



NEWS RELEASE

CITY OF HOPEWELL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The City of Hopewell Sadly and Respectfully Announces the Death of Rev. Dr. Curtis W. Harris

Hopewell, Va., - The City of Hopewell sadly announces the death of past Mayor (First African-American Mayor of Hopewell) and City Council Member, Rev. Dr. Curtis W. Harris. Rev. Harris was the City's Mayor from 1998-2000. The current Mayor of Hopewell, Mrs. Jackie Shornak said, "Today I received a call from the family of Reverend Curtis W. Harris notifying me of his passing on Sunday night. Not only was Reverend Harris a past Mayor and City Councilor of the City of Hopewell, he was a preacher and civil rights advocate known throughout the City, State and Country. His iconic life made an impact on many lives. Let us pray for his family to have the strength that will carry them through this grieving process."

Rev. Dr. Curtis West Harris was the last of six children born to the late Thelma and Sandy Harris on July 1, 1924 in Dendron, Virginia. He was raised in Hopewell, Virginia and educated in its public schools. After graduating from Carter G. Woodson High School, he continued his education at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia and eventually employed at Allied Chemical in Hopewell. Other educational experiences included obtaining a certificate in Clinical Training for Pastors from the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, Virginia; studying at the Urban Training Center for Christian Missions in Chicago, Illinois; and completing various courses at Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia. Dr. Harris also received an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 1972 and an Honorary Doctor of Law degree in 1983 from the Virginia University of Lynchburg in Lynchburg, Virginia. In 1946 Dr. Harris married Ruth Jones, his loving wife of 65 years, who passed away on May 22, 2011.

The civil rights work of Dr. Harris began as early as 1950 when he was elected president of the Hopewell chapter of the NAACP. Ten years later, he was arrested and sentenced to 60 days in jail for his role in a sit-in at a segregated drugstore in Hopewell. In 1961, he became a member of the National SCLC Board of Directors, joined forces with the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and accepted nonviolence as the most practical means to fight racial and social injustice. He was arrested 13 times for acts of civil disobedience during his civil rights career.

Funeral Arrangements are as follows:

- *Saturday, December 16th, 2017 – 8am to 8pm – Rev. Dr. Curtis W. Harris will lay in repose for public viewing outside of the doors of the Curtis W. Harris, Sr. Library at the Carter G. Woodson Middle School – 1000 Winston Churchill Drive – Hopewell, VA 23860*

- *Monday, December 18th, 2017 – First Baptist Church – 401 N. 2nd Avenue – Hopewell, VA 23860*
 - o *10 am – Open casket for viewing*
 - o *11 am – Funeral Services*
 - o *Following the services, the processional will follow Dr. Harris to his final resting place at the Appomattox Cemetery – 703 N. 21st Avenue – Hopewell, VA 23860*

- *Cards and Flowers can be sent to: Bland & Tucker Funeral Homes – 1500 Arlington Road – Hopewell, VA 23860*

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