



## Mr. Jonas Byers

June 19, 1935 - February 7, 2025

Jonas Byers was born on June 19, 1935 in Cleveland, Arkansas he was the 12th of 15 children born to Fred C. and Emma (Morton) Byers. Jonas was preceded in death by both parents, seven brothers: Luther, Jesse, Moses, Roosevelt, Joe, Scipio and Hurley; and five sisters: Malendy, Lusendy, Lillie, Icie and Gracie.

Jonas was also preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Neller Jean (Brown) Byers, who was the love of his life. They were united in holy matrimony on September 8, 1956 one year after graduating together from Conway County Training School, class of 1955 in Menifee, Arkansas. This marital union was blessed with three lovely and devoted daughters.

Jonas confessed and accepted Christ at an early age at Moore's Chapel AME Zion Church in Cleveland Arkansas, where he remained a faithful member until he moved his family to Kansas City, MO in 1965. After graduating from high school Jonas was employed with Winrock Farms where he worked for Winthrop Rockefeller for several years.

Jonas came to Kansas City, MO in September of 1964 to apply for a job with Ford Motor Company and was hired on the spot and asked to report to work that night. His career with Ford Motor Company lasted for 31 years. Jonas loved people and was very, very involved with UAW Local 249 throughout his entire Ford Motor Co. career, where he held many positions. Jonas traveled to various states representing Local 249 as a committee man, recording secretary, after being one of three to win the election as part of the New Directions group they started a newsletter and Jonas was the first editor for this newsletter, for years he annually taught classes in Norman, Oklahoma, he attended annual conferences at Black Lake, Michigan; he visited numerous schools in the Kansas City area speaking on the importance of unions in the work force. Initially, he served as Vice President of UAW Local 249. His most celebrated position was that of being the first and only African American President of UAW Local 249 for the last three years of his tenure, from 1993 until he retired in 1996.

After relocating to Kansas City, Jonas joined Metropolitan AME Zion Church under the leadership of the late Pastor O D Carson, now led by Pastor Michael Murray, where he was a loyal and devoted child of God. While at Metropolitan Jonas served in many capacities such as:

Chairman of Trustee Board, Sunday school teacher, Treasurer of Sunday School Dept, and currently holds the position of Vice Chairman of Trustee Board.

Jonas was an exceptional business man. In the late 1960's Jonas passed the exam and sold real estate for a few years before he opened his own real estate business, Byers Realty, where he became a broker and crossed paths with many people. As stated earlier, he loved to talk and enjoyed meeting new people and this job gave him the opportunity to perfect his gift to gab.

Jonas was also heavily involved with the NAACP where he and his wife Jean were lifetime members. He held a few positions with the local NAACP branch where he spearheaded attendance of UAW Local 249 members to the annual NAACP dinners. In 2016 he received the Harold L. Holiday, Sr. Civil Rights Award from the NAACP Kansas City, MO Branch.

Jonas joined Silver Trowel #9 F.& A.M. PHA in 1959. He served the lodge as Junior Warden. He was honored by the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Morrilton, Arkansas F. & A.M. PHA with the degree of Honorary Past Master and awarded with a 50+ year pin for his dedication to the arts of the Masonic Family.

Jonas ascended the ranks to become a Shiner where he joined the motor patrol and was glad

to hop on his Harley Davidson to ride in various parades throughout the states.

Jonas was an active person and one of his hobbies was bowling. Every year after moving to Kansas City, Jonas was on at least one bowling league, sometimes two leagues at a time. In 2002, Jonas bowled his first 300 game at a tournament in Springfield, Mo, from which he was presented with a diamond ring for bowling a perfect game.

Jonas was an adventurous family man and loved to travel. Every year when Ford would shut down for two weeks in July for model change the Jonas Byers family was in the car on a road trip somewhere. Jonas along with his wife has traveled all 50 states and several countries abroad, sometimes the daughters were included.

