



Bobby Ray Martin, 84, died of bladder cancer at home in Wilmore in the very early hours of Friday, Dec. 8, 2023. He was born on February 6, 1939, in Butler, GA, the son of the Rev. E. A. Martin, Sr. and Rena Lee Walters Martin. The last of four children born to a rural Georgia circuit-riding Methodist pastor, he grew up in a series of small South Georgia towns, and he often accompanied his father on his pastoral rounds.

Graduating from Dublin (GA) High School in 1956, he obtained a B.A. from Asbury College (1959) and went on to graduate school at the University of Georgia (M.Ed., 1966) and American University (Ed.D., 1972).

He also received an honorary doctorate from Asbury College.

He and Jama (Bell) married on March 11, 1967, and have celebrated 56 years of a marriage characterized by mutual devotion.

“Dr. Bob,” as he became known during his career in education, began as a science teacher at Swainsboro (GA) High School in 1962. He taught in the Science Department at Asbury College (now University), 1966-1969, and at Sandy Springs HS (GA), 1969-1970. Once he obtained his doctorate, he entered school administration, first at M.D. Collins HS in Fulton Co. (GA), then in Fayette Co. (GA) at Fayette County HS, East Fayette Elementary School, Central Office (Associate Superintendent and Interim Superintendent) and retired as principal of Braelinn Elementary School in Peachtree City, GA.

Bob served his Lord and the church in a variety of ways, including various offices in the local church, in the district and beyond, serving a term as Lay Leader of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist (UM) Church and representing the conference as an elected lay delegate to general conference three times. As he approached retirement, he became a local pastor, serving an 8-year appointment at Lovejoy Memorial UM in Newnan, GA (1998-2006), then shorter terms as copastor with Rev. Gene Walton at three more churches (Sunnyside, Fincher, Searcy Memorial) until 2013. As “Preacher Bob,” when asked about retiring, he would say, “You know, the Lord has been so good to me, and I just want to serve Him as I am able in retirement.”

Bob and Jama lived in Wilmore (KY), Washington, DC, Red Oak (GA), Fayetteville (GA), and Newnan (GA) before retiring to Wilmore in 2013.

Once in Wilmore, Bob was a member and served on the board of the Wilmore Free Methodist Church, and he was a partner in Generations Community Church of Nicholasville, KY.

Enjoying children and grandchildren was his greatest pleasure. Known as a

A Celebration of the Life of

Bobby Ray Martin

Saturday, December 16, 2023 2:00 p.m.

Wilmore Free Methodist Church, Wilmore, Kentucky

Prelude

Nathan Smith, Clarinet
Faye Montgomery, Piano

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
It Is Well
Amazing Grace

Welcome and Invocation

Pastor Daryl Diddle

Hymnal, 382

Be Thou My Vision

Scripture

Pastor Max Vanderpool

Psalms 139

Tributes

Family - Jeremy Martin
Family - Richard Smith
Friends – Daryl and Annette Diddle

Message

Pastor Daryl Diddle

Hymnal, 43

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Benediction

Pastor Max Vanderpool

Postlude

*A family interment service will be held
at Wilmore Cemetery.*

storyteller, he always sprinkled object-lesson stories into his motivational talks to educators and into his sermons. Friends and family remember and tell again his dinner-table stories about growing up in South Georgia.

Bob is survived by wife Jama, two children, their spouses and families: daughter Kimberly Smith (Richard) and three sons: Nathan, Jonathan and Andy, of Fayetteville, GA, and son Jeremy Martin (Tia) and their two children: Gianna and Joey, of Williamsburg, VA.

He is predeceased by his parents and three siblings: Elsie Davis, Betty Ruth Means, and Edgar A., Jr. (“Buddy”).

Today’s service stream / recording can be found on the Wilmore Free Methodist Church Youtube channel. In lieu of flowers your contributions would be most appreciated at Wilmore Free Methodist Church, Generations Community Church in Nicholasville, or Bluegrass Care Navigators Hospice.

The family expresses appreciation to the team from Bluegrass Care Navigators Hospice for their month of invaluable service and for the many expressions of sympathy and support which have come in recent days.



I used to think, loving life so greatly,
that to die would be like leaving the party before the end.

But now I know that the party is really happening somewhere else;
that the light and the music escaping in snatches,
to make the pulse beat faster and the tempo quicken,
comes from another place.

And I know too, that when I get there,
the music and the love and the praise will belong to Him,
and the music will never end.

~ Bob Benson, 1986



A Celebration of the Life of

Bobby Ray Martin

February 6, 1939 ~ December 8, 2023

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless His holy name!

Psalm 103:1