



## Rev. Dr. D. N. Benford Sr.

March 12, 1930 - April 15, 2024

### Portrait of a Servant

Even before his formation, God had a special plan for the life of Doris Nathaniel Benford, Sr. He was born into a sharecropping family in Kemp, TX, on March 12, 1930, to Mary Benford (Banks). He was raised in a loving home, along with his two brothers William (WD) and Rufus Jean, provided by his mother, grandmother (Seeny Stovall), uncle (Jesse) and aunt (Annie Lee). God was all they had. After hardship, members of the family relocated to Vernon, TX, and at the age of 6, he responded to the efficacious call of the Holy Spirit and accepted Jesus as his Savior at the New Hope Baptist Church. By the age of 12, he received and began to grapple with the direct call to preach God's word.

Two years after receiving his calling, Pastor Benford became fully persuaded to share the Gospel. During a direct encounter with the Lord, as angels sang 'Sweet Hour of Prayer', he made a solemn promise to God at that moment, vowing to do his best and remain faithful unto death. His personal motto then became, "I preach because I can't help it." He preached his first sermon on December 25, 1944, and preached throughout his life until his final day, April 15, 2024. With the help of Dr. C. H. Durden and the New Hope Church, Benford received \$45 after that first sermon and soon found himself headed to seminary at Conroe College. He spent seven years at Conroe College and

ultimately earned three degrees: a Bachelor of Theology, a Bachelor of Divinity, and a Doctor of Divinity. In 1945, he was ordained by the Trinity Valley Association under the leadership of Dr. J.J. Jackson and became the pastor of the West Beulah Baptist Church in Beaumont, TX for one year. In 1947, he was called to the Rising Star Baptist Church, a part-time church in Spanish Camp, TX. Soon thereafter, he was called to pastor another part-time church, First Baptist Church, in Glen Flora, TX. Three years later, in 1950 at the age of twenty, Pastor Benford was called to the Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church of La Marque, Texas.

Pastor Benford's tenure at Rising Star has been defined by challenges that he and God faced head-on: from holding the flock together after witnessing the church burn, to facing threats of death as he fought for integration, enduring personal attacks while advocating for the County's Headstart program, and even battling a stroke as he dedicated himself to serving the youth and those most in need in the community. Through it all, he remained steadfast, finding strength in the Lord.

As a visionary builder, Pastor Benford has erected two magnificent Houses of Prayer and Worship. Yet, his greatest construction projects lie in the realm of character and spiritual foundations, impacting thousands of God's children. History will likely underestimate the profound influence of his teaching, mentorship, and exemplary life on those who have crossed his path. From counseling ministers and pastors to leading cheers for beginners at Bible School, one thing is certain: he did it with all his might! He brought great passion to God's work. He brought that same passion to his personal relationships as well. He was a great father and husband, who often credited the partnership of Julia, his wife of nearly 63 years, for his ability to dedicate so much time to others. He was a great fisherman and friend, always looking to share a great story, with a funny twist and rooted in wisdom.

In all things, Pastor Benford gave thanks, recognizing the value of both sunshine and rain in shaping his journey. He was thankful for all experiences, whether good or bad, as he knew it molded his character and testimony. His unwavering gratitude is evident in the steadfastness of his walk and the fervor of his service.

Despite the divine calling on his life and God-given talents to preach and teach the Word of God in a unique way, Pastor Benford would esteem others better than himself. The motto of Rising Star, 'We always have time for you,' epitomizes this ethos, which Pastor Benford exemplified in his daily leadership. Through God's guidance and the church's outreach efforts, Pastor Benford was able to feed, clothe and minister to an uncounted many that came from near and far. If there was a kind word or deed to be done, Pastor Benford's giving spirit allowed him to give access to his time, talent and treasure.

