



Rev. Dr. Virgil Alexander Wood

APR 6, 1931 - DEC 28, 2024



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Rev. Dr. Virgil Alexander Wood

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The life celebration service for Dr. Virgil A. Wood will be livestreamed on the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church website via the link below. The livestream will begin just before 11:00 AM. The website will indicate the next service will be on Sunday; however, the service for Dr. Wood will appear once the livestream begins. The livestream will not be on any of Wheeler's social media outlets.

<https://wheelerbc.org/live-streaming>

With momentary sadness and a profound sense of eternal joy, the Wood family; wife Lillian of 71 years, son David (Lorene), daughter Deborah, and grandsons Christopher (Stephanie) and Jordan - announce that our patriarch, Virgil Alexander Wood, transitioned to be with the Lord on December 28, 2024, at 2:01AM. He was 93 years old.

Dr. Virgil Wood was a church leader, educator, and a civil rights activist who committed his entire life's work to the struggle for economic, social and spiritual development among this nation's disadvantaged. Ordained as a Baptist Minister in his late teens, Dr. Wood served Churches for over 50 years in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Virginia.

During his pastorate at Diamond Hill Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, he became actively involved in the Civil Rights movement, establishing Dr. Martin Luther King's work there as the Lynchburg Improvement Association, which became a local unit of Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

From 1963 to 1970, Dr. Wood led the Blue Hill Christian Center in Boston's Roxbury community, as its Pastoral Director and head of the Massachusetts unit of SCLC. He served with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a member of his National Executive Board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for the last ten years of Dr. King's life and work, and Coordinated the State of Virginia in the historic March on Washington on August 28, 1963.



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Dr. Wood is Pastor Emeritus of Pond Street Baptist Church, where he served from 1955 to 1958, and from 1983 to 2005. He concluded his pastoral ministry on December 31, 2005, having served Pond Street for 25 years marking his retirement from the pastorate full-time.

Dr. Wood is a 1956 graduate of Andover Newton Theological School with a Master of Divinity degree. Moreover, he received a Doctorate in Education from Harvard University in 1973, where he studied under and was mentored by Organization Development Expert Dr. Chris Argyris and Achievement Motivation Expert Dr. David McClellan. As an educator, he served as Dean and Director of the African American Institute at Northeastern University in Boston. Dr. Wood also served as a professor at Virginia Seminary and College in Lynchburg and as a visiting lecturer, researcher, and teaching Fellow at Harvard University. Dr. Wood was a Ridenour Fellow with the School of Public and International Affairs in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech and led the university's Beloved Community Initiative.

Dr. Wood had many notable accomplishments. He was an administrator for Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, a job training organization serving disadvantaged and under-skilled individuals of all races, founded by friend and mentor, Dr. Leon H. Sullivan. He established 13 OIC centers in eight southern states and in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Wood also served as a panelist and member of three White House Conferences under the Johnson, Nixon, and Carter Administrations.

The Lord's anointing was on Dr. Wood's life from early childhood through his most significant challenges and accomplishments. These include the time his dad, Marion Jerome Wood, gave him responsibility at 7 years old for feeding the chickens on the family farm in what he described as "an early rite of passage". Then later, he was selected, faithfully served, and became one of the pioneers of the civil rights movement along with his mentors, friends, and colleagues Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Leon Sullivan, Dr. Ralph Abernathy, Dr. Samuel Dewitt Proctor, Dr. C.T. Vivian, Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker, and many others. Among Wood's publications are INTRODUCTION TO BLACK CHURCH ECONOMIC STUDIES (Sparks Press: Raleigh, N. C., 1974), ORIGINATOR and contributing editor, THE JUBILEE BIBLE, (American Bible Society, New York,) 1999; and Author, "IN LOVE WE TRUST: Lessons I Learned From Martin Luther King", published by Beckham House, Silver Spring, Maryland, February 2005.

