



Dr. John Thomas Harper Sr.

November 30, 1945 - April 2, 2016

Dr. John T. Harper, Sr., a retired orthopedic surgeon who helped to break racial barriers at the Medical College of Georgia, died on April 2, 2016 due to complications related to idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. He was 70 years-old. John Thomas Harper was born November 30, 1945 to the union of LueBirda and Johnnie Harper. He was the eldest of five children. As a young boy John worked hard on the farm and excelled in school having learned from his parents the importance of having a good work ethic. He graduated as the valedictorian from Hancock Central High School in 1963. After graduation, he attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia where he majored in biology and minored in chemistry. While taking a math class across the street at Spelman College he met his future wife, Agnes Louise Houston. During his sophomore year he pledged Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated. On June 10, 1967, ten days after having graduated college, John and Agnes were joined in Holy Matrimony. The newlyweds moved to Augusta, Georgia, where John had enrolled in medical school. In 1970 the couple had their first child, John, Jr. In 1971 along with his classmate, Dr. Frank Rumph, Dr. John T. Harper, Sr. became the first African-American to graduate from the Medical College of Georgia, School of Medicine. Upon graduation from medical school, Dr. Harper completed his internship and a year of general surgery residency at the Emory University Affiliated Hospitals. His medical training was then interrupted as he had been drafted into the military. He served his country as a Flight Surgeon in the United States Air Force and was stationed

at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. After concluding his service to his country, he returned to the Emory University Affiliated Hospitals to complete his training as an orthopedic surgeon and hand surgery specialist. Dr. Harper opened a private practice in 1979 and entered partnership with another physician shortly thereafter. It is the late Dr. Don A. Morris, with whom he practiced the longest. Dr. Harper provided excellent orthopedic care to patients performing surgeries primarily at Atlanta Medical Center, Crawford Long, and Rockdale Community Hospital where for a time he served as Chief of Staff. He retired from patient care in 2008. In addition to his being a dedicated physician, Dr. Harper was an outdoorsman. He enjoyed fishing, hunting and traveling. He treasured moments of peace while on the waters of the Georgia lakes or in the woods of Hancock County. Additionally, he marveled at the ocean and loved taking his family on cruises and vacations to Panama City Beach. While he considered himself a simple country boy, one of his personal goals was to travel the world. He has toured parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe. His final trip was a also spiritual journey in which he traveled to the holy land of Israel. A loving and generous family man, Dr. Harper is preceded in death by his son, Jason. He is survived by his wife, Agnes; his son, John, Jr. (Tiya); his daughter Angela (Mario Mahome); his five grandchildren, Ashley, Jordyn, Lance, "Trey" and Jacen; his mother, LueBirda; his three sisters, Doris Mattison, Emma White, and Betty (Joseph Jones); his one brother, Louis (Betty); his three step-grandchildren, Gabby, Trinity and Carrington; and numerous other nieces, nephews relatives and friends. Celebration of Life Services will be held 11AM Wednesday, April 6, 2016 at Saints Peter and Paul Parish 2600 Tilson Rd Decatur, GA. Interment The Harper Family Cemetery 900 Hunts Chapel Rd. Sparta, GA. Visitation TUESDAY 10AM-8PM with Family Hour 7PM-8PM at our SOUTH DEKALB Chapel 4347 Flat Shoals Parkway Decatur, GA 30034 (404-241-5656).

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 5. 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM (ET)

South DeKalb Chapel
4347 Flat Shoals Pkwy.
Decatur, GA 30034
(404) 241-5656
info@levettfuneralhome.com

Family Hour

APR 5. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

South DeKalb Chapel
4347 Flat Shoals Pkwy.
Decatur, GA 30034
(404) 241-5656
info@levettfuneralhome.com

Service

APR 6. 11:00 AM (ET)

Saints Peter and Paul Parish
2560 Tilson Rd
decatur, GA 30032

Tribute Wall



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. John Thomas Harper Sr..*



April 11, 2016 at 09:53 PM



“ *Agnes, I can't imagine your grief and pray for your comfort and that of your family. I feel blessed to have known Dr. Harper and will always consider him my mentor and friend. While I am saddened by the fact that I can no longer have those "candid" conversations with him by phone, I know that he is in a much better place. I feel honored to have known him and to have witnessed his love for you, his children, and his grandchildren. He will be missed. May he rest in eternal peace.*

Ana-Elis Perry - April 11, 2016 at 09:01 PM

TM

“ I remember John as a classmate (Morehouse '67) frat brother (we both pledged during our sophomore year, I in the fall and he in the following spring) and fellow (sufferers under "the JAW") biology major. I hadn't seen him since graduation until we met again at our 45th reunion. We talked, laughed and shared memories as though we were both still in our late teens/early twenty's, and the intervening 45 years had never happened.

John was a genuinely good guy and will surely be missed by all who had the good fortune to know him.

Tom Scott

Thomas H. Scott, Jr. MD - April 06, 2016 at 06:43 PM

GW

“ Agnes (my bridge partner), John Jr, Angela, and your entire family my heart goes out to you during this difficult time.

While on a bridge trip with Agnes about a year ago, I met John for the first time. Subsequently, when Agnes and I played together in away games, John accompanied her as was his custom; and so, I got to know him a little more. I learned of his love for travel, fishing, and reading. On one occasion, I had the privilege of riding to Tunica with Agnes and John to a Bridge Tournament. During the four hour ride, we engaged in long conversations about books and philosophy. John struck me as an erudite man driven by an insatiable passion for life and generosity to those around him. This zeal, coupled with his kindness, was transformative. From my perspective, it was the manner to which John “thought” He wasn't rhetorical, he spoke metaphorically and spiritually. What a marvelous experience!

I am wishing you and your family strength, comfort, and healing.

Gwendolyn L. White

"He who has gone, so we but cherish his memory, abides with us, more present than the living man." Antoine de Saint-Exupery."

Gwendolyn L White - April 06, 2016 at 06:40 AM

FG

“ From Your Friends and Colleagues at GDOT purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Dr. John Thomas Harper Sr..



From Your Friends and Colleagues at GDOT - April 05, 2016 at 02:59 PM

FG

“ *From Your Friends and Colleagues at GDOT purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Dr. John Thomas Harper Sr..*



From Your Friends and Colleagues at GDOT - April 05, 2016
at 02:59 PM

WH

“ *John and I met as members of the Morehouse Freshman Class of 1963. When we lived in Graves Hall we thought that we were big time college students. We both learned quickly that this was going to be hard work. John was certainly equipped to handle it and i followed his example. I last saw John at our 45th Class reunion. As usual with a mile on his smile on his face and with a thousand thoughts in his head.*

To Agnes and the Harper family May God bless you and Keep you.

William Henderson

William R Henderson - April 04, 2016 at 08:53 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dr. John Thomas Harper Sr..*



April 04, 2016 at 10:12 AM