D. N. Benford, Sr., is preceded in death by his wife of 60 plus years, Julia; daughter, Michele; first wife, Dorothy; daughter, Arla; grandmother, Seeny; mother, Mary; brothers, WD and Rufus Jean, and aunts and uncles. He is survived by his children, Doris Nathaniel Benford, Jr (June), Yolanda Benford Proctor, Toni Benford Relf (Thomas), and Thomas N. Benford (Chelsea); grandchildren, Kim Jones, Tonya Jones, Dustin Benford, Desiree Benford, Mokysa Benford, Cherrell King (Rodney), Natalie Proctor, Sam Proctor, Jr., Malcolm Proctor, Alonzo Benford (Jaime), Julia Benford, Madison Benford, Wright Benford, and Chase Benford; great-grandchildren, Chris, Dantrell, Durrell (Stephanie), Hailey, Thomas, Shelton, Kennedy, Samson, Jude, Saturn, Brielle, Breland, Kendall, Emory; 8 great-great grandchildren, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family, close friends, and congregants.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Musical Celebration

APR **25**. 7:00 PM (CT)

Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church  
302 N Oak Street  
Texas City, TX 77591

## Public Viewing

APR **26**. 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church  
302 N Oak  
Texas City, TX 77591

## A Service of Praise & Thanksgiving

APR **26**. 7:00 PM (CT)

Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church  
302 N Oak  
Texas City, TX 77591

## Public Viewing

APR **27**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church  
302 N Oak  
Texas City, TX 77591

## The Triumphant Celebration

---

APR **27**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church  
302 N Oak  
Texas City, TX 77591

# Tribute Wall

PW

“ *This is a life well lived. I hadn't heard about Rev. Benford's history until seeing it in the Houston Chronicle today. Wanted to pass along my sincere condolences to his family. You must be very proud of his legacy.*

Patrice Wondercheck - May 01, 2024 at 10:38 AM

RR

“ *The Reynolds family offers its most sincere condolences to the Benford family. We are with you during this time of bereavement. We lost a true legend indeed. His legacy will live forever through his beautiful children. I was truly blessed to be able to play football alongside Thomas at Rice.*

Rashad Reynolds - April 26, 2024 at 02:29 PM

LB

*Hello my name is Lee A. Benford  
I reside in Fayetteville Georgia I was born & raised in Austin, TX  
I just happened to google my Benford family history & was surprised to find that I'm related to such a history of our family. My Dad Andrew Benford was Born & raised in Bastrop, TX where there are many Benford's Please don't hasitate to reach out to me as I am very interested to know more of our Beford family history my phone number is 845-718-7142 best regards & may God continue to bless the Benford family ..*

Lee Andrew Benford - January 24 at 08:50 AM

LP

“ *Rev Benford was my husband and our oldest daughter first pastor. He was loved.*

Liz Porter - April 26, 2024 at 02:12 PM

LC

“ Love Evonne & B.C. Cummings purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Rev. Dr. D. N. Benford Sr..



Love Evonne & B.C. Cummings - April 26, 2024 at 10:20 AM

FS

“ From Walker Family - Evelyn Street purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Rev. Dr. D. N. Benford Sr..



From Walker Family - Evelyn Street - April 25, 2024 at 04:43 PM

DW

“ My sincere condolences to the Benford Family and the Rising Star Baptist Church. My Godparents, Deacon Charles Walker & wife Sis. Dorothy Walker were DEVOTED members of Rising Star before they were called home and I made sure that even though I attended another church, I would STILL be at Vacation Bible School EVERY summer with my godsister Lisa and godbrother Charles Jr (Nard) and oh what I time I had!!! Those memories shall FOREVER stay with me because Pastor Benford and the Rising Star family made me one of their own. Pastor Benford served the Galveston County Community in sickness and in health. His tireless devotion and commitment shall be remembered by all. He has worked the works of he who sent him-now may you rest in peace. Well done thy good and faithful servant. With heartfelt prayers and sympathy—Dana Brightmon Winston