He combined a dual career in Church Leadership and Education with a life-long commitment to community development as economic and spiritual transformation. A former member of the



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Economic Development Task Force of the National Conference of Black Mayors, he also served his national denomination as the first Chairman of its Economic Development Commission, the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

Dr. Wood was a fighter and deeply passionate to be wherever there was action. When it would have been easy to rest on his laurels, accomplishments, and achievements, he created action if it had not already existed. He was a force, creating ideas and moving them forward with passion, energy, and conviction. He was faithful to the vision of a beloved community in which we are all empowered, impassioned, and responsible to love and lift each other, especially loving and lifting those at the bottom. He fought and championed for “the least of these”, holding the community he called Church, Town, and Gown, accountable to make a difference.





Events


Rev. Dr. Virgil Alexander Wood

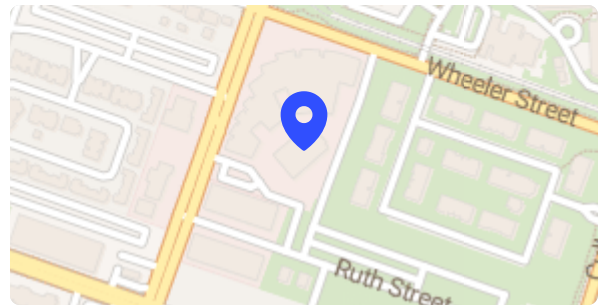
APR 6, 1931 - DEC 28, 2024

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated - Omega Ceremony


 **Friday**, January 17, 2025

 9:30 AM CT


 **Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church**
3826 Wheeler Avenue, Houston TX 77004

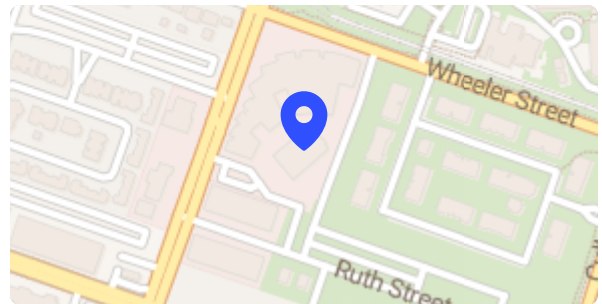


Visitation

 **Friday**, January 17, 2025


 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM CT


 **Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church**
3826 Wheeler Avenue, Houston TX 77004

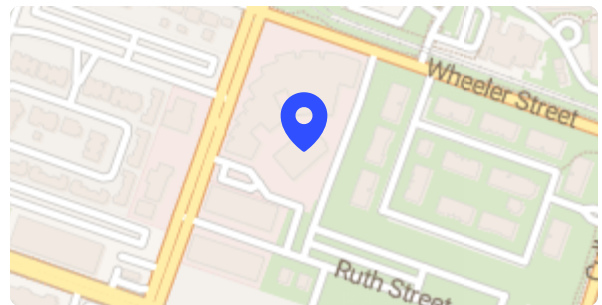


Celebrating His Life and Legacy

 **Friday**, January 17, 2025

 11:00 AM CT

 **Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church**
3826 Wheeler Avenue, Houston TX 77004





Tribute Wall

Rev. Dr. Virgil Alexander Wood

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Mabrie Memorial Mortuary shared the funeral program for Rev. Dr. Virgil Alexander Wood.

January 17 at 7:17 AM



ME **Mee** January 24 at 7:32 AM
rest in peace



Abraham Parker shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Dr. Woods. I remembered in 2016 when I just visited the United States from Liberia. He was one of my best friends. He invited me to Texas in Pearland. We talked, went to Church together on Sunday, and he said to me, help lead the new generation and that he believes that I have the potential to lead. Dr. Virgil A. Woods, may his soul rest in peace.

February 8 at 10:30 PM



Abraham Parker shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I remembered in 2016 when I just visited the United States. He was one of my best friends. He invited me to Texas in Pearland. We talked and he told me to help lead the new generation and that he believes I he saw the potential in me to do. Dr. Wood, may his soul rest in peace. Abraham Parker

February 8 at 10:20 PM



Kathleen Ferguson posted:

I studied the Enneagram with Dr. Wood in Pennsylvania. I followed him around like a little puppy dog, I thought he was so wonderful. He was a blessing to the world, and we were lucky to have him in it.

