

J. W. Griffith (92)

J. W. GRIFFITH was born Nov. 1, 1923, in Gary, Panola County, TX, the fifth son of Wyatt Greer and Ethel Heaton Griffith. His father had pastored East Texas churches for over fifty years. Bro. J. W. was saved and baptized at Mt. Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, near Gary, TX, in 1939, and surrendered to the ministry and was ordained at the Nacogdoches Missionary Baptist Church, Nacogdoches, TX in 1952.



He was a graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University with a B.S. Degree and of the Texas Baptist Institute and Seminary, from which he received degrees of Bachelor of Theology, Master of Theology and Doctor of Theology. He pastored a number of East Texas churches: Nacogdoches MBC in Nacogdoches, 1952 -1954; Pruitt Lake in Avinger, 1954; Sunset in Marshall, 1954-1955; Hopewell in Carthage, 1955-1958; Zion Hill, Henderson, 1958 - 1966; Bethel (Now Eastside) in Jacksonville, 1966-1968; First Baptist in Arp, 1968-1974; and Smyrna in Mt. Enterprise, 1976 - 1984. The last church, Smyrna, is the same church where, his father before him, was pastor and where his grandson, Joe, is currently (2013) pastor.

Bro. Griffith served on the faculty of Texas Baptist Institute and Seminary from 1954 as instructor and registrar. He distinguished himself as a student of Baptist history and served as a member of the History and Archives Committees of his local, state and national associations from their beginning. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Gum Springs Museum on the property of Texas Baptist Institute. Bro. Donald Britton continues the work begun by Bro. Griffith by caring for the museum, conducting history tours, and educating students in Church History. Several of the historical markers erected by the History and Archives committee of the Missionary Baptist Association of Texas are in the Memorial Plaza located west of the museum.

He served as a writer for the Baptist Sunday School Committee for nineteen years and wrote a number of books, including **All the Sermons of Acts; Outline Studies in Job; Manual of Church History, Vols I, II and III; Fifty Years in East Texas Pulpits** and **The Old Testament in Matthew**.

He served as assistant editor for the *Baptist Monitor*.

After retirement, Bro. Griffith remained active serving the Lord. He was busy in his writing, and also teaching Sunday School in Calvary Baptist Church, Henderson, Texas.

He and his wife, Mae, have three sons, Philip, Joe (both are ordained ministers) and Mark, and a daughter, Mrs. Nancy Haecker; five grandsons and six granddaughters.

Bro. Griffith died July 9, 1997. He is buried near his brother, O. H. Griffith, in the Holleman Cemetery, located in the community of Oak Flats, in Rusk County.

Dwight Curtis (93)

Dwight Curtis was born in DeKalb, TX on September 6, 1933. He finished high school in DeKalb at the age of 16, then moved to Texarkana and attended Business College for awhile. After that he went to work at the County Clerk's office in New Boston, TX in 1951.

While he was working at the courthouse he and Ruth started dating and married at County Avenue Baptist Church on Nov. 1, 1953. In 1955 they moved to Houston where he worked for the YMCA and finished his degree in Business Administration in 1959. Just prior to that he had surrendered to preach, and was licensed by Grace MBC in Houston, G.D. Walters pastor who baptized Bro. Curtis at County Ave in 1950, and married him and Ruth in 1953.

Bro. Curtis graduated from the University of Houston in December and moved directly to Little Rock and began classes at the Missionary Baptist Seminary. After two years he returned to Houston to pastor Bethany Baptist Church until 1964.

He went to Bowie, MD in January of 1964 to meet with Don Johnson, and the Bowie mission members about coming there to pastor. Bro Curtis stated, "I was very positive about the prospect but



before I made a final decision Bro. J.B. Powers caught me in Texarkana, on the way back to Houston, and wanted me to take the position as manager of Bogg Springs. In March 1964, Ruth and I moved to Bogg Springs with our two sons, Mike 8 and Doug 4. Greg came along in 1966.

"The rest is history. We dug in and stayed a few weeks short of 35 years. As to accomplishments, we just did one thing at a time and it actually could not be classified as a part of our lives, I think it became our lives.

"As far as operating the camp, I could not nor would not have stayed without Ruth's work. I had the business degree, but she turned out to have the most natural business mind that I have seen before or since. I did the plunger and she did most of the business. She could squeeze a camp dime until it squealed and deal with all people and situations with much wisdom."

"She was perfectly healthy until she was 39, when she was stricken with the most severe kind of Rheumatoid Arthritis. After that she had surgery most years and sometimes more. She had all of her joints replaced and still worked summers every day. We put off her surgeries until fall so that we could finish the camp season. She did joint replacements and recovered well from all eight of them. Then she had a broken vertebra in her back and had a botched back surgery and it