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Marietta Daily Journal



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EDITORIAL: BOE MADE RIGHT CALL IN EXTENDING RAGSDALE'S CONTRACT > 6A

ZION BAPTIST CHURCH | RETIREMENT OF DR. HARRIS TRAVIS



Dr. Harris Travis, pastor of Zion Baptist Church for the past 24 years, will preach his final sermon on May 1, before a new pastor takes the reins of the Marietta church. / Staff-Kelly J. Huff

'I have finished the course'

Longtime pastor passing the torch to the next generation

By Katy Ruth Camp
krcamp@mdjonline.com

— MARIETTA —

“I love you from the very depths of my heart.”

If there is a trademark of Dr. Harris Travis — words, being, aura — those words are its composite. They flow from his warm, soothing, baritone voice daily and genuinely. They are the cornerstone of his walk with God, his church members and his community.

Travis, pastor of Marietta's 150-year-old Zion Baptist Church for the past 24 years, has announced his retirement from the pulpit. Since he was 14, the 82-year-old has been an employee of some sort of institution, in some sort of fashion. After May 1, he will simply be the employee of God.

TRAVIS, 8A

Dr. Harris Travis

82 years of implementing change

- > **BORN** Christmas Day, 1933 in Sneads, Florida
- > **AGE 12:** Dedicated his life to God
- > **AGE 14:** Took his first job as a cook at the Florida State Hospital to pay for high school transportation fare
- > **AGE 15:** Integrated Sneads' telephone company as the first African-American telephone linesman/installer
- > **AGE 17:** Graduated high school from segregated Jackson County Training School
- > **AGE 19:** Enlisted in the United States Army and the Korean War after racist male residents in Sneads made serious threats to kill him if he didn't leave; integrated the U.S. Army Finance Office in Poitiers, France, as the first African-American military pay clerk
- > **AGE 20:** Integrated the U.S. Army USAREUR Finance School in Friedberg, Germany, as the only African-American attendant in the winter class
- > **AGE 21:** Honorably discharged from the Army, enrolled at Florida A&M University
- > **AGE 23:** Transferred to the engineering program at Tennessee State University
- > **AGE 26:** Graduated from TSU and became the first African-American engineer hired by the U.S. Navy's Naval Avionics Facility in Indiana
- > **AGE 28:** Received a master's degree in electrical engineering from Purdue University and became the only African-American professor in the university's School of Technology at the time
- > **AGE 32:** Earned a Ph.D. in engineering education from University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana
- > **AGE 36:** Became the head of the department of Mechanical Engineering
- > **AGE 48:** Became the first and only African-American chief academic officer at a non-historically black college or university in Georgia at the time as the vice president of student affairs at Southern Polytechnic State University
- > **AGE 53:** Became the first African-American to win a national office in the American Society of Engineering Education as the chairperson of the Engineering Technology Division
- > **AGE 54:** Became the first African-American to win the national James H. McGraw award by the Engineering Technology Division of the American Society of Engineering Education
- > **AGE 58:** Received an honorary doctorate in technology from Purdue
- > **AGE 64:** Became the first full-time pastor of Zion Baptist Church
- > **AGE 82:** Retiring from Zion Baptist Church



Above: One of Dr. Harris Travis's proudest accomplishments is the ceremonial bricks celebrating the history of Zion Baptist Church and its founder members, who were slaves. Right: Travis said the church's history museum has 150 years of faces and facts that have been preserved for the younger generation in the Marietta church.



CUMBERLAND | DEVELOPMENT

Low bid for I-285 bridge comes in at \$10 million

By Ricky Leroux
rleroux@mdjonline.com

The lowest bid from contractors to build the multi-use bridge proposed to span Interstate 285 and connect the Cobb Galleria and the Atlanta Braves' new stadium and mixed-use development came in at just over \$10 million.

