

Byron R. Spears

THE WALKING BIBLE

JULY 3, 1912 - JANUARY 29, 2013



Farewell Service

Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills 6300 Forest Lawn Dr. Los Angeles, CA 90068

February 8, 2013

Elder James Lee Officiating

The Family of Elder Byron R. Spears wishes to acknowledge with deep appreciation for the many telephone calls, gifts, food, and other expressions of love and kindness during this difficult time. Individual expressions of thanks will be acknowledged at a later date.

REPAST

Aladena SDA Church
2609 N Lincoln Ave.
Altadena, CA 91101

INTERMENT

Court of Remembrance
Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills
6300 Forest Lawn Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90068

PALL BEARERS

Ernesto Abrahams - Philip Grayson Jr. - Wallace Baker
Julian M. Nelms - Jason R. Spears - Anthony D. Wright

HONORARY PALL BEARERS

Anthony Velasquez - Moise Isaac - Robert Dent
John Collins - Steve Washington - Dan Goodlow

Program by Benjamin J. Taylor, grandson
bjtaylor.design@gmail.com

Musical Prelude	Elder Gerald Penick
Processional	Elder James Lee
Opening Prayer	Elder Lorenzo Paytee
Musical Tribute	Philip Grayson
Scripture Reading	Elder Moise Isaac
Musical Selection	Lee Rugless
Eulogy	Pastor Doug Bachelor
Video Presentation	Philip Grayson Jr.
Tributes	Elder Virgil Childs Northern CA Conference

Elder Arnold Trujillo
Pacific Union Conference

Elder Earl Canson jr.
Central CA Conference

Musical Selection	Men of Note
Tributes	Elder Belino Salazzar Elder Lorenzo Paytee Southern CA Conference

Elder William Penick
Elder Gerald Penick
Southeastern CA Conference

Reflections	Family and Friends
Closing Prayer	Dr. David Taylor
Parting View	Lee Rugless

Childhood

Byron R. Spears; brother, husband, father, step-father, uncle, grandfather, great-grandfather, pastor, evangelist, confidant, and friend. Born on July 3, 1912 in Topeka, Kansas as the youngest of three to Carl F. Spears and Ollie (Green) Spears. He and his siblings, Virginia and Carl Jr., all attended Buchanan Elementary School, the Holy Name Catholic School, and Assumption High School (Catholic).



He was an intelligent child with a thirst for learning and teaching the Word of God. At age five he forced Carl to sit in an arrangement of chairs in the backyard with other dolls and stuffed animals while he preached. He also performed funerals in a similar fashion for his pets that died. At seven he convinced the local butter and egg delivery man to hire him as a "barker" to shout out goods and their prices. Byron, however, wasn't always an angel. For kicks he would take milk from the neighbors' porches, drink the milk and resell the bottles. He and Carl would also cut the trees on the lawn of Christ Hospital and climb them to ride them down as they fell. Yet, every Sunday morning Byron would serve as an altar boy walking the aisle of the Episcopal Church wearing his acolyte robe - the picture of an angel.



Young Adulthood



As a teenager Byron read through the Gideon Bible and discovered Seventh-Day Adventist literature. Challenged by the words found in his reading, he was convicted to serve God.

At 17 Byron found himself in awe of the beautiful Marthella Evans, and she by his charm and popularity; they were married in 1930, a year later. Byron continued to read Scripture and began committing verses and passages to memory, wanting to join the Seventh-Day Adventist church. Marthella needed more convincing as a Methodist and after reading *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* they were baptized together in the College Avenue Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Topeka. His first sermon on "Wisdom" was preached in a loud, eloquent and commanding delivery; he quoted every scripture in the Bible related to wisdom at the age of 21, which enthralled the congregation. Consequently, he was elected Head Elder and served the church for the next 10 years.



Fifteen months after they were married Byron Jr. was born, two years later came Rosemary, Marlene six years after that, then Carl was born eight years after Marlene, and Sharon was born three years after Carl.

The year 1936 was horrific for the Spears household, as Byron was stricken with polio. Penicillin wasn't available at the time, so Byron was given palliative treatments and told he had only 12-18 months to live, but God had another plan. The rehabilitation process was long and tedious, requiring exercises and massages 10-12 hours per day. Unable to go back to work at his job as a bellboy at the Jayhawk Hotel, he started his own business called the Topeka Bottle and Junk Company two years after his illness. He collected bottles and scrap metals, useful commodities during the Depression and later WWII, driving his truck around town using his canes to shift gears. Byron continued to witness for Christ and preach the Word as well and because of his reputation he was invited to speak at many other denominational churches.