Dana Brightmon Winston - April 25, 2024 at 04:42 PM

PA

“ Condolences to my cousin, June Benford, and the entire Benford family. My grandparents (Deacon Tom & Sis. Willie B. Neal, Sr.), along with my parents (Elmer & Helen Antwine) were faithful members of Rising Star. After I was born, we moved to Dallas, but I still have fond memories of coming every summer to visit my grandparents, which included attending church services and Vacation Bible School at Rising Star, and having “play-dates” with Yolanda and Toni. May God continue to Bless you and give you strength. Pastor Benford left an enduring, deep-rooted mark in the LM/TC Community that no one will ever match. Well done thy good and faithful servant, now it is time to rest. Praying for the Benford Family and the Rising Star Church Family - from Pamela D. Antwine-Boyd and family

---

**Pamela Antwine-Boyd** - April 25, 2024 at 03:14 PM

DC

*To be honored by your church and to be recognized for your longest work service is an important feat. But to be in the world book of guinness is an important thing that the world needs to know.*

---

**Dr. Lillian Cummings** - April 25, 2024 at 07:59 PM

DL

“ To the family of Pastor DN Benford. Your father always treated me with love and respect during the time that I knew him. My sincere condolences during your time of grief. Really! RIP SIR!

---

**Dauterive Sly - former son- in- law** - April 25, 2024 at 10:44 AM

NS

“ *May God Bless the Benford family. A giant touched the lives of the Lamarque Texas City community many years ago. What an impact. Dr. Benford married my Mother Frances Thompson and Prymus Thompson when he moved to the area as she joined the Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church. May God continue to Bless his family and his legacy. They are praising God in Heaven!*

---

**Norma Spells** - April 24, 2024 at 10:16 PM

TP

“ *Rev. Benford played a pivotal role in our lives, extending the warm embrace of the Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church Family to the Pace Family. Under his guidance, we imbibed the values of diligence and aspirations, learning to strive for more with purpose during our time at Rising Star. His dedication to youth empowerment was palpable, constantly striving to showcase the brighter facets of life through the church, offering valuable lessons for the future. His work has left an indelible mark. Reverend, rest now, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. God Bless and Love to the Benford Family from*



*Ms. Troylene Pace, Thalia, Jackie, Leona, Vicki & Kathy*

---

**Thalia Pace-Bryant** - April 24, 2024 at 11:12 AM

TG

“ Rev. Benford and RSMBC have been so instrumental not only in my family and my life, but in the lives of so many others across America. There is not a place that I go where someone does not know and speak highly with reverent respect for Rev. Benford and RSMBC. I am blessed and grateful to have had him as my hometown Pastor and Shepherd. I know that despite his humanness, God is saying "Well done good and faithful servant" - Matt 25:23



---

**Tanisha Hicks George** - April 23, 2024 at 01:04 PM

BM

“ Sending our thoughts and prayers and deepest condolences from the Monroe Family in Tampa, FL.

---

**Brandon Monroe** - April 23, 2024 at 12:26 PM

QA

“ I will always remember you Rev Benford. You were truly a great man of God. Ty for your obedience to his word and being a great leader.

---

**Queen Amen** - April 23, 2024 at 08:52 AM

CR

“ More than a reverend and more than a friend; A caretaker to the meek and vigilant servant of the Most High. Thank you for preaching AND living it Rev. Rest heavenly

---

**Crystal** - April 22, 2024 at 07:13 PM



“ *Care and Compassion Spray was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. D. N. Benford Sr..*