The bid came from Northwest Express Roadbuilders, the same contractor building the \$834 million

IF YOU GO

- ♦ **WHAT:** Cobb Board of Commissioners meeting
- ♦ **WHEN:** 9 a.m. Tuesday
- ♦ **WHERE:** 100 Cherokee St., Marietta

managed lanes project that will add 30 miles of "reversible" toll lanes through Cobb and Cherokee counties. The company is a joint venture of Archer Western and Hubbard Construction. The Board of Commissioners must vote to approve the contract before construction can begin and is scheduled to do

so on Tuesday. Jim Wilgus, interim transportation director

BRIDGE, BACK OF SECTION



The low bid of \$10 million to build the multi-use bridge proposed to span I-285 and connect the Cobb Galleria and the Atlanta Braves' new stadium, seen above in this rendering, came from Northwest Express Roadbuilders, the same contractor building the \$834 million managed lanes project. / Special to the MDJ

KENNESAW | INVESTIGATION

Altercation leads to a shooting by probation officers

Staff reports

A Kennesaw man is in serious condition after being shot multiple times Wednesday by probation officers attempting to serve him with an arrest warrant.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation will investigate the shooting, according to a news release.

At about 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, two officers from the state Department of Community Affairs were attempting to arrest Jeffery Roy Moffat, 23, at a home on Climbing Rose Court in Kennesaw, the release states. An altercation ensued and Moffat was shot.

He received medical aid on scene before being transported to WellStar Kennestone Hospital, where he is listed in serious condition, the release states. The DCS officers were not injured during the altercation, according to the news release from the GBI.

Moffat's parents knew about the outstanding warrant on their son and contacted the DCS to report he was "behaving erratically," according to the release.

When the investigation is completed, the GBI plans to turn over its findings to the Cobb District Attorney's office.



OBITUARIES IN MEMORY

DEATH NOTICES

CHANG, Yung H. 58, of Marietta Georgia died March 4, 2016. Funeral Service will be held Thursday 10:30AM at lakeside Cemetery in South Fulton. Hanley-Shelton Directors, Marietta, Ga.

ENGLISH, Laurie, 52, OF Powder Springs Ga. passed on March 28, 2016. Funeral Service will be held Saturday April 9, 2016. High Point Christain Tabernacle. Burial held Kennesaw Memorial Park. Hanley-Shelton Funeral Directors, Marietta, GA.

MALONE, Earl D. 80, of Roswell died April 1, 2016. Funeral Service will be held April 8, 2016 12 noon Hanley-Shelton Funeral Chapel. Hanley-Shelton Directors, Marietta GA.

SUGGS, Douglas Earl 83, died March 29, 2016. Funeral Service will be held Thursday April 7, 2016 at 11AM at Zion Baptist Church, Roswell Hanley-Shelton Directors, Marietta, GA.

PLESS, Kathy Elizabeth 64, died March 27, 2016. Funeral Service will be held Saturday, April 9, 2016 2PM at new Friendship Baptist Church. Hanley-Shelton Funeral Directors, Marietta, GA.

OBITUARIES

BROWN, Susie Kathleen
Susie Kathleen Brown, 64, of Smyrna, GA passed away Tuesday, April 5, 2016 at Wellstar Cobb Hospital. Funeral Services will be held at 11:00 am on Saturday, April 9, 2016 at West Cobb Funeral Home and Crematory in Marietta with Rev. Jimmy Summey officiating. Interment will follow at Riverview Cemetery in Smyrna, GA. Susie was a native of Oplelika, AL and had lived many years in Smyrna, GA. Susie loved music, playing her guitar and singing, spending time on her computer, watching movies and especially spending time with her family. Survivors include: her husband of 36 years William D. Brown, Jr.; three children: James Thorn of Temple, GA, Robert Smith and Laura Brown of Smyrna, GA; two grandchildren: Erin and Shay Thorn, also several nieces and nephews. The family will receive friends on Friday, April 8, 2016 from 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm at West Cobb Funeral Home and Crematory in Marietta. Online guest book at www.westcobbfuneralhome.com



