



## Rev. Dr. Lester Basken

June 8, 1931 - August 8, 2021

Reverend Doctor Lester Basken, known as “Nick”, was a beloved husband, a loyal family member, and a true friend to all.

Lester Basken, born to Price and Elvira Basken on June 8, 1931, in Senatobia, Mississippi. Lester was the youngest of seven siblings, who all preceded him in death. He began his education at Halliburton School, which was an extension of his family church, Halliburton Missionary Baptist Church. The family stayed in Nesbit until they moved to Memphis in the early 1940s. In Memphis, he attended and graduated from Geeter High School, where he met the love of his life, Irene Jackson. Shortly after graduation, he was drafted into the Army and shipped to active combat duty in the Korean War where he was assigned to a Bazooka squad. On his 19th birthday, he was wounded in action. After recovery, Lester received an honorable discharge and the Bronze Star. Lester and Irene were married on August 14, 1953, shortly after his return to the States. He fulfilled his dreams of playing baseball with a local team called the Weaver Clowns. The infamous, Weaver Clowns had an opportunity to play against the legendary greats, Hank Aaron and Willie Mays.

Lester was employed by Liberty Cash Foods, and National Food Stores. After leaving National Food Stores, he worked for Memphis Housing Authority and Shelby County Sheriff Department. After working nine years with MHA, the Lord reminded Lester of the promise that he made while he was injured in

Korea. "Lord, if you let me live, I will do anything you want me to do."

Before accepting his call to preach, Lester was already active at his home church, Mount Pisgah, Weaver Rd. He was Choir Director, Sunday School Teacher, and the Superintendent of Sunday School. He was also the Choir Director of the Whitehaven District Choir, and a member of the J.W. Hardaway Singers. After preaching his first sermon on the third Sunday, in January 1971, Reverend Basken was called to pastor Middle Baptist Church the next week. Reverend Basken understood and realized the importance of education and he exemplified this by earning his Bachelor of Theology degree from Mid-South Theological Seminary, Doctor of Theology from Tennessee School of Religion, and an Honorary Doctorate from Lemoyne-Owen College.

As pastor of Middle Baptist Church, he was instrumental in the building of a new sanctuary, education building, sanctuary renovations, family life center, and the purchase of additional land to expand the parking lots and future projects. Under

his leadership the membership grew from 250 to over 4,000; and more than fifty young men accepted the call to preach the gospel under Reverend Basken tutelage.

After 44 years of service, Reverend Basken retired from Middle Baptist Church. During his tenure, he also launched an annual summer youth employment program; initiated the Middle Baptist College Scholarship Fund;

worked to expand the church's philanthropic mission by assisting many higher educational institutions such as Lemoyne-Owen College, Mississippi Valley State University, Tennessee State University, Alcorn State University, Jackson State University, and Southwest Tennessee Community College. For twelve years, Reverend Basken served as Moderator of the Whitehaven District Association.

He is the recipient of many honors and rewards. Pastor Basken is a national icon among preachers and pastors.

Reverend Basken has been married to the lovely Irene Jackson for 68 years. They were blessed with four children, one son, Chrislyn Basken (Elizabeth), two daughters, Leslie M. Basken and Marilyn B. LeaVelle, who all preceded him in death. They have one surviving daughter, Sheron D. Hamilton (Gerald), seven grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, five sisters-in-law, and a host of nieces and nephews.

Reverend's Favorite Scripture: Psalm 27:1

The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear?

Why, BECAUSE "The Lord is my Light."



# Cemetery Details

## West Tennessee Veterans Cemetery

4000 Forest Hill Irene Rd.  
Memphis, TN 38125

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG **13**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (Cst)

Middle Baptist Church  
801 Whitehaven Lane  
Memphis, TN 38116

## Service

AUG **14**. 11:00 AM (Cst)

Middle Baptist Church  
801 Whitehaven Lane  
Memphis, TN 38116

# Tribute Wall



“ *Snow Funeral Home created a Service of Rev. Dr. Lester Basken in memory of Rev. Dr. Lester Basken*



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**Snow Funeral Home** - August 14, 2021 at 02:13 AM

WD

“ *My pastor was a TRUE MAN OF GOD, he’s truly missed. My prayers still go out to his family.*

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**WINDAY DAVIS** - February 18, 2025 at 11:11 PM

KT

“ *Sending prayers to the Basken family. It’s been 20 years since I’ve lived in Memphis, but I remember Reverend Basken so well. I was a member briefly of Middle Baptist before I moved out of state. What a wonderful man. I will continue to pray for you.*

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**Kristin Thomas-Fanning** - August 15, 2021 at 08:45 AM

FB

“ Sending our prayers, love and condolences to the Basken family. He was one of God's chosen! A Preacher's preacher. A loving husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, veteran, uncle, cousin, friend and mentor. A leader and singer in the spiritual world. His light will shine forever because he touched so many lives. Rest in paradise, Pastor!

*Frieda Jordan Brown  
Michael & Nataki Williams*

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**F J Brown** - August 14, 2021 at 07:24 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Lester Basken.



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August 13, 2021 at 07:40 PM

SF

“ Shirley Henderson and Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Rev. Dr. Lester Basken.



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**Shirley Henderson and Family** - August 13, 2021 at 02:37 PM

MM

“ *Mt. Zion MB Church, Sardis MS purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Rev. Dr. Lester Basken.*



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**Mt. Zion MB Church, Sardis MS** - August 13, 2021 at 11:32 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Lester Basken.*



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August 13, 2021 at 09:13 AM



“ *Rose Remembrance was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Lester Basken.*



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August 12, 2021 at 03:33 PM

DM

“ Family please be mindful that our God is our refuge and strength, a very present help during our times of trouble.(Ps. 46:1) Know that Rev. Basken's battle is over here, but he's resting peacefully with our almighty God! Here are some memories during one of his many powerful sermons!



Donna Martin - August 11, 2021 at 06:22 PM

VH

RIHP Rev. Dr. Lester "Nick" Basken.

Vanessa House - August 13, 2021 at 06:41 PM

AH

“ Remember the all the happy times with my pastor who always put a smile on my face! I'm going to definitely miss this gentle giant who was a great preacher, teacher, and evangelist! Rest well Dr. Basken...rest well! 💜🕊️



Audrey Holmes - August 10, 2021 at 07:18 PM

PS

*To the family of Doctor Lester Basken, I love and pray for you all. We have lost a true giant, he will be missed more than I am able to communicate. The fight is over, now on to his reward. Rest in power sir. With so much love. Miss Polly.*

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**Polly Smith** - August 11, 2021 at 07:34 PM

CB

“ *May God bless the Basken Family and the Middle Baptist Church - Whitehaven family. May God continue to strengthen, comfort and keep you all during this time of bereavement. God bless!!!!!!*

*Charlotte Bachus  
St. Mark Baptist Church*



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**Charlotte Bachus** - August 09, 2021 at 10:52 PM