



American Baptist News Service
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Former ABC Leader Rev. Harrison Williams Dies – Update

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 2/11/13)—The Rev. Harrison E. Williams, former deputy general secretary for regional operations, American Baptist Churches USA, died on Thursday, January 24, 2013. He was 93.

Dr. A. Roy Medley, general secretary of American Baptist Churches USA, said, “Rev. Williams was an excellent servant of Christ’s church, who used his intellectual, pastoral and administrative gifts in support of the church’s mission.”

In active ministry which extended 43 years, Williams displayed notable gifts of leadership and responsibility in varied Christian service.

He was the liaison for 39 region executives serving in states, cities and regions across the United States.

Upon Williams’ retirement in 1987, Dr. Robert C. Campbell, then general secretary of American Baptist Churches USA, said, “We have appreciated [Rev. Williams’] ministry with us and in his earlier service in a variety of responsible positions in ABC. He has been thoroughly professional in the manner in which he has carried out the responsibilities of his office and yet very sensitive to all persons with whom he worked throughout the denomination.”

From 1964-65, he was director of Urban Ministries for the Cleveland Baptist Association. He then became the executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region in New York, and associate executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of New York State. In 1970, he was named New York State’s executive minister.

In addition to serving in regional capacities, Williams possessed broad experience that included service as a U.S. Navy chaplain on active duty (1944-46). He continued in the U.S. Naval Reserve for a number of years. He served as pastor of the First Baptist Church, East Rochester, NY (1946-49), and the Lyndhurst Baptist Church, Cleveland, OH (1949-64).

Williams graduated from Syracuse University and Colgate Rochester Divinity School/Bexley Hall/Crozer. He took graduate work at the College of William and Mary, the University of Rochester, and Western Reserve University.

For the past decade, Williams was a member of Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland, CA. His pastor, the Rev. H. James Hopkins, said, “The Lakeshore and American Baptist families lost a great leader, a gentle spirit, and a wise friend when the Rev. Harrison Williams...passed away last Thursday at age 93. Harry made significant contributions to every community he was part of as a pastor and denominational leader. Certainly our congregation, along with the residents and staff at Grand Lake Gardens, his home for the last decade, will miss his steady, unflappable presence.”

His wife, Anabelle, died on September 6, 2001. He is survived by his daughter, Marilyn Pugliese of Santa Rosa, CA, and his son, Mark Williams of Philadelphia, PA. There are two grandchildren.

Rev. Williams’ memorial service will be held on February 23 at 2pm at the Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, 3534 Lakeshore Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610.

Memorial gifts may be made in Rev. Williams’ name to Hope Partnership for Education, 1701 North 8th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122-2807; or Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering, MMBB, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1700, New York, NY 10115-0049.

American Baptist Churches is one of the most diverse Christian denominations today, with over 5,200 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members, across the United States and Puerto Rico, all engaged in God’s mission around the world.