JENNINGS, Patricia Cole
Patricia Cole "Patsy" Jennings, 69, of Marietta, died April 6, 2016. Ms. Jennings was born in Bremen, GA on July 13, 1946 to the late Joe and Geraldine Cole. After graduating from West Georgia College, she began a teaching career that spanned more than four decades. After 25 years teaching chemistry, physics, and life sciences at Carrollton High School, she moved back to the Marietta area where she earned teacher of the year in 2001 and later retired from Sprayberry High School. She is survived by two daughters, Julie Jennings McLaughlin of Glen Burnie, MD, and Allison Jennings Kocamis of Alexandria, VA; one son, Matthew Jennings; one granddaughter, Emily Jennings; one sister, Gerri Cole Armstrong; one brother, Larry Cole, and one nephew, Taylor Armstrong, all of Marietta. At her request, Ms. Jennings was cremated and a memorial service will be held at a later date. For online condolences, please visit www.mariettafuneralhome.org

Marietta Funeral Home and Crematory
We strive to list a complete record of deaths in Cobb County, so please ask your funeral director to contact us at 770-428-9411, or by email at funeralnotices@mdjonline.com. Next day publication is available for all obituaries received by 4:00 pm

WILLIAMS-PHILLIPS,

Lavada Dianne
Lavada Dianne Williams-Phillips passed away Tuesday, March 29, 2016. Dianne was born in Atlanta Georgia, on March 5, 1941. She is survived by her husband Jon Phillips, her daughter Cheryl Fales, brother Jonny Cochran and sister, Janice Grant. She is also survived by her grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins. The family would like to thank family and friends for their loving support as well as Jamie, Darin and Chris with Journey Hospice. We want to also thank Angela, Dianne's caregiver and Dr. Michaelson for their loving and wonderful care. A memorial service for Dianne will be held on Saturday, April 16, 2016, Concord Baptist Church located at 4494 Floyd Rd., Mableton, GA, at 11 AM. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in memory of Dianne to: Caring Voice Coalition, 8249 Meadowbridge Rd., Mechanicsville, VA 23116. www.caringvoice.org. Condolences can be left at www.GeorgiaFuneralCare.com



SALESS, Maxine Anne



Maxine Anne Saless, age 73, of Marietta, passed away April 1, 2016. A long time and active member of Christ Episcopal Church, she sang in the choir, played the organ and piano, and was a part of the women's group. Maxine had a love for life, her family, and found joy in giving back to the community. She was a member of the Red Hat Society and served as past president of the Cobb Symphony Orchestra Women's Guild. She worked at Wellstar Kennestone Hospital for 15 years and Marietta Cobb Vocational School for 15 years training CNAs. Survivors include her husband of 54 years, Louis Saless of Marietta; children, Peter Saless (Tracy) of Simpsonville, South Carolina and Debbi Diaz of Woodstock; grandchildren, Christine Audie (Jeremy Webb), Matthew Audie (Michelle) of Warminster, Pennsylvania, Andrew Saless of Simpsonville, South Carolina, and Michele Diaz of Woodstock; great grandson, Tristan Webb of Woodstock; brother, Richard Rowland (Liz) of Red Bank, New Jersey; niece and goddaughter, Courtney Rowland of Connecticut; and nephew, Matthew Rowland of New Jersey. The family will receive friends Saturday, April 30th from 11:00 AM until service time at 12:00 PM at Christ Episcopal Church in Kennesaw with a reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a charity of your choice. Condolences may be made at www.winkenhofepineridgefuneralhome.com



Let children walk with Nature, let them see the beautiful blendings and communions of death and life, their joyous inseparable unity, as taught in woods and meadows, plains and mountains and streams of our blessed star, and they will learn that death is stingless indeed, and as beautiful as life. —John Muir

It will be the little things that you will remember, the quiet moments, the smiles, the laughter. And although it may seem hard right now, it will be the memories of these little things that help to push away the pain and bring the smiles back again. —Author Unknown

When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight. —Kahlil Gibran

TRAVIS

From 1A

"I'm 82 years old," the pastor said, slowly and thoughtfully, as he leaned forward in an office chair and allowed memories to swirl through his mind. "And I have never had a break ... I finished this chapter. I did everything I humanly possibly could do in this chapter. So I'm not leaving with any tears in my eyes. I gave it my all, whatever it took. I can work with anyone, there's no race divide. You treat people the way you want to be treated and you love them."

