



Dr. Leslie Jerome Brandon

August 24, 1947 - June 2, 2026

OBITUARY

Leslie Jerome "Jerry" Brandon was born on August 24, 1947, in Murray, Kentucky, to his loving parents, Eddie L. Brandon and M. Lavelia Brandon. From the very first moments of his life, Jerome demonstrated extraordinary resilience that would come to define him. Born at home under the care of a midwife, a complication at birth left his survival in serious doubt. When his father returned to the doctor the following day, the physician asked with certainty, "He died, didn't he?" His father replied with quiet conviction, "No, he is very much alive." It was a declaration that would prove prophetic, Jerome Brandon would go on to live a life of remarkable purpose, impact, and faith.

At an early age, Jerome accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior at St. John's Missionary Baptist Church in Murray, Kentucky. Upon relocating to Georgia, he became a devoted and faithful member of Greenforest Community Baptist Church (GCBC), where he served with distinction for more than 40 years. His service touched nearly every corner of church life, from the Stewardship Committee and the Shuttle Ministry to the Usher Committee and the Food Give Away volunteer program. He served as a Shepherd for the Adult IV Sunday School Class, had the honor of being the church's first Sunday School Banquet speaker, and was recognized this year with the distinguished title of Shepherd of the Year.

Jerome's formative years were grounded in faith, hard work, and strong family ties. He spent many summers alongside his cousins and siblings, visiting his grandparents and working the land of his grandfather's 250-acre farm, an experience that instilled in him a work ethic he carried throughout his entire life. He received his early education at Douglass High School and went on to graduate from Murray High School in 1965. He then pursued higher education at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Physical Education with a concentration in Exercise Physiology.

During his time at Murray State, Jerome took great pride in his role as a founding charter member of the Zeta Omicron Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., established on January 11, 1969. Together with 14 Line Brothers, he helped build a brotherhood committed to a bond that would last a lifetime. He went on to earn his Doctor of Philosophy in Exercise Physiology from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

Dr. Brandon joined the faculty of Georgia State University (GSU) in Atlanta, Georgia where he built a career of profound academic and scientific achievement. Over the course of his tenure, he authored book chapters, contributed encyclopedia entries, published more than 130 scholarly papers, and delivered over 150 professional presentations in 30+ countries. His research focused on cardiometabolic predictors of cardiovascular disease in African and European Americans, the management of obesity in African Americans, and the influence of muscle function on functional ability and aging — work that touched and improved lives around the world.

Dr. Brandon held appointments with the Department of Kinesiology and Health at GSU, the VA Medical Center's Research, Rehabilitation and Development division, Emory University School of Rehabilitation Medicine, and the Geriatric

Institute at GSU. In addition, he served as a Fellow and past President of the American College of Sports Medicine, former Chair of the Fitness Council of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD), as a committee member for the Georgia Board of Regents, and as a board governor for the Global Health and Body Composition Institute. Dr. Brandon completed his distinguished professional career as Chair of the Department of Kinesiology and Health at Georgia State University, retiring in 2022. At the time of his passing, he held the honored title of Professor Emeritus.

Beyond his academic achievements, Jerome was a man of deep personal warmth and an unwavering commitment to his community. He volunteered tirelessly for food drives, mentored young people, and in his youth, each Christmas delighted children by donning the suit of Santa Claus — a reflection of his playful spirit. He was an avid runner who also enjoyed tennis, karate, basketball, and football, embodying the very principles of healthy living he championed in his life's work.

Jerome was a devoted son, a loyal brother, a cherished uncle, and above all, a proud and loving father to his son, Leonard Jeremy Brandon, with whom he shared a lifetime of treasured memories.

Jerome was preceded in death by his parents, Eddie L. Brandon and M. Lavelia Brandon; his brothers, Delmus Brandon, Carl Brandon, Harvey Brandon, and Eddie Ray Brandon; and his nephew, Bobby Brandon Jr.

He is survived by his son, Leonard Jeremy Brandon; his brothers, Bobby "Browny" Leonard Brandon and Charles Brandon; his sister, Patricia Jackson; his special friend, Brenda Cleveland; and a beloved host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends whose lives he enriched immeasurably.

Jerome's parting words of wisdom — "Be an actor, not a reactor" — capture the spirit with which he lived. His greatest hope for those he loved was that they would invest themselves in the lives of young people, nurturing in them the attitudes, skills, character, and fortitude needed to face the challenges of this world with courage and grace.

Dr. Leslie Jerome Brandon did not merely survive his first day on this earth, he spent every day thereafter proving why he was meant to be here.

