



## Charles Joyner

January 5, 1935 - September 13, 2016

Charles Joyner, 81, a native of South Carolina, passed away September 13, 2016 in Myrtle Beach. He was the son of WG Joyner of Mississippi and Kelly Paul Joyner of the Bucksport area. He was the eldest of six children. His brother Paul died in 2011. His surviving brothers are Bob, John, and David. His sister Cherry Leslie resides in Texas. Also surviving are many beloved cousins.

The growing Joyner family lived in several communities in South Carolina, including Mt. Pleasant. From there, they moved to Myrtle Beach in 1947. When Charles was quite young, he worked for the city of Myrtle Beach as a truck driver. Later he worked in the office of Myrtle Beach Farms, now part of Burroughs and Chapin. He graduated from Myrtle Beach High School in 1952. Majoring in history and English, Joyner graduated from Presbyterian College. He received a MA and PhD in history from the University of South Carolina. He later earned a PhD in folklore from the University of Pennsylvania. He also did postdoctoral studies at Harvard University.

Joyner spent many years as a college professor. One of his earliest teaching experiences was for Coastal Carolina. In the years before Coastal's campus was built, his history classes were held at Myrtle Beach High School. He taught at both Columbia College and Pfeiffer College, before teaching for fifteen years at St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, NC. In 1980, Joyner returned to Coastal Carolina where in 1984 he published *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community*. Following its publication he

accepted posts at the University of Alabama, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Mississippi, and the University of Sidney in Australia. Joyner returned to Coastal Carolina in 1998 as Burroughs Distinguished Professor of Southern History and Culture.

Joyner has written books and articles about southern history and culture including studies of communities in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. *Down by the Riverside*, the best known of his books, chronicles slave life in the Lowcountry's All Saints Parish community. It has been called "the finest work ever written on American slavery." In *Shared Traditions: Southern History and Folk Culture*, Joyner explored the intersections of African-American and white cultures and how they have flowed together in Southern history and heritage.

His numerous honors and awards include the Governor's Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities from the South Carolina Humanities Council, the Lifetime Commitment Award from Bluegrass on the Waccamaw, and the National University Press Award. Joyner was one of the first recipients of Coastal Carolina's University Medallion. He also served as president of the Southern Historical Association.

Surviving are his wife Jean Dusenbury Joyner, his son Wesley, his daughter Hannah, her husband David, and their son Abraham.

A memorial gathering will be held in December.

Donations may be sent to the South Caroliniana Library, 910 Sumter Street, University of South Carolina, Columbia SC 29208 or to Coastal Carolina University's History Department, PO Box 261954, Conway SC 29528.

Please sign the family's guestbook at [www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com](http://www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com)

Goldfinch Funeral Home, Beach Chapel, is in charge of the arrangements.

# Tribute Wall

JM

“ I was an undergraduate student of Professor Joyner's when he was a visiting faculty member at UC Berkeley in the 1980s. His was one of my favorite classes, and I remember him fondly. I thought of him just this week, knowing how much he loved Myrtle Beach, as the hurricane passes through South Carolina. And then this morning, I learned of his passing in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

*Although I knew him only briefly years ago, he had a profound effect on the direction I took with my own career and studies. He was a tremendous teacher and scholar. I just wanted to express both my gratitude and my condolences to the Joyner family.*

*Jennifer Moon, Bellingham, WA*

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**Jennifer Moon** - October 08, 2016 at 11:25 AM

BR

“ I was so sad to learn of the passing of Charles Joyner. To the family, I am so sorry. He was my history professor at St. Andrews Presbyterian College and his soft spoken, professional manner was much appreciated. Particularly memorable was a January, 1971, British Folk Songs course led by him through the back country of the British Isles, including Northern Ireland. He was the driver, and a good one.

*Blair Rankin, SAPC, class of 1971*

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**Blair Rankin** - October 03, 2016 at 06:42 PM

DS

“ *Prayers to the entire family.  
Having had Charles on TV many many times I knew his genuine love and passion for this community. His books will always be a reminder of that dedication.  
Hugs to all  
Diane DeVaughn Stokes  
Myrtle Beach*

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**Diane DeVaughn Stokes** - September 28, 2016 at 11:55 AM

CL

*Diane, I never met you, but my mother spoke so highly of you. Thank you for reaching out to our family at this time. Kindly, Cherry Joyner Leslie*

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**Cherry Joyner Leslie** - November 01, 2016 at 05:30 AM

ML

“ *Wesley,  
  
I'm so sorry for your and your family's loss. You know, I think your dad was the first college professor I ever met. He was everything I expected a professor to be--brilliant, bookish, engaged, distinguished--but also surprised me by being approachable, humble, and genuinely interested in the ideas and perspectives of everyone he met. I know he will be greatly missed.  
  
Much love to you and your family,  
Maria Linn*

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**Maria Linn** - September 21, 2016 at 08:38 AM

HH

“ I took every class he taught at St. Andrews. He had the greatest influence on my love of history. He made history come alive. He will always be my favorite historian, storyteller, and teacher. What a remarkable and truly wonderful person that I have had the privilege of knowing. God blessed us through his life and work.