A ONE-ROOM-SANCTUARY CHILDHOOD

Travis was one of 10 children, born in 1933 to Otis Theodore Travis and Mabel Webster Travis in a small town west of Tallahassee, Florida, called Sneads. He was the second of the 10, most born two years apart, so he joked that all of the children had to learn to walk quickly, as another was going to take his or her crib soon. The town held 750 souls, 160 of which were African-American.

Tonight, Zion Baptist Church is holding a black tie celebration in honor of its 150th birthday along with the retirement of its pastor, the Rev. Dr. Harris Travis. The event, which begins at 6 p.m., will be at the Renaissance Atlanta Waverly Hotel.

Ever the comedian, he also joked that he repeated first grade eight times, as the one-room sanctuary of St. Peter Missionary Church taught grades first through eighth to the 30 to 40 African-American children in the town, all at the same time. By seventh grade, he already had more schooling than his parents and, even though he was the only eighth-grader in the class, they still held a graduation ceremony for him.

"I was basically in that building six days a week. You would sit on the same benches for school that you sat on Sunday. Church was all I knew," he said.

At age 12, he gave his life to Christ, something he called the "best decision I ever made."

"Back then, they said your parents carried your sins until you were 12 years old. So I made sure they carried them all 12 years," he said, breaking out into a big, jovial, airy laugh.

SUCCESS, EDUCATION AND SEGREGATION

After his eighth-grade graduation, there were no high schools in Sneads, so he and his older sister had to take the Greyhound bus 20 miles away to Marianna, then walk three miles to the segregated Jackson County Training School.

After his ninth-grade year, his father told him he could only afford the Greyhound fare — 52 cents per day — for one of his children, and he had chosen Travis' sister. His father told Travis that he needed to get a job to help the family, just as the other boys in town had done.

Travis loved going to school and was making good grades, so he prayed on it. He asked the local insurance agent, a white man who came to town every week, where he might find employment. The agent said that if Travis bought an insurance policy from him, he would tell his brother, who was the chef at Florida State Hospital, to give him a job. He bought the policy, and the man hired him as a cook. He worked all summer before 10th grade and saved \$270, \$100 of which would pay for his bus fare the entire next year.

High school graduation followed as well as a scholarship to Florida A&M University, but his boss at the Sneads telephone company — a company he had worked for since he was 15 as a linesman and installer — offered him a job he couldn't refuse and he put college on hold. But after Travis cut off a local white policeman's phone lines for not paying his bills, he was thrust into a world of death threats and

fear, instigated by a group of racist white men in town. He was essentially "run out of town" and enlisted in the United States Army during the Korean War, not knowing what else to do.

In his book, "Overcoming: I Count It All Joy," Travis said it took a great deal of praying and time for him to forgive and accept.

"I thought God was on my side, but felt like I was out there alone. It was a crushing blow. My plan for a life in Sneads was in shambles. ... I remained angry and hurt for the next 21 years, until I reached the age of 40. It wasn't until then that the Lord spoke to my heart through what I can only describe as similar to a 'bolt of lightning.' That was the day I finally released my anger. God helped me see that He had removed me from that situation so that He could provide me with the great life He had in store for me," he writes.

After he was honorably discharged at the age of 21, Travis made education a priority once again and enrolled at FAMU, the same university that had offered him a scholarship to attend some three years prior.

He went on to receive undergraduate, graduate and doctorate degrees in engineering from various universities. There have been many lives lived during his one, as he was an engineer, a professor, a department head and the vice president of academic affairs at Southern Polytechnic State University before stepping onto the pulpit as Zion Baptist Church's first full-time pastor.