The family invites friends, colleagues, and students to pay their respects during the visitation at Gregory B Levett and Son Funeral Home - Flat Shoals Location in Decatur, Georgia, on Tuesday, June 9th, 2026, from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. A family hour will be held from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

A Celebration of Life service will be held at Greenforest Community Baptist Church 3250 Rainbow Drive Decatur, GA 30034 on Wednesday, June 10th, 2026, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. This service will honor Leslie's remarkable journey and the profound impact he made on the lives of those around him.

Please see the link for the Live Streaming of the services: <https://www.youtube.com/live/JIJOvJunDyE>

Leslie will be laid to rest in his birthplace during an internment service at Murray City Cemetery 511 Beale Street, Murray, KY, 42071 on Saturday, June 13th, 2026, from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm.

Arrangements are being handled by Gregory B. Levett and Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory-SOUTH DEKALB CHAPEL 4347 Flat Shoals Pkwy Decatur, GA 30034. The family wishes to express their gratitude for the outpouring of love and support during this difficult time. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in his Name

- Dr. Leslie Jerome Brandon.

Leslie Jerome Brandon will be remembered for his gentle spirit, his inclusive heart, and his profound contribution to every community he was a part of.

Cemetery Details

Murray City Cemetery

511 Beale Street
Murray, KY 42071

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 9. 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 Hour

JUN 9. 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM (ET)

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

Alpha Omega Service

JUN 9. 7:00 PM - 7:30 PM (ET)

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

Celebration of Life

JUN **10**. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Greenforest Community Baptist Church
3250 Rainbow Drive
Decatur, Ga 30034

Visitation

JUN **13**. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Imes Funeral Home & Crematory - Heritage Chapel
1804 Kentucky 121 Bypass
Murray, KY 42066

Internment

JUN **13**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Murray City Cemetery
511 Beale Street
Murray, KY 42071

Tribute Wall



“ *Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Leslie Jerome Brandon*



Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory, Inc. - June 06 at 04:15 PM



“ *Dr. Brandon was a wonderful friend for the last 48 yrs. We first met 48 yrs ago as new Exercise Physiology Ph.D. students at the University of Illinois. U til retirement a few yrs ago, we often roomed together at our Professional Meetings.
I know that Jerry is now in Heaven . . . Until we meet again.*

Mark Loftin - June 09 at 02:07 PM

CW

“ My mind goes back to Fall 1968, when entered my Freshman year at Murray State University, KY. I'm a Florida girl that fell in love with the hospitality of the "downtown" residents of Murray. Among those residents was Jerome Brandon. He treated me like a family member and referred to each other as cousin as a result of my lifelong association with the Williams-Reed Family. I was very supportive of Jerome and the brothers who worked tirelessly to charter a chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity on the MSU campus. As a "little sister" of the fraternity, Jerome and I had maybe opportunities to laugh and share pioneering experiences on the predominantly white campus. I looked up to Jerome for his intelligence, character, friendship and ability to stay focused while balancing a strong academic pursuit with a healthy social life. Jerome remains a dear friend and a fond memory of my college experience. To the Bereaved Family, Jerome will be missed but remembered by me and others who loved him dearly. Keep him alive through special memories of his life with you.

Cheryl L Walker - June 08 at 12:57 PM

BJ

“ Jerry was one of the "good guys" in every aspect of his being. I had the privilege of sharing an office with him during my first year on the faculty at Georgia State University and, as I recall, his second year. We worked together at GSU for nearly 22 years. Our exercise science students would congregate at his office as he served as their undergraduate advisor and he was respected by all as he advised with insight, compassion and enthusiasm. It was a thankless job at times, occasionally overwhelming quite frankly, but Jerry persisted and always with a kind word and smile. He would occasionally have his son, Jeremy, with him in the office and was he ever a proud and doting father. Jerry was an unassuming and private man and I read his obituary with sadness but also a wealth of pride and amazement at the man he was and the contributions he made to his community, friends, students and colleagues whether at GSU, ACSM/SEACSM, the VA/Emory or his beloved church. May Jerry's memory always and forever be a blessing to all who knew him. Rest in pride and peace, my dear friend and colleague...Ben Johnson

Ben Johnson - June 08 at 11:08 AM

CW

Thanks for sharing your memories... Cheryl Lonon Walker

Cheryl L Walker - June 08 at 06:55 PM

ZA

“ Zeta Omicron Charters of Alpha Phi Alpha purchased the Yellow & White Sympathy Standing Spray for the family of Dr. Leslie Jerome Brandon.



Zeta Omicron Charters of Alpha Phi Alpha - June 06 at 10:08 PM