September 20 at 3:38 AM



Tribute Wall

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Dave Hamill posted:

I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Virgil <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/just-third-way-hour-26-civil-rights-icon-dr-virgil-wood--15282704> You can hear his own words showing his legacy would be merging the work of King and Kelso. Our movement has traditionally been about doing so through legislation. But Virgil's revelation is that it will first spring forth as part of spiritual jubilee. Perhaps the faith/beloved community can build a crypto system to empower all through principles of Binary Economics and King's "synthesis". We now have the tools to fulfill Virgil's beautiful vision. It will work and official sanctioning of the Economic Democracy Act will naturally follow. Thanking God for the incredible work of Dr. Virgil Wood. Dave Hamilledanetwork.org

April 2 at 8:59 AM



Anonymous sent a Strength & Solace Spray to the Wood family.



January 16 at 10:45 AM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Virgil.



January 16 at 10:45 AM



The Lloyd & Alicia Monroe Family sent a Sentiments of Serenity Spray to the Wood family.



January 16 at 5:43 AM



The Lloyd & Alicia Monroe Family planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Virgil.



January 16 at 5:43 AM



IJ

Isidro Garza Jr Pe posted:

Tribute to Dr. Virgil Wood Part II Isidro Garza, Jr. PE 15 January 2025 He encouraged working together with Dr. Ruth Simmons, first African American female to head Prairieview A&M. Though he never met her because of his ailing health which restricted his travel, I would often talk to him about the great heart of the current President Dr. Tomikia P. Legrande, the new president of Prairie View A&M and how she plans for a restoration of dignity to the slave cemetery on property belonging to the University and to be celebrated on 14 August 2026 on the 150th anniversary of Prairie View A&M. This is in sync with a lifelong effort by Dr. Bishop Walter Pendelton, a direct descendant of GW Wyatt, one of the first African American Texas State Representative after emancipation. Dr. Wood showed me the boxes of original documents he accumulated throughout his life, including original notes dating back to the times he lived with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Today, as we celebrate Dr. King's birthday, we are reminded that it was his wish for all of these documents to be preserved in a manner and place worthy of respect. Dr. Wood envisioned what the world would be like if NAACP and LULAC would truly unite with one common purpose for the greater common good. He had such great admiration for Tieman "Skipper" Dippel's writings in The Language of Conscience series. Dr. Wood in Project Jubilee 1865 stated, "One symptom of our malaise is educational systems all over America--- the sending of black and Hispanic males to prison instead of to university---is the result of education without soul. A nation fostering education without soul is a nation on the way to its own doom. He encouraged stronger relations with Dr. Richard Johnson and Bill Mahomes, both Regents at TSU and Texas A&M respectively, always stressing the importance of education. He led a delegation of LULAC and NAACP in talking truth to power with Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath. The delegation included the great legendary LULAC leader Johnny Mata, Dr. Robert Mohammed, Judson Robinson, Donna Bahorich who was the Chairman of the State Board of Education and the Chief of Staff of HISD Sylvia Saenz Trinh. He emphasized bringing together NAACP with LULAC by working closely with Bishop James Dixon and Gary Bledsoe. He was impressed by my prison Pastor JR Williams spending long hours showing us the way! As I close, I come to the realization of how little I have said and how much more I left out. Dr. Wood's accomplishments in making this a more Godly world are well documented. Now it is up to us to continue his legacy! May God take Dr. Wood's soul in his loving hands and affirm that he has "ran the good race" and that now he can Rest in His Peace. Isidro Garza, Jr. PE League of United Latin American Citizens
LULAC https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgil_Wood

January 1 at 5:42 AM



IJ

Isidro Garza Jr Pe posted:

