



Billy Alfred Vaughan

August 10, 1935 - August 22, 2023

Billy Alfred Vaughan, 88, of Laurel, Mississippi, passed away peacefully to join the heavenly choir of the saints on August 22, 2023.

Born on August 10, 1935, Billy was the oldest of four children born to Coby and Sarah Helen (Murry) Vaughan of Fordyce, Arkansas, where his father was employed by Fordyce Lumber Company. In the course of time, the Vaughans settled in Camden, Arkansas, where Billy started high school. The family attended Calvary Mission Church, a ministry of First Baptist Church of Camden. This little church became the center of their lives. Billy had been cultivating a talent for music, learning guitar from his father and cornet and other brass instruments in school. While in high school, he was in a boys' quartet that sang for school, church, and city functions and played drums for a little combo known as the Lamplighters. During those years, Billy gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and at a revival service he accepted God's call to full-time service in music ministry. At Calvary Mission Church he helped with the bus ministry and led the church's choir and the evening service singing. After graduating from Camden High School in 1953, Billy began his studies at Ouachita Baptist University.

In 1954 Billy joined the Air Force so that he could marry his high school sweetheart Mary Helen Gordon of Camden and later return to school on the GI bill. Two weeks after he married Mary in 1955, Billy was deployed to Yakota

Air Base in Japan, where he was assigned to Chaplain Roger Ginter as a Chaplain Service Specialist. Billy directed the base choir and the music at the Saturday Night Gospel Hour, as well as performing the many other duties assigned him by his C.O. Mary was able to join Billy in December 1955, and the following December they welcomed daughter Deborah, and then their son Michael in 1957. In 1958, when he was honorably discharged as a staff sergeant, Billy, Mary, and their children returned to Arkadelphia, Arkansas, where the Vaughan family welcomed daughter Victoria.

Resuming work on his music degree at Ouachita Baptist University, Billy worked diligently as a student, a member of the campus maintenance crew, and the music director at Second Baptist Church of Arkadelphia. After completing his Bachelor of Music degree in 1961, Billy became music/Bible education minister at West Helena Baptist Church in West Helena, Arkansas. In 1962-64 Billy accepted a similar position at First Baptist Church of Paragould, Arkansas. There the Vaughan family welcomed their son Billy, Jr.

From Paragould, Arkansas, Billy and his family of six moved to Columbus, Mississippi, where he held the position of Minister of Music of First Baptist Church. There he expanded the number of choirs so that all ages could participate in the church's music ministry; started one of the first handbell choirs in the state; and premiered Good News (the very first youth folk musical). During his service to First Baptist Church, he also directed his first musical drama, The Seven Last Words of Christ by Dubois; incorporated orchestras during special church events; and at times collaborated with Mississippi University for Women's music program. Billy also spent two summers ('67 and '68) at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to further expand his own Bible knowledge.

In 1971 the Lord led Billy to First Baptist Church of Laurel, Mississippi, where he continued implementing musical instruction and worship for all ages;

assisting with the youth from time to time and later working with the Keenagers (ages 55+); founding the FBC Sonlight Quartet; actively participating in the Mississippi Baptist Singing Churchmen; and completing a Master of Music degree from William Carey College in 1977. He also organized church music competitions for young pianists in the Jones County Area.

In 1976 and throughout the remainder of his life, Billy suffered from recurring lymphatic cancer and often had to receive chemotherapy and at times radiation. On August 19, 1989, he suffered a brain aneurysm that paralyzed his left side and led him to resign his long-cherished position as Minister of Music. But the energies he possessed before his stroke were channeled into other areas of service: assisting in the church tape ministry; actively participating as a choir and Sunday school member; helping to count church offering monies; occasionally assisting the church's television ministry; serving as a greeter; personally calling church members and their families on birthdays and praying for them; and volunteering for any other errand or task he could do to be a blessing to the people he loved. Billy and Mary (who quit her job to help him) became an even more inseparable pair and continued these newfound ministry opportunities for years until their health restricted them to their home. Billy loved using music to worship his Savior and encouraged others to do the same.

