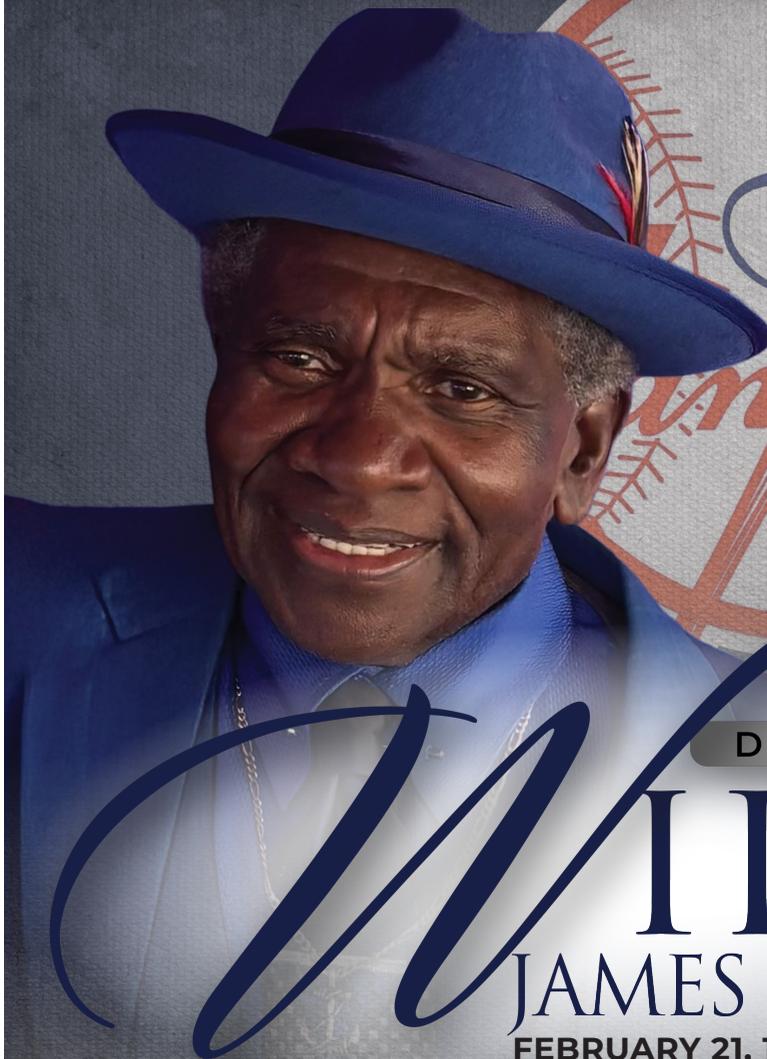


CELEBRATING THE MEMORIES OF



D E A C O N

**WILLIE**  
JAMES RIVERS, SR.  
FEBRUARY 21, 1945 – FEBRUARY 1, 2026

Friday, February 13, 2026 | Eleven O'Clock in the Morning

*In the Edifice of:*  
The Family Worship Center  
2 Trask Pkwy | Yemassee, South Carolina, 29945

*Elder Glenton Ingram – Host Pastor | Overseer Jeannette Harley  
Elder Bernard Rivers - Eulogist*

# Willie,

*You left me without saying goodbye .  
Though your smile is gone forever, and  
your hand I cannot touch  
Still I have so many memories of the  
one I loved so much.  
Your memory is our keepsake with  
which I will never forget part  
God has you in His keeping  
I have you in my heart.  
It is sad to walk the road alone,  
Instead of side by side. But to all, there  
comes a moment  
When the ways of life divide.  
You gave us years of happiness  
Then came sorrow and tears  
But you left us beautiful memories  
I will treasure through the years.*

Love You Forever, Your Wife Marie



# THE LEGACY OF HIS LIFE

*“For by thy words thou shall be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”* Matthew 12:37

Deacon Willie James Rivers, Sr., son of the late Kato & Albertha Gibbs Rivers, was born February 21, 1945. Reared in the Burton community of Beaufort, SC. Willie attended the public schools of Beaufort County and the Robert Smalls High School. As Willie transitioned into adulthood, he entered the workforce, where he held various jobs. He worked with Trask Farms, Independent Nail Factory, Exxon Gas Co., Parker White Metal Company, and Atlantic Industries. While employed with Atlantic Industries, Willie severely injured his back and was no longer able to work. Not letting that stop him, he continued working different odds and ends and whatever he was able to do.

At an early age, Willie accepted the Lord Jesus as his Savior, and joined Pine Grove Baptist Church, Beaufort, SC. He became an ordained deacon and would go on to serve at, St. Luke Baptist Church, Yemassee, SC, Jerusalem Baptist Church, Early Branch, SC and Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Yemassee, SC. Along with his service to the church and ministry, Willie loved to help his neighbors and community. Whether it was lawn care, minor plumbing jobs, or even taxiing children to school, when they missed the bus, he didn't mind. He even served as a personal “Uber” for his sister, taking her wherever she needed to go.

In 2004, Willie was joined in Holy Matrimony to Ms. Marie Smalls. Affectionately known as “Billy” to truly know him, was to love him. He was who he was. He was outspoken, always saying what was on his mind; yet a jokester always having a witty comeback. He was a “protector” for his daughters and a true girl dad. Some of his many hobbies and talents include gardening and sharing the fruits of his garden with anyone who was in need, fishing and crabbing, playing cards, dancing and even exercising.