Ministry

While speaking at a Methodist church one Sunday evening, Byron was unknowingly being auditioned by the General Conference Committee. On June 18, 1944 President of the General Conference Committee, Elder Nathaniel Carter Wilson, ordained Byron and friend Elder William Penick. He served for two years in Wichita, Kansas and Kansas City, which grew from 80 members to over 250 in just 3 years.



Due to his reputation Elder Spears' was invited to work in Stockton, CA. From that effort, the Stockton Church, Market & E, was formed. He later moved to Sacramento and started the Capitol City SDA

Church. Pastor R. Wendell Nelson of the Market St. Church in Oakland recommended Elder Spears to be hired as the Conference Evangelist to the Northern California Conference. As a result, the Bay Area Evangelistic Committee was formed, variously composed of Elder Owen Troy, Elder R.W. Nelson, Elder Major White, Elder and Mrs. John Collins, Mrs. E. Van Nockay Porter, Mr. and Mrs. Gulley, and Vera Knox. During the nearly 18 years Elder Spears served as Evangelist for the Northern California Conference, he also worked periodically with the "It is Written" broadcast. While evangelizing in the Northern California Conference, he worked with Elder Major and Edward White, Elder Hightower, Elder William Penick, Elder Owen Troy, Elder G.N. Banks and Elder John Collins.



HEAR
SPEARS
- AND -
**JOYCE
BRYANT**

TOO !!

Oakland Auditorium Theatre
SUNDAY, FEB. 19th

FREE 6:30 P.M. FREE !!



The years of 1968-1970 found Elder Spears working as the Evangelist with the Pacific Union Conference. And in 1970, he was called to join the evangelistic team with the Voice of Prophecy (VOP). While with the VOP, Elder Spears preached in various states in the U.S., including Hawaii, Canada and Bermuda. Each meeting was held for 3 months, and he traveled with various singing evangelists such as Dick LeJoie, Joe Melashenko, Ralph McGann, Bob Delafield, Ted Jones, Charles Cook, I.D. Evans and John Kaikainahaole. Byron moved his family to Los Angeles in 1969 where he continued to work with the VOP.

After a long bout with cancer, Marthella passed away in 1981. After 51 years of marriage Byron was heartbroken and retired from the VOP later that year.



Retirement

Surviving Family



Soon after Marthella's death, Byron married Lone Owens-Taylor. With this union came four stepchildren: Dancan, Janis, Lisa, and Michael. Byron and Lone eventually moved to Gold Canyon, Arizona and were married nearly 28 years. Even in retirement he was invited by conferences country wide to hold evangelistic meetings, and would hold Bible studies in his home regularly.

Due to failing health, Byron's children brought him to Southern California to be near the family at the age of 97. He continued Bible studies to the residents and his long-time friends weekly in his assisted living facility and even spoke at several local churches at 99.

Elder Spears taught, preached and delivered the Holy Scriptures for almost 80 years, 69 years as an ordained minister. He was often called "The Walking Bible" but he would say that it was God who gave him the gift of memory, the patience, joy and health to raise new churches and inform open hearts that Jesus died to save all who desire to follow Him. Known for placing God first in his life, he has been able to help others spiritually, physically and financially. Byron was a strict vegan and attributed his long life to the grace of God and to his preservation of his body, God's temple.



Family of Byron and Marthella Spears

- Byron Jr. - Gwendolyn Talley
 - Mischa, Dana, Nancy, Pamela, Jason
 - David
- Rosemary - Cecil Abrahams
 - Sandea, Angela, Ernesto, Ricardo
 - Jason, Christina, David & Joshua, Tara & Justin
 - Faith, Kavante & Christopher
- Marlene - Philip Grayson
 - Philip Jr.
 - Philip III & Mia
- Carl - Moniza Lyons
 - Carmona
 - Brooklyn, Brynna & Trinity
- Sharon - Ronald G. Jones
 - Felicia, Uriah, Christopher, Julian
 - Devonte & Andre, Rocco & Chip

Family of Byron and Lone Taylor-Spears

- Dancan Taylor
 - Anthony
- Janis Taylor
- Lisa Taylor - Anthony Velasquez
 - Benjamin, Daniel, Sabrina
- Michael Taylor - Leslie Medina
 - Sydney, Sofia

What Shall I More Say?

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

I Corinthians 10:13