Billy was preceded in death by his parents Coby and Sarah Helen Vaughan; his sister Martha Jane Santifer; his brother-in-law Jerry Santifer; and his great-grandson David Michael Dunavent.

He leaves behind his loving wife of 68 years Mary Helen; brother, Mike (Connie) Vaughan of Camden, Arkansas; sister, Linda (Carlton) Sanders of Heber Springs, Arkansas; his four children: Deborah Stoulig of Brandon,

Mississippi; Michael (Rhonda) Vaughan of Morton, Mississippi; Victoria (Daryl) Coats of Jones County, Mississippi; and Billy (Andrea) Vaughan of Avondale, Arizona; his 17 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren; and a host of relatives and friends who sorrow at his departing but rejoice in his testimony for the LORD, knowing that he is whole again and singing praises to the LORD, Who was merciful and gracious to him all of his life.

Memory Chapel of Laurel, Mississippi, is in charge of the funeral. Visitation will be held at First Baptist Church of Laurel at 10-11 a.m. on Monday, August 28, 2023, with a celebration service following at 11. Pastor John Helveston and Bro. Shannon Slover will officiate.

Benton Funeral Home of Fordyce, Arkansas, is in charge of the interment at Salem Cemetery in Bearden, Arkansas, at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, August 30, 2023.

Pallbearers are Billy's grandsons: Paul Stoulig III; Christopher Coats; Charles Stoulig; Jake Dees; Daniel Coats; Michael Coats; and Alex Vaughan.

Honorary Pallbearers are Doug Jefcoat, Jeffrey Bailee, Carleton Dillard, Wade Burroughs, Billy Guy, David Hayes, James Hinton, Roger Jefcoat, and Charlie Robine.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Billy Vaughan Scholarship Fund at the William Carey University School of Music.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."
(James 1:12)

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 28. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church of Laurel
607 West 5th Street
Laurel, MS 39440

Service

AUG 28. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church of Laurel
607 West 5th Street
Laurel, MS 39440

Tribute Wall



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Billy Alfred Vaughan.* ”



August 27, 2023 at 06:49 PM



“ *I was associated with Billy as Financial Secretary at First Baptist, Laurel. He truly manifested his love for Christ in all he did. Ralph and I went on several youth trips with him and saw the fun side of him! He loved the youth and they loved and admired his Christian walk. Mary Helen was his help mate, supporting all his endeavors. To have been sick as long as he, he truly believed God was walking with him and would take care of him, Rest in peace, Billy, in a healed body singing in the heavenly choir! Prayers for the family during these days.* ”

Ralph and Fay Campbell

Fay C. Campbell - August 26, 2023 at 11:40 AM



“ *I was Billy's Secretary for Billy from 1975-1980. He was truly a man of God. I truly enjoyed working with him in the many programs through the music ministry of FBC Laurel including helping with the children's choir program, the youth handbells and the youth choir. Billy will be missed by many who truly loved him. I'm sure when Billy got to Heaven, he heard, "Well done good and faithful servant."* ”

Nancibeth Williams - August 26, 2023 at 10:00 AM

DC

“ I use to work at First Baptist Church in Laurel when he was Music Director. The kitchen staff always had free coffee for our Coffee Breaks. One morning I left my desk to go drink a cup only to find a little sign he placed secretly " Coffee \$.15 a cup" . Of course, I did not have money with me and I went back to the office without having any....we had a big laugh about it. The main thing I remember about Billy was his Christ-like personality. I dearly loved his wife Mary Helen and their family and have kept in touch all these 42 years. Would to God that we have more Christian soldiers like Billy Vaughn in America.
Sincerely, Dorothy Chapman

Dorothy Chapman - August 25, 2023 at 05:45 PM