



## Mr. Wade Ladd

March 17, 1940 - May 7, 2025

Mr. Wade Daniel Ladd, 85, of Olathe, Kansas, transitioned peacefully on May 7, 2025, surrounded by his family after a courageous 4-year journey with Parkinson's disease. A devoted son, husband, father, grandfather, educator, community servant, and lifelong baptized follower of Christ, Wade walked humbly with God, lifting others through his wisdom, laughter, and unwavering commitment to equity and education.

Born on March 17, 1940—St. Patrick's Day—in Sapulpa, Oklahoma, near Tulsa, Wade was the cherished only son of the late Rev. Ivea Ladd, a Baptist pastor, and Mrs. Flaxer Houston Ladd. While some believed being born on St. Patrick's Day made him lucky, Wade knew his life was guided not by luck, but by faith, purpose, and an unshakable commitment to serving others.

He graduated from the famed Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he developed leadership skills and earned distinction as an all-state music champion for trumpet performance. After high school, Wade nearly joined the touring band that gave birth to the Gap Band, neighborhood friends and fellow Tulsans, but instead chose a path of education and service.

Wade earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. He later earned a master's degree in Adult and Occupational Education from Kansas State University and an Educational

Specialist Degree in School Administration from Central Missouri State University.

For more than 50 years, Wade called the Greater Kansas City area home, dedicating himself to service and leadership across schools, churches, and civic organizations. His distinguished career included roles as a substitute teacher, special education teacher, vocational resource educator, coordinator of special populations, and transition specialist in the Kansas City, Missouri, Hickman Mills, Blue Valley and Olathe Public Schools. He tirelessly championed opportunities for students and adults with disabilities, expanding vocational and educational pathways serving on many advisories and non-profit boards. Under his leadership, KCPS vocational services participation increased by 50%, and he grew district wide technology exhibitions to welcome over 5,000 new participants and vendors. Wade chaired the American Vocation Association-Technical Education & Diversity Committee.

Wade's expertise was sought nationally as a conference speaker and education advocate.

Wade's accolades reflected his excellence: he earned the Dean's List at both Kansas State and Lincoln University, received the Linne Benjamin Scholarship and Special Education Fellowship, and was listed in Who's Who in American Education and Who's Who in the Midwest. He later became a Gold Lifetime Alumni Member of Lincoln's National Alumni Association.

Beyond education, Wade's commitment to community was unwavering. A proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, Beta Lambda Chapter, Wade remained active for decades. He and his wife, Carole, travelled to South Africa with a delegation to witness the chartering of their first international chapter, Rho Phi Alpha on the Continent.

After completing the Olathe Civic Academy, he was appointed as Olathe

Human Relations Commissioner under the late Mayor Michael Copeland, chairing it twice. He contributed to the Johnson County Housing and Community Development Advisory Board. Wade was an active member of the Democrats of Johnson County and served as an elected Democratic Committee Man for Ward 3 in Olathe, where he worked to foster civic engagement and voter participation. A lifetime member of the Lincoln University Alumni Association and the NAACP-Olathe and Johnson County, Wade was a steadfast advocate for civil rights, educational equity, and community empowerment. Wade served on the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art Education Advisory Board for nearly a decade. After Chairing the 100th Anniversary of The Ivanhoe Club (an African American men's social club founded in 1908), he later became its final President in 2013. Whether mentoring young boys & teens through the Boys & Girls Club of Kansas City, advocating for fair housing, or lending his voice to civic causes, Wade was a bridge-builder and changemaker.

Faith guided Wade's life. He was an active member of several congregations, including the historic Second Baptist Church of Kansas City where he served as Chair of the Trustee Board and tenor in the choir, and co-chaired with his wife, Carole, both the 125th and 150th Church Anniversary Celebrations. He also worshiped at St. Stephen Baptist Church, St. Paul AME Church of Olathe, and later at Fellowship Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) until his health recently declined.

Affectionately known as "Dapper Dan", Wade's tall stature, warm smile, smooth signature strut, and quiet confidence made him unforgettable. His hazel-brown eyes and rich tenor-baritone voice with natural vibrato left an indelible impression— whether leading a hymn, offering a heartfelt greeting, or sharing a story. Wade's love for music made him a beloved soloist and choir member in SBC's Voices of Inspiration. His passion extended to celebrating

African and Black American culture. For more than a decade, Wade and Carole hosted annual Kwanzaa celebrations with about 10 central families and their guests, fostering community, cultural pride, and joy. He was a history buff, who loved to share stories of HBCU legacies and teach others about the history of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, memories of growing up in the Greenwood District and honoring the resilience and contributions of Black communities. He loved a home-cooked meal, especially when shared with loved ones, and together with Carole, hosted house parties and epic holiday gatherings once featured in the Kansas City Star for their warmth and hospitality.