During the evening hours of Sunday: February 1, 2026, our husband, father, grandfather, brother and more, Mr. Willie James Rivers, Sr. departed from the shores of mortality to a place not known by man. If Willie was here, he would want us to be reminded, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid.” (John 14:27, NKJV)

Preceding him in death along with his parents are: grandson, Medicus “Man” Watson; sisters, Arimetha “Sister” Howard, Alice Rivers Ensley, and three brothers, Apostle Kato Rivers, Thomas “Hammer” Rivers and Jasper “Jackie” Singleton. Deacon Rivers leaves to cherish his unique memories his faithful and beloved wife, Marie Smalls Rivers; three sons, James (Kuyabonega) Rivers, Donald (Lynn) Rivers, and Sammy (Natasha) Kirkland, five daughters, Vanessa (Andre) Rivers, Yolanda Rivers, Rivka (Reginald) Brown, Nachella (Ugo) Smalls and Shaquan (Darrell) Leake; two stepchildren, Minister Marcus (Evangelist Nicole) Smalls and Alexis (Minister Reggie) Boles; two brothers, Eugene Rivers and Elder Leon Rivers; two sisters, Gladys Rivers and Pastor Gloria (Reverend Samuel) Houston; six sisters-in-law, Prophetess Leola Rivers, Helena (Johnny) Ellis; Dorothy Bacote, Ella Rena Hamilton, Gwendolyn (Rasool) Ahmed, and Shirley Williams; four brothers-in-law, Johnny (Jeanette) Barnes, Anthony Mitchell, Dennis (Terri) Hamilton, and Joseph (Natayla) Hamilton, Jr.; 30 grandchildren of which four were reared in the home, Jania Smalls, Reginald T. Brown, Jr., Gabriella Smalls and Saejin Brown; 24 great-grandchildren; devoted friends, Ronald Hunt, Anthony Jenkins, Joseph Hampton, Jacob Lewis, Sammy Deloach, and Vernon Jenkins; along with a host of nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends.

# ORDER OF SERVICE

*Reverend W. E. Young Priestler, Presiding*

## **Processional**

Clergy & The Family

## **Song**

Choir

## **Prayer of Comfort**

Minister Medicus J. Watson, Jr.

## **Holy Scriptures**

*Old Testament* | *Isaiah 61:1-3* - Minister Marcus Smalls

*New Testament* | *2 Corinthians 1:2-7* – Elder Clifford Smith

## **Solo**

Sis. Michelle Bryant

## **Expressions of Remembrance**

*As A Friend* - Bro. Sammy Deloach | *As I Knew Him* – Bro. Jesse Riley

## **Solo**

Sis. Anna Busby

## **Family Tributes**

Children | Grandchildren

## **Solo**

Bro. Jeraldo K. Brown

## **Words of Comfort**

Elder Bernard Rivers

## **Words of Appreciation & The Respective View**

Reverend W.E. Young Priestler & Young Funeral Home

## **Benediction**

## **Recessional**

## **Committal & Interment**

Stephen & Sarah Williamson Memorial | Yemassee, South Carolina







*Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. (I Corinthians 13:4-8b NKJV )* **Love Alexis**

*“My father and I built a relationship later in life and he never failed to make me laugh. I’m grateful for the time we shared and the bond we created. Rest well”.* **Love, Sammy**



*You are definitely my king, my hero, Most of all my guardian angel. I miss you so much! No one is perfect in this world but you were more than perfect in my eyesight. The jokes, the cries, and the laughter will always be in my heart..... Oh I can't forget. You were never a Casanova. I LOVE YOU FOREVER. Your Baby Girl, Love Nachella*



*Willie, I never thought I would see the day where I would have to write a tribute for you. I'm going to miss so much about you. I'm going to miss your jokes, laugh, and more importantly, make you laugh. I'm definitely going to miss your cooking. Especially your collard greens! Serving you was never a chore. I loved every minute of helping you out or giving you a ride anywhere. Anything to constantly see that smile on your face. You never failed to ask me questions that I would urgently find an answer to. I love and miss you deeply from the bottom of my heart.* **Love Rivka**



*You were there for me in every way that a father was supposed to be.. through the laughter, the pain, the memories and all the good times that I had the pleasure to share with you will always carry me through the rest of my natural life.. continue to take your rest love you forever Daddy*  
**Love Hopie**



*Daddy, you were an amazing Father. Daddy, you always showed who you were through the love, laughter, wisdom and the caring heart you had. I will always carry and cherish the precious unforgettable memories we shared. Your love and spirit will forever live through me. Take your rest Daddy. Gone too soon, never forgotten.*  
**Love Londa**



## *Pallbearers*

Nephews

## *Flower Bearers*

Nieces

## *Acknowledgment*

The family of the late Deacon Willie James Rivers, Sr. would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation for all acts of kindness shown to us. Sincere thanks for everything everyone did to help us through this difficult time of bereavement.

*“May God keep and bless you all”*

***The Family***

Final Arrangements Entrusted To:



109 Yemassee Hwy | Yemassee, SC 29945

Phone: 843-589-2555 Fax: 843-589-2124 [www.youngfuneralhomesc.com](http://www.youngfuneralhomesc.com)