---

April 22, 2024 at 07:08 PM



“ *In loving memory of Rev. Dr. D. N. Benford Sr. will be missed dearly.*



---

**Jeanette Washington** - April 22, 2024 at 04:45 PM



“ *Condolences to the Benford and Rising Star Family.*

*LaMarque High School Class of 1984*



---

**LaMarque High Class of 1984** - April 22, 2024 at 11:16 AM

DW

“ R.I.P. Uncle Nathaniel Benford.. you are my Daddy's Brother Rev. Dr.F.M. Johnson and Sis.Alberta.. Tony and I grew up around cousins Orla, Jr., Michelle, Yolanda, Toni...we are family..too many memories to list..all good! Servant Well Done..the work you've done speak for you!..I wish you could take your briefcase with you.. Daddy said you were a Genius.. love ❤️ you Benford Family.. ALOHA

Darrell Brent Williams - April 21, 2024 at 09:28 AM

SC

Genius is correct A compassionate Genius

Sylvia Joiner Crawford - April 23, 2024 at 07:37 AM

JA

“ Sending heartfelt condolences from Denver Co. I am very proud I grew up under the leadership of Rev D N Benford Sr. Praying for both The Benford Family, and Rising Star Church Family.

James (Jimi) Archie - April 20, 2024 at 12:14 AM

SC

“ Sylvia Joiner Crawford, Reginald, Chelsi purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Rev. Dr. D. N. Benford Sr..



Sylvia Joiner Crawford, Reginald, Chelsi - April 19, 2024 at 07:07 PM

KG

“ Kevin & Tanisha (Hicks) George purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Rev. Dr. D. N. Benford Sr..



Kevin & Tanisha (Hicks) George - April 19, 2024 at 12:08 PM

SC

“ Heartfelt Condolences extended to The Entire Benford Family, Extended Families and Congregation of Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church. The Joiner' Family

Sylvia Joiner Crawford - April 18, 2024 at 06:43 PM

JH

“ Rev. will always hold a special place in my heart. He and my Daddy worked tirelessly in the Mainland Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance and I worked with him many years through the funeral home. We have shared many miles and stories over the years. Never wasn't to let them go, but he earned his rest. Servant of God WELL DONE! Gonna miss you Rev.

John N Humphrey - April 18, 2024 at 05:42 PM

CJ

Rest in peace! You have earned your crown 🙏

Carol Johnson - April 18, 2024 at 09:29 PM

CJ

TKU for your community service

Carol Johnson - April 18, 2024 at 09:30 PM

RR

*Heartfelt Condolences to The Benford Family, and The Rising Star Church Family. Thanking God for allowing me the opportunity to have been apart of the teaching and training of The Rev D N Benford Sr. Memories I will embed in my heart , will last a lifetime. The Crowder Family and The Benford Family have a bond not even death will change. Many Thanks to The Benford Family, for sharing Rev Benford, not only with Rising Star, but the entire world. A life well lived , and The Work You've Done Will Speak for You!!*

**Rona Crowder Rigsby** - April 18, 2024 at 11:13 PM

GG

“ Gwendolyn Garrett sent a virtual gift in memory of Rev. Dr. D. N. Benford Sr.



**Gwendolyn Garrett** - April 18, 2024 at 05:07 PM

LC

“ Our condolences and prayers to The Benford Family. May God continue to comfort you and give you strength you need at this time of sorrow.



**Little Rock Baptist Church Texas City** - April 17, 2024 at 12:26 PM

RS

“ Our condolences and prayers to The Benford Family. Rest Easy Angel. Rev. R. L. Smith and Sadie.



**Rev. R. L. Smith and Sadie** - April 17, 2024 at 12:24 PM

OT

“ *My condolences and prayers to the Benford Family in the pasting of Rev. Benford. He was a awesome man God. I love to hear preach and sing. Rest Easy Angel. From Oneal Jefferson of Dallas Tx*



---

**O'Neill Jefferson Dallas Texas** - April 17, 2024 at 12:21 PM

DM

*My Condolences and prayers to the Benford Family. A man of God. Many years I worked with him at The South Texas District Association. Rest In Peace 🙏🙏*

---

**Dorothy Maxey** - April 18, 2024 at 10:25 PM