Wade's love story with Carole Ann was one of deep partnership and shared purpose. Married nearly 35 years until her passing in 2013, their union was a testament to faith, love, and mutual respect. Together, they cultivated a home centered on education, culture, and faith. Their travels spanned the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Qatar, Dubai, and South Africa, embracing the richness of the world.

A man of wisdom, humor, and hospitality, Wade welcomed friends and family with warmth and sage advice. He delighted in simple pleasures—spirited conversations, an Oldies or Doo Wop hit, or a Chiefs victory as a season ticket holder. His legacy of servant leadership, quiet strength, and advocacy lives on in the many lives he touched.

Wade leaves to celebrate and cherish his remarkable life: his younger sister, Iva Jean Jackson (Tulsa); daughters, Constance DaNell Weaver, St. Louis and Rev. Dana Nelson; son-in-law Rev. Kevin Nelson. Olathe; grandchildren Darnell Weaver, St. Joseph, MO, DaNell Weaver, Jordan Weaver St. Louis, 1LT Joshua Nelson, US Army, Ft. Johnson, LA, Jacob Nelson and Gabrielle Evans, Olathe; great-grandsons Zion and Amir Weaver, St. Louis; nephews Paul (Wanda) Jackson Tulsa, Wesley L. Elders, Kansas City, MO, Christopher (Jessica) Elders, GST.Net York City; nieces Karla and Karen King Los

Angeles, Laura (Jeremy) Jackson-Cupps, Tulsa; Cousin Malcolm (Jeanette) Dunn Tulsa; beloved lifelong friends, Eddie Belt, Horace Coleman, Clint Dozier and Rev. James & Annetta Vertreese; and a host of cousins, extended family, fraternity brothers, former students, mentees, and cherished friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Carole Ann Ladd; sister Maxine Saunders-Tuitt; in-laws Rico Tuitt, Rev. Oscar Jackson, Wesley C. & Judy L. Elders; and Cousin Captola (Edgar) Dunn. He is joyfully reunited with them all.

Wade's walk with the ancestors has begun, but his voice and legacy echo in every life he nurtured and every community he uplifted. His memory is a blessing.

Funeral Services will be held on Friday, May 16, 2025, 11:00 a.m. at Central Christian Church. Interment: Forest Hill Cemetery. Visitation: from 10-11:00 a.m. at the Church. Services conducted by Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Funeral Chapel. Condolences may be shared on our website.

# Cemetery Details

## Forest Hill Cemetery

6901 Troost Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64131

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 16. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Central Christian Church  
3801 Linwood Blvd  
Kansas City, MO 64128-2102

## Service

MAY 16. 11:00 AM (CT)

Central Christian Church  
3801 Linwood Blvd  
Kansas City, MO 64128-2102

# Tribute Wall

SR

“ *Refuge of Hope Community Church In loving Memory of Rev. Dr. L.C. Drew, Senior Pastor Kathy Hyland, Administrative Assistant To the Family and Friends of Wade Ladd, On behalf of everyone at Refuge of Hope Community Church, I would like to express our most sincere sadness at the passing of your beloved. In this time of great sorrow, please know that you are in our thoughts and our prayers. While it hurts us left behind, I hope you can take comfort in the fact that Wade is with God now. He lives on not only in your memories, but with our heavenly Father as well. Sending prayers of comfort to our former members of St Paul under Rev. Drew May God Bless You, Sis Kathy Hyland Prior Pastor's Admin*



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**Sis Kathy Hyland, Admin to the late Rev** - May 13, 2025 at 09:16 PM

DN

*Thank you for your kind sentiments and prayers of comfort. The Family of Wade D. Ladd.*

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**Dana Nelson** - May 15, 2025 at 09:12 AM

RF

*My condolences to the Nelson family for the loss of Brother Ladd. I pray that God gives you comfort during this difficult time. Brother Ladd was really a nice person. Though his earthly presence will be missed, we know he is with God. I am praying for the family.*

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**Rubye Frazier** - May 16, 2025 at 10:15 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Mr. Wade Ladd.



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May 12, 2025 at 10:13 AM