



## Rev. W. L. Whelchel

April 13, 1930 - July 6, 2020

Walter Lee (W.L.) Whelchel was born on April 13, 1930 in Lumpkin County, Georgia. He was the youngest of eight children born to the late Walter and Earmon Jackson Whelchel. W.L. Whelchel grew up under the guidance of his parents and older brothers and sisters in the Hickory Grove Community, located in Lumpkin County. Due to the fact that there were no public schools for the rural African-American communities, young Whelchel's elementary years were spent at the Hickory Grove Church School. He continued his high school years at the Beulah Rucker Industrial High School when his family moved near Gainesville in 1937.

Professionally, W.L. worked for the First National Bank of Gainesville for 32 years. He was the first African American Gospel Radio Phenomenon within the Northeast Georgia area. He worked with WDUN of Gainesville as well as WSGC of Elberton with his renowned radio show called the "Hour of Sharing". 1961 proved to be very significant in the life of W.L. On March 17, 1961, he received the Lord as his personal savior. He became a member of the Hickory Grove Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Dahlonega, GA. Since his acceptance of Christ, tremendous changes occurred. One such change came in 1963 when he accepted the call into the ministry. His leadership and dedication to Christ benefited many in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

More great things were yet to come. In 1966, Rev. Whelchel was assigned to the Elberton Circuit. Rock Springs CME, Pleasant Home CME, and White's

Chapel CME made up the aforementioned circuit. Under his guidance, a new church from the foundation upward was erected at Rock Springs. Pleasant Home and White's Chapel were remodeled. Under his leadership, White's Chapel soon became a full station church. Rev. Whelchel pastored and served White's Chapel for 20+ years. He truly believed that many souls were saved and the community family was blessed.

In 1971, Rev. Whelchel had the opportunity of a lifetime to travel to Jerusalem and be baptized in the River of Jordan....just as our Saviour, Jesus Christ. He thoroughly enjoyed this priceless experience.

With God continuing to guide his footsteps, Rev. Whelchel was moved to even higher heights in 1986, for it was 1986 that he was assigned as the Presiding Elder of the Elberton-Gainesville District. He was dedicated to this charge for seven years. Rev. Whelchel's leadership as a Presiding Elder enabled him to guide many young people called into the ministry, as well as witness many souls being saved. Rev. Whelchel's service to the Elberton-Gainesville District was one of great success. After seven years as Presiding Elder, Rev. Whelchel was once again appointed to serve four more years as the pastor of White's Chapel CME Church. During this time, complete renovations were made to improve the church. Four years following, W.L. received the appointment to pastor his home church; Hickory Grove CME Church in Dahlonega, Georgia.

Throughout his life, Rev. Whelchel has managed to further his thirst for knowledge. He enhanced his learning of the scriptures by attending an Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) seminary training extension course in 2001-2002. In completion of this course, Rev. Whelchel received a Certificate of Theology. Some other accolades of service that Rev. Whelchel accomplished in his lifetime included membership in the NAACP, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society and Salvation Army Advisory Board. He was presented the Ebony Eloquence Award by the Fair Street Butler High School Reunion Committee and lastly he was honored to receive by the Georgia State Senate, Resolution Number 809 for his years of service

to the ministry.

Life has always consisted of many obstacles for Rev. Welchel. In 1994, he was diagnosed with cancer. He had to undergo four major operations. After the third operation, Rev. Welchel slipped into a coma. In February 1995, unbeknownst to him, his family was preparing to bury him. Unbeknownst to his family, Rev. Welchel had spiritually entered into a peaceful tranquility. This spiritual tranquility resulted in his healing. In the same time frame, God healed Rev. Welchel. This healing, however, came with one stipulation. The stipulation was to exclaim to the world that God, and only God, had healed his cancer-ridden body. In the year 2002, Rev. Welchel would once again be faced with trusting, believing, and having total faith in God. It was in that year that he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. In the book of Romans, Paul tells us to “present our bodies as a living sacrifice” and that we are to be “holy and acceptable unto God”. Rev. Welchel exemplified this very statement that Paul so boldly preached. He was truly a living testimony. Through all of his trials and tribulations, Rev. Welchel never ceased to pastor God’s people. He was tremendously blessed to see the four generations of ministers: Rev. W.L. Welchel, his son Rev. Eugene Welchel, his grandson Rev. Walter James Welchel and great grandson Austin Welchel.