Jonas loved and cherished his family, not just his immediate family but also his parents and siblings. Jonas was passionate about family reunions and gatherings; he helped to spearhead the first Byers family reunion in 1970 and they are still going strong today. After he retired he organized monthly breakfast outings to different restaurants for his siblings and their spouses that lived here locally. As children, nieces and nephews started to retire they were also included. Due to COVID in 2020 the outings were halted, however, in December 2024 the

tradition began again.

Although Jonas only had three biological children, he was Daddy, Pops, Papa or Poppy to many, including nieces, nephews, neighbors, and friends. Even one of his nurse assistants after caring for him for two days told him “well you’re my papa now” and she would come into his room often and say “Papa do you need anything.”

Jonas is survived by his daughters: Deborah (Ronald) Lewis, Sherry Byers, and Vivian E (Curtis) Goldmon. Two grandchildren: Curtis III and Courtney Goldmon. Three great grandchildren: Amariana, and twins August and Aurielle. A step granddaughter: Shayla Goldmon. A chosen daughter: Doris Lee. Two sisters: Viola Garlington, Denver CO and Rosie Holloway, Cincinnati, OH and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and other relatives and friends.

Funeral services Saturday, February 15, at 11:00am at Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church. Interment XII Gates Memorial Gardens Cemetery. Visitation 9:00am-11:00am at the church. Arrangements entrusted to Lawrence A. Jones & Sons. Condolences may be shared on our website.

# Cemetery Details

## XII Gates Memorial Gardens

9500 East Bannister Road  
Kansas City, MO 64138

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB 15. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Metropolitan A. M.E. Zion Church  
2828 Prospect Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64128

## Funeral

FEB 15. 11:00 AM (CT)

Metropolitan A. M.E. Zion Church  
2828 Prospect Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64128

# Tribute Wall

CD

“ Thank you for sharing your knowledge about our inherited land in Arkansas!!! Sending hugs and love to the family. Cheryl Rainey Davis, Terri, Toni, Dwayne, Genise, & DeAnthony Rainey.

Cheryl Rainey Davis - February 16, 2025 at 02:22 AM

TW

“ We are sending our deepest sympathies to the entire family during this time of mourning. (From the children of the late Lee W. Rainey)

Toni Williams - February 15, 2025 at 01:45 PM

DW

“ Father's are a precious jewel. Your family was blessed to have the love and guidance of your dad. Praying for the family.

Deborah Williams - February 15, 2025 at 12:24 PM

LM

“ Vivian and family, you are in our Prayers during this difficult time. Lula Mays and family. 🙏

lula mays - February 13, 2025 at 02:03 PM

CR

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



CLEDELL ROBINSON - February 13, 2025 at 01:22 PM

CR

*To the Jonas Byers family, the Cledell Robinson family offer our condolences to you in the loss of your father ,other close relatives and friends. May God comfort you and keep you in this time of sorrow grief, may he heal your broken heart!!*

**CLEDELL ROBINSON** - February 13, 2025 at 01:41 PM

MM

*To the family of Mr. Jonas Byers! My sincere condolences to you! We will miss him dearly. Mr Byers and I shared the same birth day. June 19th. RIP 🙏🙏🙏*

**Melanie Marshall** - February 15, 2025 at 02:47 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mr. Jonas Byers.*



February 13, 2025 at 12:07 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mr. Jonas Byers.

February 13, 2025 at 12:07 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mr. Jonas Byers.

February 12, 2025 at 07:52 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Mr. Jonas Byers.



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February 12, 2025 at 07:52 PM



“ *"I'm deeply sorry for your loss. My thoughts are with you and your family during this difficult time. May you find comfort and strength in the love and memories shared."* David & Karen Byers of Conway Arkansas

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**Karen Byers** - February 11, 2025 at 11:30 PM



“ *Merdina Rainey Nash purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mr. Jonas Byers.*



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**Merdina Rainey Nash** - February 11, 2025 at 09:11 PM