He was a pioneer and an integrator, to say the least. There were countless times he was the first or only African-American to obtain certain accomplishments, whether it be in education, engineering, academia or military service.

When he joined the Army at age 19, he was the first and only African-American in the finance office in France and later the finance school in Germany. He was the first African-American engineer hired by the Navy's Naval Avionics Facility in Indiana. He was the only African-American professor in the School of Technology at Purdue University. He was the first and only African-American chief academic officer at a non-historically black college or university as the vice president for Academic Affairs for Southern Polytechnic, a position he held for 16 years. And along the way of so many firsts and onlys, he married his first and only love, Georgia, and they raised seven children.

GROWING ZION

During his time as pastor, Travis said the church went from about 500 members when he started to 2,500 today. The church itself grew as well, from about 4,000 square feet to 97,000 square feet. An academy was created, which now has a long waiting list. When he became pastor, he was the only one on the payroll. The church now employs 28 people.

One strategy Travis credits for the church's massive growth is his focus on ministries, especially the children and youth programs.

"Most times in an African-American church, the first Sunday attendance is always good then it will drop off," he said, explaining that the children and youth are now in charge of the fourth Sunday's services, an action that has greatly increased attendance and participation. "They will sing, dance, tell the scripture, take the offertory ... Kids will come here, and they see how active and involved the kids are. Most of the parents have joined because of their kids."

Eric M. Beckham next in line for pastor at Zion

By Katy Ruth Camp krcamp@mdjonline.com

MARIETTA — Dr. Harris Travis, who will give his final sermon as pastor of Zion Baptist Church in Marietta on May 1, said the next pastor of the 2,500-member church is expected to be finalized after this weekend.

The church voted in February to approve the Rev. Eric M. Beckham, M.Div., MFT as its next pastor. Beckham is currently the pastor at Clear View Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey.

Travis, who is retiring, said the church congregation welcomed four candidates to "interview" at the church for the first weeks of November, December, January and February. Each of the four candidates had one of the weeks to get to know the church and its congregation, including giving sermons on Sunday and Monday nights and meeting with the church's various ministries.

On Feb. 8, 15 and 22, all of the church members participated in voting on who they wanted to be the next pastor of ZBC. Travis said 67 percent of the church has to agree on one candidate and Beckham was chosen by the church as the pastor-elect at the end of February. Church members have been notified of the result, Travis said.

Beckham's new role has not yet been finalized, Travis said, as the church is fine-tuning his contract this weekend. Beckham was originally nominated by a church member who knew him from New Jersey.

Travis also said the men's ministry and choir have also helped to make the success ZBC is today. He is proud of his men's and women's choirs, a pride that permeates from his office's bookshelves, which hold enormous group pictures of the choirs which cover the books behind them.

Another source of pride for Travis is the storied sidewalk that wraps along Lemon Street, which acts as a brick, historic, welcoming moat for the church. The fruit of an effort that he led, the bricks tell the story of the church and hold the names of former slaves and others who built, maintained and grew the church over its 150 years of history.

Just a few yards away is The Old Zion Baptist Church Museum, a small, brick church with old wooden pews and simple, pointed-arch windows. This was one of the first buildings to house the church before it moved to its current location in 1977.

When he tells stories inside the walls of the museum, Travis' hearty voice echoes and

permeates. It feels as though a movie is about to start playing and his voice is the opener and narrator. The walls display and hold so much history for the African-American community, the Marietta community, the ZBC community and so many others, and Travis has made it one of his many missions to preserve that history through that voice.

'FROM THE DEPTHS OF MY HEART'

When asked if he had any final words to say about his life and time at ZBC, Travis' purposeful frame walked slowly from the front pew of the old church to the last, touching the ends of the pews as he passed, and he spoke these words:

"I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. And I know — I know that there is a crown waiting for me when I get to Heaven. And I just want all of you to remember I love you from the very depths of my heart and that you follow me to get your crown. May God bless you, love you from the depths of my heart."

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