Tribute to Dr. Virgil Wood A Tribute to Dr. Virgil Wood (Part I) Isidro Garza, Jr. PE 15 January 2025 My dear friend, Dr. Virgil Wood, my Pastor, my Mentor, I miss you! When you meet Dr. Wood, please have a pen and paper ready to take notes and even then, you will be lucky to absorb only a small fraction of his message. I met him soon after I came out of Federal Prison in 2010, when all our convictions were vacated by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and my 235 months sentence was replaced with time served after 811 days. He spoke with praise of this common prison experience we both lived through. I would miss him even as he was with us as we would spend countless hours partaking of his wisdom that he shared with me and my family, knowing that this day would eventually come. At 93 he was taken away from us prematurely for he had so much more he wanted to get accomplished here on earth in His Beloved Community, where darkness was displaced with "Light", where there would be no sickness nor poverty, where there would be no discrimination for all loved each other with Agape love, where all would serve others before oneself. He would often talk about his pride and joy, Lillian, whom he loved and adored, and of his banker son David, and of course his angelic daughter, Deborah. Oh, how I miss him. In the Magnificat, Our Blessed Mother Mary asked why it was her, a lowly servant, that had been chosen to carry the Son of God. When I get to heaven, I too will ask Jesus why He blessed us so undeservingly with a relationship with such an anointed, loving person as my friend, Dr. Wood. Dr. Wood would not only speak with unmatched authority on a plethora of subjects, but he would also listen intently. He was fascinated by a sermon my youngest son, Fernando, wrote entitled "Mary Had a Little Lamb. In this dichotomy, when Jesus was asked about his ancestry and who he was, he responded by saying, "On my mother's side, Mary had a little lamb. And on my Father's side he was the Son of God, the Lion of Judah." Then he would shift back to the community he envisioned, which I am certain was the foundation for Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream". It was transformational where Conscience triumphed over Convenience, moving from Plantation Slavery to Community Economics. He knew people with an abundance of resources all over the country, but he knew he could count on his Provider and spoke as if his resources were limitless. In his Beloved Community his vision would start with old plantations, from Hearne, Bryan, Navasota, Brenham, Hempstead, Prairie View, Wharton, Kendleton, Sugarland, and Galveston. He would speak of always allowing an honorable way out to those who had harmed us, where forgiveness and repentance would be the order of the day. He would often say that George Wallace was in heaven because he repented for the suffering he inflicted through his bigotry and because of daddy Martin Luther King Sr's forgiveness. Now they are all together advocating for better lives for you and I and for all of our loved ones.

January 1 at 5:42 AM



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Lawrence And Marva Griffin Carter posted:

To the wife, daughter, son and family of my beloved college professor -- Virgil Wood: Please know that I will forever be grateful for the impact that Virgil had on my college education and for hosting me on my first trip to Boston, which resulted in me earning 3 degrees from Boston University; For working with him at his SCLC Office on Blue Hill Avenue; and for meeting my wife, Marva, who was a student at Boston Conservatory of Music. Knowing Virgil, gave me the opportunity to meet Martin Luther King Jr. 4 times, and led to his recruitment of me to Morehouse College, where I have now served for 45 years as the founding dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel. This Chapel is the world's most prominent religious memorial to Dr. King, class of 1948. It was also a rich blessing to work with Virgil in Lynchburg, Virginia, as he led nonviolent demonstrations for civil rights. My job was to run the mimeograph machine at Diamond Hill Baptist Church. I also witnessed the prayer meetings and rallies at Court Street Baptist Church with Dr. Harold A. Carter. So many sweet memories, especially Virgil inviting Dr. King to Boston to speak on the Boston Commons. We have Virgil's oil portrait in the African American Hall of Fame of the King Chapel. He now belongs to the ancestors, the ages, and the archangels. Peace and Richest Blessings, The Family of Lawrence Edward Carter Sr., Dean Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel Morehouse College Atlanta, Georgia

January 12 at 7:38 AM



William S. Epps posted:

Virgil Wood was instrumental in getting me field work while I was matriculating at Andover Newton Theological School at Blue Hill Christian Center in the Roxbury area of Boston. I always remembered his graciousness in facilitating that for me. He came to Second in Los Angeles as our guest to market the Bible he was instrumental in getting together that reflected the relevance for African Americans citing their presence in the Bible. He was a noteworthy activist, humanitarian and scholar par excellence. Thanks for what you have poured into so many. Pericles says what we leave behind when we exit this ephemeral reality is not etch in monuments of stones but what you poured into the lives of others. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord they rest from their labors and their works follow them. Amen. William S. Epps Second Baptist Church Los Angeles.