*My prayers and love to the family.  
Henry Hall, SAPC, Class of '71*

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Henry Hall - September 20, 2016 at 01:14 PM

BJ

“ The first time I met Charles was while I was visiting my down-the-street friend, his brother Bob, in the Joyner residence on 38th Avenue. Charles said he had something he wanted to show me, and he brought out a five-string banjo, hand made out of mountain cherry, on which Charles demonstrated a tune he'd learned from the great North Carolina folk legend, Mr. Frank Profitt. Seems Charles had actually met and talked with Mr. Profitt, and had learned more about Appalachian folk music, which had been around for upwards of 300 years. So inspired by Charles' story, that I became a student of the five-string banjo myself, and still play mine every now and then.

*I will never forget the scattered times over the years when I saw Charles, and talked with him. He was always receptive to me, and always had something interesting to share. He had a a kind of homespun kindness about him, and an easy way of talking, and was always interested in what I had to say.*

*I will never forget him.*

*Bill Sigmon, Jr.  
Mount Pleasant, SC*

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Bill Sigmon, Jr. - September 19, 2016 at 05:18 PM

CL

*Bill, I am Charles's little sister, Cherry (20 years younger than Charles). I remember you and another of your brothers, David. Didn't you also have another brother as well? And I believe y'all used to sing together? Thank you for reaching out to our family.*

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**Cherry Joyner Leslie** - November 01, 2016 at 05:33 AM

DG

“ *Charles Joyner has been a friend ever since I can remember. Quiet, easy going, but always a dedicated scholar and historian. Charles left his positive influence in some of the most prestigious halls of learning in our nation. But Charles never forgot his roots in the everyday of world of Low Country South Carolina and how we came to be one community, black and white. We will miss Charles in multiple ways. He was us and we him. God bless men like Charles Joyner who give us courage to learn from our history and in the process come to understand and accept how we came to be. You're in the hands of our Lord now Charles and we know we will get to talk to you again...forever. Dan*

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**Dan Gray** - September 19, 2016 at 04:42 PM

WH

“ *Hi Hannah,*

*So sorry to hear about your father. I met and talked with him on several occasions when you were an honor student at Coastal Academy. My wife had a couple of classes under your father at Coastal Carolina in the early '80's. She said that he was the best lecturer she ever had as a student. Wish I had looked for opportunities to sit in his classroom. Please know that we share your grief.*

*Willard and Patricia Hane*

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**Willard Hane** - September 19, 2016 at 04:26 PM

KP

“ Dear Jean, Wesley, Hannah, and Family,

*Ellen and I want you to know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. We are saddened by Charles death. I knew him as a first-rate historian and folklorist who contributed immensely through his scholarship to the fields of African American culture and history, especially in South Carolina.*

*Wesley--I send you special greetings. I hope that you are successfully managing your health concerns and have found success in your career. I appreciate your work with me as a graduate assistant when I was teaching with the University of South Carolina's Department of History. Time has moved quickly since I retired in June 2006.*

*Sincerely,*

*Kenneth E. "Ken" Peters Ph.D  
Professor Emeritus, Department of History  
University of South Carolina*

*921 Sugar Mill Road  
Chapin, South Carolina 29036  
kepeters7@att.net*

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**Kenneth E. Peters** - September 19, 2016 at 03:42 PM

JF

“Peace and joy to the spirit of Chaz Joyner. He enriched the South Carolina and Southern historical communities with his unique manner and profound understanding. Few if any have had a broader grasp of our culture, or have shown more poetically and effectively how connected our people were and are.

*I always welcomed opportunities to talk with Chaz and to listen with others to his learned words or his renditions of folk songs. My condolences to Jean, Hanna, Wesley, and all of his family and friends. Many will carry on his legacy of "asking big questions about small places."*

*Jim Farmer*

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**Jim Farmer** - September 19, 2016 at 03:30 PM

GT

“I enjoyed all conversations with Dr. Joyner as he and shared a love of local history. He will be missed greatly.

*Gail Lilly Todd*

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**Gail Todd** - September 19, 2016 at 11:28 AM

JW

“ Meeting Dr. Joyner opened up a new world for me regarding my family history connection to Lang Syne Plantation at Fort Motte S.C. and the Good Hope Plantation at Lone Star S.C..



*He introduced me to Susan Millar Williams. Life has not been the same since.*

*I only met Dr. Joyner once but once was enough as what he did has impacted thousands of people in such a positive way connected to the work I have been involved in since meeting him.*

*My heartfelt sympathy to his family.*

*Mr. Jackie J. Whitmore  
Columbia S.C. 29204*

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**Jackie Whitmore** - September 19, 2016 at 11:15 AM

DA

“ I met Charles in the summer of 1999 upon my moving to Myrtle Beach from West Virginia. A year later I joined the History Department at Coastal Carolina University where we were colleagues until his retirement. He was a great scholar and a true Southern gentleman. My wife (Forrest) and I extend our sincere condolences to Jean and to the other members of his family. Dr. Bernard L. "Bernie" Allen

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**Dr. Bernie Allen** - September 19, 2016 at 08:02 AM



“ *As a history major at Coastal Carolina University it was my privilege to study under Dr. Charles Joyner, who was also a family friend as he'd grown up with my uncles and my Dad and I'd known his mother Kelly since my youth from church. He was a gracious gentleman, a learned scholar, and a loyal friend. When I last saw him at my mother's funeral in 2012 he recalled that while we didn't always agree he enjoyed having me as a student -- the feeling was Mutual and if he enjoyed having me as a student I was blessed by having him as a teacher. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.*

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**Drew Collins** - September 19, 2016 at 12:11 AM