OBITUARY
Dr. Willie Frank Payne

Dr. Willie F. Payne went to be with the Lord on Thursday, October 13, 2016. He was a native son of Valdosta, Georgia and born on November 9, 1921 to the late Frank and Ruth Payne. Many called him “WF”, but his family nicknamed him “Dick”. At the age of three, he moved to Miami, Florida with his parents, brother David and twin sisters, Mary Lynn and Martha. He received his elementary and high school education in Coconut Grove. During his high school days at George Washington Carver High School he excelled in football, basketball and track. A high achiever, he was president and Salutatorian of his senior class.

Dr. Payne entered Morris Brown College in 1941 on an athletic scholarship. He played football at a time when the college had won the National Championship. In June 1943, he was called to serve in the U.S. Army for two and one-half years during World War II.

He returned to Morris Brown College in 1946 and graduated Cum Laude in 1949 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology. In 1949, he entered the University of Iowa where he received his Master of Science Degree in Zoology, in the summer, 1950.

Dr. Payne joined the Morris Brown College faculty as an Instructor of Biology in the fall of 1950. During his fifty three years of residency at Morris Brown College, he had a progressive career serving as Chairman of the Biology Department, Chairman of the Division of Science and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

In 1956, Dr. Payne received a National Medical Foundation Grant to complete his Doctoral Study in Neuroembryology and was awarded his degree at the State University of Iowa in 1958. In 1962, he completed post-doctoral studies at Washington State University. Dr. Payne directed institutes funded by the National Science Foundation for high school students and teachers, at both Grambling State University and Morris Brown College for over ten years.

Dr. Payne’s gift and passion was touching the lives of youth through teaching and Education. He had the pleasure of fulfilling his passion during his fifty-three years at Morris Brown College. His reward came when students succeeded and made lasting contributions to society.

He was a loyal United Methodist and one of the first African Americans to join Ben Hill United Methodist Church of Atlanta, Georgia in 1968. In addition, he was a proud member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

As a father of four, Dr. Payne’s love for teaching was rivaled only by his love for his children: Kenneth Payne, Sr, Gregory Payne (Athena), Valerie Payne Jackson and Travis Payne. He also enjoyed and valued the time spent talking, laughing, and even dancing with grandchildren: Gregory Payne, Jr., Kenneth Payne, Jr., Loren Payne, Destiny Jackson and great granddaughter, Amaria Allen. Spending time with his best friend William Dendy (Travis’s Godfather) was always a joy, as well.

During much of his adult life he resided in the Atlanta, though he maintained very close ties with sister, Mary Lynn Cambridge and his numerous family and friends in Florida. Having invested a lifetime in the success of his students, Dr. Payne also loved playing cards, discussing History, sharing his infinite wisdom on so many social issues and listening to music.

Dr. Payne will forever be remembered and loved by his many dedicated family members, including nephews: Ronald Payne (Dorothy) and David Payne; nieces: Jannette Wilcoxon, Jacqueline Porter, Vanessa Grice, Vivian Hazelton (Ralph) and Audrey Dukes (John), as well as a host of cousins and other relatives.

To the man who loved family, students, friends and music, “Thank you for making a major difference in the lives of so many. You did your part masterfully!”

Let the trumpet sound.
Let the music play.