During his tenure as Presiding Elder, the late Bishop Joseph C. Coles gave him permission to erect a new church at Hickory Grove. The groundbreaking for the church was on Sunday, March 29, 1992, and the new church was consecrated on Sunday, September 13, 1992. Rev. Welchel continued in his ministry with a vision from God to build a Family Life Center for this community and for God’s people. Groundbreaking Services for the Life Center (The Vision) was held on Sunday, July 9, 2006.

After 45 years in the ministry, Rev. Welchel continued to maintain a love for God’s people and a special love for the children of the church. He always reflected back to the date of March 17, 1961 when he first met the Lord. Even after going to church had become a challenge, he would have weekly bible

study with his sons and friends at his home, which was such a joy for him. This was truly his saving grace in such a time of health challenges...OH BUT GOD.

Family has always been very important to Rev. Whelchel. He was preceded in death by his parents Walter and Earmon Whelche; three brothers ML, Zeke and Jake Whelchel; three sisters Roselle Hamilton, Lucille Hamilton and Anne Brownlee. He leaves to cherish loving and everlasting memories with his wife of 72 years, Mrs. Rebekah T. Whelchel; two sons, Rev. Eugene Whelchel (Lena), Mr. Tony Whelchel (Bettye); one daughter, Mrs. Michele Williams (LLoyd); two sisters, Mattie Lee Hudson of Baltimore, Maryland and Ornie Lee Whelchel; 9 grandchildren, 21 great grandchildren, and 9 great-great grandchildren, one adopted son Mr. Anthony (Chip) Footman of LaGrange, Georgia; and one adopted daughter Ms. Doris Moss of Atlanta, Georgia.

<https://www.wimberlyfuneralhomelivestreams.com/>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL **10.** 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wimberly Funeral Home  
325 Summitt St SE  
Gainesville, GA 30501  
(770) 536-3251  
info@wimberlyjackson.com  
<https://www.wimberlyjacksonfuneralhome.com>

## Service

JUL **11.** 11:00 AM (ET)

W L Welchel Family Life Center  
69 Hickory Grove Road  
Dahlonega, GA, GA 30533

# Tribute Wall



“ *Rev. W. L. Whelchel*

October 22, 2023 at 04:48 PM



“ *Charlene & Avery Niles lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel*



**Charlene & Avery Niles** - November 12, 2020 at 03:48 PM



“ *Rev. W L Whelchel was a Pastor / Preacher, Teacher and friend. He taught me a lot back when he pastored White's Chapel CME Church in Elberton some 20 plus years during his pastoral appointment. He loved his church and his members. We would talk even after he had gone on to pastor other churches. He has already been missed since he retired from pastoring and will surely be missed now. To the family you are in our prayers may the Lord comfort and strengthen each of you.*



**Rev. Alton & Laura Downer** - August 16, 2020 at 07:53 PM



“ *My deepest condolences ...R.I.P Dearest friend💕*



**Pamela Jackson** - August 12, 2020 at 12:40 PM



“ Kelly Baummer lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel



Kelly Baummer - July 13, 2020 at 07:31 AM



We got a random text of his passing. Did not know who he was but we would like to send condolences.

Kelly Baummer - July 13, 2020 at 07:32 AM



“ Melinda Hutchins lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel



Melinda Hutchins - July 12, 2020 at 01:59 PM



“ Dorothy Bolden sent a virtual gift in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel



Dorothy Bolden - July 11, 2020 at 08:10 PM

NN

“ *Nathan Ann Neal lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel*



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**nathan Ann Neal** - July 11, 2020 at 02:04 PM

TF

“ *Our Prayers and condolences to the entire family, On behalf of Rev. & Mrs. A.D. Hawks Our condolences goes out to you. Rev. Whelchel was a close friend of the family, his legacy, friendship and memories will never be forgotten. The community has lost another icon, however our father has gained an awesome individual . The Hawks Family*