January 10 at 12:32 PM



Tribute Wall

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CR

Carolyn H. Richardson shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Rev. Virgil Wood was always ready to speak and share God's Word, along with his experiences walking with Dr. Martin Luther King and give words of wisdom to others, especially young people. He did that for a Young Adult Bible Study Group I held in my home for six years. We were honored to have him that Wednesday night in September of 2010. After giving a message, he took the time to answer our questions and even shared a meal with us. We will never forget how encouraging he was especially to the young men in the group and how valuable the information was he shared. After that, I would often go to hear him speak at other churches, and was always honored when he mentioned our Young Adult Bible Study Group. Not only did he make an impact on our group that night, but he left an impression on any groups or individuals wherever he went. Carolyn H. Richardson



January 1 at 5:42 AM

DR

Donna Blackshear-Reynolds posted:

Rev. Dr. Wood was indeed a giant in the history of this country. His words and deeds will live on from his students at Northeastern, his church members, fellow ministers, civil rights activists and organizers, his friends and his beautiful family. My special memories (besides observing him being a loving husband to Lillian, and father to my Link sister Deborah, where on many occasions I hear his words of wisdom and integrity from Deborah (my father says...) in our many conversations, I invited Dr. Wood to speak at NASA Johnson Space Center for our Juneteenth Observance, where he shared how he had in his youth interviewed a former slave! All in awe of his words, his speech ended with a rousing standing ovation and will never be forgotten for its detail on Juneteenth and the lived history he was able to share. Those closest to him, his wife, son and daughter are also a testament in their lovely lives of service to his influence. He will indeed be missed by all of us. Sincere condolences to his family, please know as Dr. Wood made his mark here on earth, he will continue to live through all who knew him.

January 3 at 3:36 AM



Tribute Wall

Rev. Dr. Virgil Alexander Wood

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Parker, Diamond Hill Baptist Church posted:

DIAMOND HILL BAPTIST CHURCH 1415 Grace Street Lynchburg, Virginia 24504 Telephone (434) 845-0640; (434) 847-6280A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT TO REV. DR. VIRGIL ALEXANDER WOOD FROM THE DIAMOND HILL BAPTIST CHURCH FAMILY We, The Diamond Hill Baptist Church Family, pause with heartfelt sympathy and love to pay our tribute of respect to Rev. Dr. Virgil Woods. The Angel of God came on Saturday, December 28, 2024, and said, Virgil, it is time to take your rest. Rev. Dr. Woods, being the soldier on the battlefield for the Lord, answered God's call. Rev. Dr. Virgil Woods was the Shepherd of The Diamond Hill Baptist Church for five wonderful years (1958 – 1963). He was a faithful shepherd, preacher, teacher, leader, and friend to name a few. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (John 10:11) Rev. Dr. Virgil Woods was a good shepherd. He lived what he preached. He stood on the Word of God. We thank God for the time he spent here with us. We, The Diamond Hill Baptist Church Family extends to his family our heartfelt sympathy. We pray that you will be blessed and cheered by the memory of his kindness and his devotion; that your strength in the Lord will grow stronger to accept God's will in calling him home. The Diamond Hill Baptist Church Family say to the family, keep your hands in God's hands and look to the hills from which cometh your help. Our help comes from the Lord who made Heaven and Earth. Stay together, pray together and love one another. Lovingly Submitted by The Diamond Hill Baptist Church Family The Rev. Dr. Owen Cardwell, Pastor Sister Shirley B. Parker, Clerk Sister Chonna Kidd, Assistant Clerk

January 1 at 5:42 AM



Abraham Parker shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

February 8 at 10:30 PM





Abraham Parker shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

February 8 at 10:20 PM





Carolyn H. Richardson shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

January 4 at 7:12 AM



Rev. Wood and Mrs. Lillian with Ms. Rich's Bible Study Group, September, 2010 - #1



Rev. Wood and Mrs. Lillian with Young Adult Bible Study Group, September, 2010 - #2



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Virgil by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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