



## Dr. Lee Andrew Ransaw Sr.

March 24, 1937 - June 18, 2026

"Well done, good and faithful servant." — Matthew 25:23

Dr. Lee Andrew Ransaw

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Some lives are measured not by the years they span, but by the countless lives they forever change. Such was the life of Dr. Lee Andrew Ransaw—internationally respected artist, educator, mentor, and visionary, whose passion for art and education inspired generations of students, artists, and colleagues.

Born on March 24, 1937, in Little Rock, Arkansas, Dr. Ransaw's artistic talent was evident from childhood. At just five years old, a local Indianapolis newspaper recognized his extraordinary gift, offering an early glimpse of the remarkable career that would follow. He graduated from Shortridge High School in Indianapolis before earning his bachelor's and master's degrees from Indiana University and his Doctor of Education degree from Illinois State University.

Before dedicating his life to higher education, Dr. Ransaw proudly served his country in the United States Army and, in his early twenties, fulfilled another dream by playing professional basketball in Italy, where he lived. His love of travel and culture continued throughout his life, taking him around the world in

pursuit of artistic inspiration.

For more than three decades, Dr. Ransaw served Morris Brown College as Professor of Art, Chairman of the Department of Fine Arts and Letters, Dean, and ultimately Professor Emeritus. He transformed the visual arts program into a nationally respected center for artistic excellence while mentoring countless students whose lives and careers were forever changed by his guidance.

His impact extended far beyond the classroom. He established the Dr. Ruth Hall Hodges Art Gallery, painted the historic Morris Brown College Centennial Mural, and co-founded the National Alliance of Artists from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (NAAHBCU), creating opportunities for Black artists and preserving their contributions for future generations.

Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Ransaw received numerous honors, including fellowships from the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, and United Negro College Fund. His remarkable life was preserved by The HistoryMakers, and in 2024 he was recognized with the President's Lifetime Achievement Award presented on behalf of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., honoring his extraordinary contributions to education, the arts, and American culture.

While his accomplishments were many, those who knew him best will remember his generosity, quiet wisdom, impeccable style, and unwavering belief in the potential of others. He inspired people not only to become better artists, but better human beings.

Nothing brought Dr. Ransaw greater joy than his family. Together with his beloved wife, Cheryl Johnson Ransaw, he created a home filled with art, laughter, conversation, and hospitality. Their shared love of creativity, culture, and travel reflected a life beautifully lived.

He leaves to cherish his memory his devoted wife, Cheryl Johnson Ransaw; his children, Jennifer Ransaw Smith and Lee Andrew Ransaw, Jr.; his beloved grandchildren, Bailey Ariel Smith, Kendell Emory Smith, Peyton Elizabeth Smith, and Micah Andrew Ransaw; along with former students, colleagues, fellow artists, extended family, and countless friends whose lives were enriched by his presence.

Dr. Lee Andrew Ransaw leaves behind more than paintings and awards—he leaves a legacy of creativity, excellence, mentorship, and service that will continue to inspire for generations to come.

The family invites you to join them in celebrating Dr. Ransaw's extraordinary life. Your prayers, presence, and cherished memories are deeply appreciated. If you are unable to attend, please consider sharing a message of condolence or sending plants/flowers as a tribute to a life so beautifully lived.

Services entrusted to Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Home, 4347 Flat Shoals Parkway, Decatur, GA 30034.

# Upcoming Events

## Visitation

JUL 10. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Gregory B Levett and Son Funeral Home - Flat Shoals Location  
4347 Flat Shoals Pkwy  
Decatur, GA 30034

## Family Hours

JUL 10. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Gregory B Levett and Son Funeral Home - Flat Shoals Location  
4347 Flat Shoals Pkwy  
Decatur, GA 30034

## Celebration of Life service- Attend Live or via Livestream

JUL 11. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Kelley Chapel United Methodist Church  
3411 Kelley Chapel Road  
Decatur, GA 30034