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**The Hawks Family** - July 11, 2020 at 12:55 PM

MU

“ *Sending out our condolence to Reverend Whelchel family. Rebecca and W.L was a big part of our family and our Life. And White's Chapel CME Church Family he will be miss*



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**Mr and Mrs Charles & Delois Umble** - July 11, 2020 at 11:30 AM

MU

“ My condolences to Whelchel family. Rev Whelchel was a great person he will be miss. I remember when he was Pastor at White's Chapel Church and when he baptized me maybe Rebecca was like my grandma I love you both



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**MS Stacy Umble** - July 11, 2020 at 11:13 AM

MF

“ Sending our sincere condolences to the Whelchel family. Rev. Whelchel played a big part in my life as a young man as the pastor of Whites Chapel Church. Under his leadership I learned many valuable lessons that I will cherish for the rest of my life. You will be truly missed. Thank you and Mrs. Rebecca for your many years of service in our community.

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**Mr. and Mrs. David Umble and family** - July 11, 2020 at 09:19 AM

MF

“ Rev. Whelchel, What a Guy! What a great JOY his life has meant for so many in the Gainesville community, especially to me! This was a man whose calm demeanor leaves great memories in our hearts and minds on how to live and how to share Jesus through words and actions that encourage and inspire. Whether he was at First National Bank, at the Court House, at Hickory Grove or other speaking engagements, or in short conversations just passing by, one could always leave knowing that a life was uplifted because he spoke. Thank you Family for sharing such a great man with all of us!



*Myrtle W. Figueras*

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**Myrtle Figueras** - July 11, 2020 at 06:48 AM

VM

“ *My condolences to the family. May his soul rest in peace till we meet. Have heard lots of good stories about you. I feel like I know you from all the stories of wisdom I have heard family members saying about you. Mostly from your great grand daughter Shaniqua Bell. Her face lights up when she talks about you.*

Victoria Matavata - July 10, 2020 at 10:09 PM

YV

“ *My condolences, I remember growing up in the community and when you pass by his home there was always a kind hello. Will be missed*  
*Love Yvette Statham Anderson*



Yvette - July 10, 2020 at 09:02 PM

PP

“ *I was blessed to be a youth in the CME Church during his tenure as Presiding Elder of the Elberton-Gainesville District. I will sincerely miss him. May GOD bless and strengthen you all. Regards, Paige Perry: Trinity CME Church-Toccoa, GA*

P. Perry - July 10, 2020 at 04:29 PM



“ *My Condolences to the family. Sorry for your loss.*



Michelle Poole Bell - July 10, 2020 at 03:13 PM

CJ

“ We the members of Hickory Grove CME Church have been blessed over the years to have had so many God sent pastors like Rev. W.L. Whelchel in our lives. Personally speaking; from childhood to adulthood, Rev. Whelchel has been a Mentor, Pastor, Leader and a Friend. He will be truly missed but not forgotten. Our prayer is “God bless and comfort the Rev. W.L. Whelchel family today and the days to come.”



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**Charles & Sandra Jackson** - July 10, 2020 at 03:12 PM

MB

“ My prayers are with you during your time of bereavement .



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**Marion Bryant** - July 10, 2020 at 02:05 PM

VM

*My condolences to the family. May his soul rest in peace.*

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**Victoria Matavata** - July 10, 2020 at 09:56 PM

EM

“ The family of Clarence E. Mack extend our deepest condolences to the family of Rev. W. L. Whelchel. We are praying with and for all of you in your time of need. We love you all and pray for peace within you.

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**Elaine Mack** - July 10, 2020 at 09:10 AM

LS

“ McCrarys send our Prayers and condolences to the Whelchel family. May God bring you peace and understanding through these times. Rev Whelchel will truly be missed, A true man of God and a blessing to all generations.



