

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**Virginia Kitchings** - July 30, 2023 at 02:41 PM

JS

“ To the family of Dr. Richardson, I would like to offer my sincerest condolences to you all. My deceased parents Joe & Gladys Grate as well as my Aunt Janie Chandler of Horry County were all friends. I remember some of the times that he would come through Loris to visit. He had such a warm smile and pleasant personality.



May God bless you all and grant you peace in days ahead.

Jolanda Grate Sulton  
Columbia, SC

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**Jolanda Sulton** - July 30, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Leo Richardson.



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July 30, 2023 at 12:53 AM

CP

“ The Payton family extends its deepest sympathy to the Richardson family on the loss of your loved one. Leo was a consummate professional, and a true gentleman who was well respected and loved. He was a great friend of our family and will truly be missed. May you find comfort in knowing that he has finished his course and is now resting with the Lord.

Dr. Cecil W. Payton  
On behalf of the entire Payton Family

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**Cecil W Payton** - July 29, 2023 at 12:40 AM



“ *Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dr. Leo Richardson.*



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July 28, 2023 at 05:21 PM



“ *Thank you Dr. Richardson for sharing your life with us all in so many ways, especially training up your wonderful children- and my favorite friend- Beverly. God bless. Kerol, Khara & Grace*

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**Kerol** - July 28, 2023 at 05:17 PM



“ *Dr. Richardson was a gentleman and a scholar who loved his family and serving the community. He loved the players on his teams. He will be missed by all that knew him. Indeed, it was a honor and a privilege. So sad that he is gone. Condolences to his beloved family.*

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**Eunice Jackson** - July 28, 2023 at 01:21 PM



*Sincere condolences to the family of a humbled and gracious man, Dr. Leo Richardson. My late husband, Dr. Leon Henderson and Dr. Richardson were friends from the time they both served in leadership and administrative positions at the University at Buffalo, and continued their friendship which is now eternal. We had the pleasure of enjoying his company during his many trips to Buffalo. A memorial donation is being sent to Savannah State University. Beautiful memories will sustain you.*

*Blessings,  
Cecelia B. Henderson  
Williamsville, New York*

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**Cecelia B. Henderson** - August 23, 2023 at 05:49 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Leo Richardson.*



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July 28, 2023 at 01:07 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dr. Leo Richardson.

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July 28, 2023 at 01:07 PM



“ *Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Dr. Leo Richardson.*



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July 28, 2023 at 01:07 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Leo Richardson.*



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July 28, 2023 at 08:46 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dr. Leo Richardson.



July 27, 2023 at 04:19 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dr. Leo Richardson.

July 27, 2023 at 04:19 PM



“ To The Family,  
It is with profound respect that I extend my sincerest condolences for the loss of Dr. Leo Richardson. As an Alumnus of Morris College I marvel at all of his achievements, many accolades and great legacy.  
During this difficult time, I pray his life, which was well-lived, and your fond memories of him, bring you some semblance of comfort.

Peace Blessings.....

Shnita Lee, President  
Morris College-Richland County Alumni Chapter

Shnita Lee - July 27, 2023 at 03:02 PM



Dr. Richardson we will truly miss.

Shirley - July 28, 2023 at 02:07 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Dr. Leo Richardson.*



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July 27, 2023 at 11:31 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dr. Leo Richardson.

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July 27, 2023 at 11:31 AM



“ *Dr. Richardson was a great man. His tall stature and no non-sense style was calming and inviting. It was an honor, to hold onto to his every word while being filled with complete gratitude.*

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**Mirinda Anderson** - July 26, 2023 at 09:15 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. Leo Richardson.*



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July 26, 2023 at 03:29 PM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Dr. Leo Richardson.*



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July 26, 2023 at 01:46 PM



“ *I (Royce Bowie) am a neighbor of Dr Richardson for the past 15 years. Upon entering the neighbor I encountered Dr Richardson passing my home walking his dog. At the second or third sighting of this event, something compelled me to stop him and introduce myself. This gesture proved to be the start of a wonderful friendship/mentorship that lasted untill his untimely passing. I have cherished conversations from our frequent encounters that will keep me smiling for many years to come*

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**Royce Bpwie** - July 26, 2023 at 01:36 PM



“ *So sorry to hear of Dr. Richardson's passing. Sending our prayers and condolences to the family.*

*Lou Ann and William Pyatt*

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**Lou Ann Pyatt** - July 25, 2023 at 09:13 AM



“ *Dr. Leo Richardson was a father to so many of us at Savannah State College/University. We send our Love and condolences to the family. Praying for comfort and peace.*  
*Bobby and Marie Pierce*



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**MariePierce** - July 25, 2023 at 07:46 AM

VD

“ I write to express my heartfelt condolences on the passing of an extraordinary, iconic man who dedicated his life to serving others, particularly in athletics. As a proud alumnus of Morris College, his legacy will forever be etched in the hearts of the entire community.

*It is with deep admiration and respect that we remember the profound impact he made on the world around him. Through his unwavering commitment to athletics and the values instilled at Morris College, he ignited a spirit of passion, perseverance, and sportsmanship that inspired countless individuals. His dedication to guiding and mentoring aspiring athletes was unparalleled.*

*As an alumnus, he embodied the essence of Morris College's mission—to foster personal and intellectual growth, empower individuals to make a difference and create a lasting legacy of excellence. His contributions to the college community were immeasurable, and his passion for education and athletics served as a shining example for students and colleagues.*

*He taught me personally the importance of resilience, determination, and the pursuit of greatness through the challenges he faced and overcame.*

*May his legacy continue to inspire us as we strive to impact the world, just as he did positively.*

*Please know my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this challenging period. If there is anything I can do to offer support or assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out.*

*With deepest sympathy and heartfelt appreciation,*

*Victoria Dixon-Mokeba 94' Alumna of Morris College*

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**Victoria Dixon-Mokeba** - July 24, 2023 at 02:46 PM

PC

“ *I am deeply saddened to hear of the passing of my favorite SSU coach. He was so loving, caring and personable. We will miss him immensely! My sincere condolences to the family.*

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**Patricia Cooper** - July 24, 2023 at 12:27 PM