

## *The Passing of a President*

**The Reverend Dr. Chancy R. Edwards  
The 21st President of the General Baptist State Convention  
(1970-1974)**



*A Memorial Tribute by Dr. Nilous M. Avery, II, D.Min.*

“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. God comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NLT).

“Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant”

On Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, word spread quickly that the Reverend Doctor Chancy R. Edwards boarded the last leg of a long flight from this life to eternity. After ninety-two (92) faithful and fruitful years, he outlived many of his contemporaries and it was time to go home to be in the glorious presence of the Lord.

Dr. Edwards was the 21<sup>st</sup> President of the General Baptist State Convention of N.C., Inc., Pastor Emeritus of the First Baptist Church, Fayetteville, former N.C. State Senator, former President and Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Missionary Convention, Civil Rights Pioneer/Activist/Leader, Husband, Father, Grandfather, a servant of God and a friend to humanity.

Like Barnabas in Acts 11:24, Dr. Edwards was a “good man full of the Holy Spirit and faith.” His life was long, productive, and Christ-honoring. He received local, regional, national and international recognition on account of his advocacy for humanity, strategic leadership during the Civil Rights Era, campaigns for equal opportunities in education, community work in North Carolina, and steadfast commitment to standing up and speaking out for the voiceless. His preaching, teaching, service, and exemplary living set him apart. He sat among royalty, yet he walked with and worked for the least, the lonely, and the lost.

On a personal note, Dr. Edwards was a schoolmate of my late father, the Reverend Dr. Nilous M. Avery at Shaw Divinity School. The longtime friendship of the Edwards and Avery families continued through the deaths of my parents, whereupon Dr. Edwards presided over the home going services for both of them (my mother Mrs. Christine Watson Avery in 2011, and my father in 2014).

He graciously stood and eloquently proclaimed words of wisdom and guidance during my installation as the 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the GBSC in October 2014. His humble presence and much-needed encouragement were always timely, uplifting, and appreciated. He was and shall always remain a friend, an advisor, a mentor, and a model of faithfulness.

Dr. Edwards, a person who excelled at preaching and Christian living for such a long tenure, taught all us about servant hood. Even with so many accomplishments and commendations, he never pursued accolades. He stood tall, literally and figuratively, and he cared more about faithfulness than success.

In today’s climate of news-cycle-driven, celebrity-focused, trophy-carrying actions and attitudes outside and inside the church, it almost seems odd that Dr. Edwards never tried to make a name for himself or act newsworthy. Day after day, year after year, decade after decade, he did the same thing God calls every faithful servant to do: he kept preaching, teaching, serving, and living out the gospel in everyday life. He cared more about faithfulness than success!

He understood, embraced, and embodied the teaching of Jesus: *“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked”* (Luke 12:48, NIV).

“Lives of great men all remind us, We can make our lives sublime, And, departing, leave behind us, Footprints on the sands of time” (A Psalm of Life, Longfellow).

We thank God, we praise God, and we celebrate the Life, Legacy, Leadership, Loyalty, and above all, the Faithfulness of the Reverend Doctor Chancy R. Edwards. Our thoughts, love, and prayers are ongoing for his wife, Sis. Carolyn Edwards, his daughter Jewyl, his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives, countless friends, and grateful ministry mentees.

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:23).

“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.” (1 Corinthians 16:23-24, NIV).



**GBSC THEME:**

**“Committed to Christ, Commissioned for Missions” (Acts 1:8)**