Lorraine Shields - July 09, 2020 at 11:04 PM

M)

Ours luv and prayers goes out to y'all and our deepest condolences to your family with luv and care ,For one of greatest Man that has Every walked on this earth he was a little GOD !!! 🙏 . The Mize Family

Marcia Mize. (chacha ) - July 10, 2020 at 06:00 PM

GF

“ Grady Young Foundation lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel



Grady Young Foundation - July 09, 2020 at 09:20 PM

GF

Our sincere condolences, thoughts, and prayers are lifted for you! May God continue to bless, comfort, strengthen and sustain the Whelchel family, and give you peace! We love you!

The Grady Young Foundation  
Charles G. Young

Grady Young Foundation - July 09, 2020 at 09:22 PM

WD

“ *Willie Mae Davenport (late Rev. Robert Davenport) purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Rev. W. L. Whelchel.*



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**Willie Mae Davenport (late Rev. Robert Davenport)** - July 09, 2020 at 05:44 PM

RF

“ *Sending Our Prayers & condolences to the Whelchel Family. May the Great REV. W.L. Rest in the bosom of Jesus Christ & may God's Comfort & Strength reside in the Spirits of his Loved ones during these difficult times.*



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**Rodney&Mika Young & Family** - July 09, 2020 at 11:55 AM

W&

*Sending our deepest sympathy to the Whelchel Family. May God be your strength and comfort. Rest In Peace Pastor 🙏*

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**Willie Mae Davenport-Mitchell & Family** - July 09, 2020 at 03:35 PM

GS

“ *Goizueta Dean Suite purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Rev. W. L. Whelchel.*



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**Goizueta Dean Suite** - July 09, 2020 at 11:06 AM

HA

“ Hazel Allen lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel



Hazel Allen - July 08, 2020 at 10:03 PM

SJ

“ Star Johnson lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel



Star Johnson - July 08, 2020 at 08:36 PM

SJ

Reverend Whelchel was truly a God loving man. Blessing to the Whelchel family.

Star Johnson - July 08, 2020 at 08:38 PM

DB

“ Daphne Brownlee lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel



Daphne Brownlee - July 08, 2020 at 07:29 PM

KC

“ *Rev. Whelchel was such a kind man. My thoughts and prayers for your family in his loss.*

*Karen Craft  
(First National Bank)*

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**Karen Craft** - July 08, 2020 at 05:30 PM



“ *The God who stretched forth the universe and created all we can conceive will console you in this hour: On behalf of President John Harris and members of the FSB Alumni, condolences —Rev. Dr. Douglas Childers, Spiritual Committee*

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**J Childers** - July 08, 2020 at 03:22 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Rev. W. L. Whelchel.*



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July 08, 2020 at 03:10 PM

DK

“ *I worked with W L at First National. He was always so kind and smiling. He was a joy to work with. Rebekah And family, you are in our thoughts and prayers. Donna Kinney*

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**Donna Kinney** - July 08, 2020 at 01:32 PM

BF

“ *WL was a wonderful person. Enjoyed working with him at First National Bank. Rebekah you and your family are in my prayers!* ”

Becky Fauscett - July 08, 2020 at 12:44 PM

NT

“ *My prayers are with you all!* ”



Nikiya Few Thompson - July 08, 2020 at 12:06 PM

LR

“ *Louise Randolph sent a virtual gift in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel* ”



Louise Randolph - July 08, 2020 at 12:06 PM

JJ

“ *Jeraldine Sewell Jenkins lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel* ”



Jeraldine Sewell Jenkins - July 08, 2020 at 11:07 AM

JJ

*My sincere condolences to the family. Rev, Pastor Whelchel will be missed. I always looked forward to the yearly phone calls to chat with him and Ms Rebecca. Occasionall visits was always pleasant because of their hospitality. I met Rev, Pastor Whelchel in 1974 while working as a teller at FNB. He would come to the teller's window every morning to chat or greet us, before he opened the doors for business. His pleasant presence set the pace for me each day. I truly enjoyed sitting in close proximity of him and Ms Rebecca at Church gatherings, and attending Hickory Grove to hear his sermons. I will always remember the talking and laughing, the singing and talking about the Lord with him on the phone. Ms Rebecca, may the Lord keep you snuggled dear sweet woman!*

