



## Dr. Carlisle Driggers

August 27, 1937 - May 18, 2026

Dr. Benjamin Carlisle Driggers, Jr. went home to meet his Savior on Monday, May 18, 2026. Dr. Driggers was a faithful servant who truly lived the commandment given in Matthew 22:37, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”.

Dr. Driggers was born on August 27, 1937, in Hartsville, South Carolina, to Zula Mae Driggers White and Benjamin Carlisle Driggers, Sr. He accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and was baptized at the age of 12 at First Baptist Church in Hartsville. His childhood was guided through the love of his family that included his sister, Linda, and brother, David, and other church, school and community members who would play key roles in his life. Dr. Driggers graduated from Hartsville High School.

Dr. Driggers attended Mars Hill College and continued his education at Carson-Newman College. While completing his studies, he worked as the deejay of the school’s radio station. After graduation in 1959, Dr. Driggers went on to earn degrees in theology from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY and a Doctorate of Ministry from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA. Additionally, Dr. Driggers was awarded honorary doctorates from Anderson College, North Greenville, and Charleston Southern universities.

Dr. Driggers was a life-long pastor. For over 35 years he served as a pastor or staff member of churches in South Carolina, Kentucky, Alabama, West Virginia, and Georgia. Through his experiences and background, he had a heart for race relations and reaching all people as commanded through the Great Commission. For thirteen years he served on staff at the Home Mission Board (now the North American Mission Board) in Atlanta, GA, as the Associate Director of the Black Church Relations Department and then Regional Director for planning and budgeting. In 1991 Dr. Driggers was unanimously elected to the position of Executive Director-Treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention where he served for 15 years until his retirement. While at the SCBC his focus for church growth was envisioned through Empowering Kingdom Growth. His final pastorate was at Lake Country Baptist Church in Eatonton, GA from 2009-2017. He considered Lake Country his home church.

While Dr. Driggers loved reading, writing, driving his '55 blue Ford pick-up and the Atlanta Braves, none of these compared to the love he had for his wife and family. Dr. Driggers met the love of his life at Carson-Newman College. He married Jeanette Roberts Driggers, from Cartersville, GA, on August 16, 1959. He has told the story many times of seeing Jeanette in the cafeteria line at school and knowing immediately that he needed to meet that girl! Jeanette has played a key role in their 66 years of marriage and service in the churches and positions they have held together. She has been Carlisle's true partner and role model of a preacher's wife. He recently told family members that he "loved Jeanette more today than he ever had." Dr. Driggers also dearly loved his daughter, Jana Driggers O'Kelley, and son, Benjamin Dave Driggers, their spouses, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Nothing pleased him more than sitting at a family gathering and seeing their love for each other.

In addition to his wife, Jeanette, Dr. Driggers' survivors include his daughter,

Jana Driggers O'Kelley (Jimmy), son, B. Dave Driggers (Holly), grandchildren Jarris O'Kelley Etheridge (Mike), Kenneth Olin Driggers (Emily), Jacob Carlisle O'Kelley, Clara Ellen Driggers Taylor (John) and Joseph Benjamin Driggers, and three great-grandchildren. Survivors also include his sister, Linda Driggers Williams (Chick), nieces, nephew and cousins.

Dr. Driggers wanted to be remembered for his vision of growing churches. He disciplined others, baptized, taught and led by example. He will always be remembered for his genuine faith and love for his wife and family. Donations may be made to his home church, Lake County Baptist Church, to carry out the mission of leading others to Christ.

A Service will be held on Saturday, May 23, 2026 at 3PM in Lake Country Baptist Church with Rev. David Lyda officiating. The family will receive friends at the church from 2PM to 3 PM. Burial will be on Tuesday, May 26 at 1 PM in Providence Church Cemetery in Shady Dale.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY **23**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Lake Country Baptist Church  
1259 Crooked Creek Rd.  
Eatonton, GA 31024

## Funeral Service

MAY **23**. 3:00 PM (ET)

Lake Country Baptist Church  
1259 Crooked Creek Rd.  
Eatonton, GA 31024

# Tribute Wall

MH

“ I was blessed beyond measure to serve on Dr Driggers staff at the South Carolina Baptist Convention. He and Jeanette were a blessing to Cindy and me during that time and beyond. I am a better believer. Minister and person for having known Dr D.

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**Monty Hale** - May 26 at 05:38 PM

ND

“ nick davis sent a virtual gift in memory of Carlisle Driggers



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**nick davis** - May 23 at 02:55 PM

LS

“ We were blessed to have had Carlisle and Jeanette as neighbors back in the 1980's. You'll never find any more Godly people. Our condolences to Jeanette, Jana and Dave.  
Linda and Dale Shinn

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**Linda Shinn** - May 23 at 08:20 AM

KB

“ I was so deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Dr. Driggers. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to have worked under his leadership at SCBC for 16 years and most honored to have served as his executive administrative assistant. He was truly a wonderful and extraordinary leader who brought out the best in everyone. I am grateful for the guidance and support I received from him. He and Mrs. Driggers were so very welcoming into their home. Their hospitality and generosity were a true reflection of kindness and God's love. I am sending my deepest condolences to the family. He made a profound impact on my life and will always look back on my time working with him with fondness and deep appreciation.

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**Kim Ballentine** - May 21 at 08:42 PM

NB

“ My memories of Dr. Driggers are precious. Freddie and I attended church there for a good while and made many friends. I remember Dr. Drigger sitting with me at Macon Hospital while Freddie was in for tests, etc. I did not know what was going to happen; when Dr. Driggers showed up!! He stayed with me all day. Such a blessing! Jeanette, you are in in prayers and love. I know y'all were in step with God all the way and wish you comfort and wonderful memories.  
Nancy Barnes

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**Nancy Barnes** - May 21 at 05:44 PM

GB

“*Carlisle Driggers is a person I have always appreciated. Even though we were 13 years apart in age, we passed through some of the some places. Some at different times, and others during the same time. We went to the same college (Mars Hill College/University) and the same seminary (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY). We were members of the same church in Louisville. These first three at different times. Places where we overlapped are that we both were adjunct professors at the same seminary, worked for the same national missions agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, and worked for the same state convention (SC Baptist Convention).*

*In South Carolina, Carlisle had the spiritual insight and courage to envision a bold strategy of church growth called Empowering Kingdom Growth. He was the visionary, myself and a coworker helped develop the strategy under his leadership, and I managed the day-to-day operation for the first three years. Carlisle's vision led three giant churchmen of the last half of the 20th century--Peter Drucker, Lyle Schaller, and Bob Buford--to declare he had successfully launched a large regional denomination into a new era of Kingdom progress, and to make prophetic advances during the era of post-denominationalism.*

*I appreciate Carlisle then launching me into full-time consultant and gave me the title of National Consultant for Denominational Transformation. I will be eternally grateful for his influence on my ministry.*

*There are fewer Baptist statemen like Carlisle Driggers around today. They broke the mold when Carlisle retired.*

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**George W Bullard** - May 20 at 08:15 PM

LM

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with you.  
Friends at Johnnie McDade Grocery.*



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**Luther Minor** - May 20 at 06:13 PM

GA

*One of life's pleasures was to learn from and serve with Dr. Driggers*

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**Gary Anderson** - May 23 at 01:58 PM