Jeraldine Sewell Jenkins - July 14, 2020 at 10:34 AM

FW

“ Freddie Webb lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel



Freddie Webb - July 08, 2020 at 09:32 AM

PJ

“ 💔🙏 Rev WL Whelchel❤️ May your Soul Rest in Peace ✨🙏✨ Much respected, admired and adored as our Pastor...truly a Legend...🌟 Such a privilege to have had so many memorable experiences under your guidance...THANK YOU for All your Teaching and Blessings always... and so much LOVE 🤔 You will truly be missed ✨ Prayers and much Strength to all your family ✨🙏✨



Pamela Jackson - July 08, 2020 at 09:09 AM

JM

“ Our prayers are with the family 🙏



Joyce Mitchell - July 08, 2020 at 08:45 AM

SB

“ Sally Mattox Brown lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Welchel



Sally Mattox Brown - July 08, 2020 at 02:04 AM

SB

Praying for the family. Love you all ❤️🌹 Sally Matrix Brown

Sally Mattox Brown - July 08, 2020 at 02:07 AM

SB

Sally Mattox

Sally Mattox Brown - July 08, 2020 at 02:08 AM

TP

“ Rev. Welchel an Icon in the Black community will be sorely missed. You the Family have our deepest condolences. May God wrap his loving arms around you during this period of time 🙏🙏🙏



Theresa Anderson Puryear - July 07, 2020 at 11:22 PM

RT

“ *Richard O Trammell lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel*



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**Richard O Trammell** - July 07, 2020 at 07:28 PM

RT

*My Condolences to the Family.*

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**Richard O Trammell** - July 07, 2020 at 07:32 PM

HF

“ *Hopkins Family lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel*



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**Hopkins Family** - July 07, 2020 at 07:11 PM

MM

“ *Mattie L Mathis lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel*



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**Mattie L Mathis** - July 07, 2020 at 07:06 PM

RS

“ *Rev & Mrs. Richard Sheller lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Whelchel*



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**Rev & Mrs. Richard Sheller** - July 07, 2020 at 06:32 PM

HF

“ *Praying that God's Peace will comfort you during this difficult time. Your Family are in our prayers.*  
*Rev ADHawks Family*



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**Hawks Family** - July 07, 2020 at 06:31 PM

CR

“ *Rev. Whelchel was like a father to me. He was the best pastor I ever had at Whites Chapel CME Church. He cared so much about the well-being of all of us. He will be truly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with you Mrs. Whelchel and family. Thank you for sharing him with us.*

*Love Always,  
Clark and Fannie Rucker*

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**Clark and Fannie Rucker** - July 07, 2020 at 05:36 PM

GY

“ Grover E & Janice C Young lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Welchel



Grover E & Janice C Young - July 07, 2020 at 05:00 PM

HR

“ Hope Rucker lit a candle in memory of Rev. W. L. Welchel



Hope Rucker - July 07, 2020 at 04:45 PM

HR

Rev. Welchel Was my childhood pastor. We learned so much from him. Those lessons I still carry with me today. He was the best pastor, leader, & teacher in the world. I will miss him dearly. Mrs Welchel thank you for Sharing him with us, and my thoughts and prayers are with you.

Hope Rucker - July 07, 2020 at 04:48 PM

MM

“ I remember Rev Welchel from a little girl--my mom always called him "Shorty Welchel", especially when they worked together years ago in the chicken plants. He was respected by all who knew him. He gave our family support and words of encouragement when my mom died. He will be missed--The old soldiers are leaving us.

Mary Lois Mason-Young - July 07, 2020 at 04:43 PM

SC

“ *Rev. Welchel was my childhood pastor at Whites Chapel CME Church in Elberton, GA. What I loved most about him was that he genuinely cared for us. He took time with us and ensured we participated in events from CYF to Leadership Training school. I talk about him often now as an adult as he was such an intricate part of my growing up. Thank you Mrs. Welchel and family for sharing him with us. He will be truly missed.*

*Love Always,  
Stephanie (Rucker) Cooper*

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**Stephanie Cooper** - July 07, 2020 at 04:14 PM