



## William Thomas "Tom" Jarratt III

October 18, 1947 - September 13, 2023

### A FAITHFUL MAN

William Thomas Jarratt, III, October 18, 1947 – September 13, 2023

William Thomas Jarratt, III, age 75, of Myrtle Beach, passed away on September 13, 2023 at his home. He was born in Petersburg, Virginia, on October 18, 1947, to Anna Morse Jarratt and William Thomas Jarratt, Jr. The Jarratt family was well known in the Petersburg community for over two centuries dating back to Richard and Betsey Jarratt b. 1779. Richard was born a free man who owned his own cargo ships. The family possessed a massive number of historical papers that documented the family's generations throughout the whole 19th century on Pocahontas Island, Virginia. The Jarratt papers are now preserved at a Petersburg, Virginia museum.

William, III, known as Tom, was very proud of his father who was a successful self-employed building contractor and business man who built many of the neighborhoods and restored many of the historical buildings in his hometown. Tom's mother, Anna, taught many of Petersburg's youth for 50 years and attended the family's church, the First Baptist for 90 years.

Tom, his sister, Jocelyn Michelle Jarratt M. Ed, and both of his parents all were graduates of Virginia State University [HBCU]. His brother, John Fuller Jarratt, is a graduate of A & T State University in North Carolina [HBCU]. Education was strongly encouraged in this family and paid off for Tom when he finished college with a Bachelor of Science Degree, and the Buick Division

of General Motors hired him in 1972. He was trained at General Motors Institute in Flint, Michigan and then employed as a district manager in Minnesota.

The Chevrolet Division in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania was added to his resume when he joined them as a factory representative.

Tom won sales and leadership awards during his employment! He won trips to Hawaii and Acapulco.

When Tom was a little boy he asked his mother, Anna, "What would you do if you saw Jesus walking down the road?" His mother answered, "I would fall to the ground and kiss his feet!" That answer made such an impression on the little boy, so much, that he told that story for the rest of his life! Her faith in Jesus contributed to Tom's decision to give his life to Christ on his day of visitation.

Like many children at twelve years old, it was decided that Tom was old enough to be baptized but did not know Jesus Christ for another twenty years.

Emma, a family friend in Washington, DC shared a Christian tract about Hell and Christ's promise to save any who would believe in him. She shared a word of personal testimony with Tom. He said that he returned to his hotel and read it. He was so convicted that he got on his knees and prayed the sinner's prayer on the tract.

In 1977, Tom met his wife to be, Debbie Bell, a successful Hallmark, and Franklin Mint designer. 150 miles separated the two love birds in the beginning, so Debbie painted the portrait of her new fiancé with five expressions of his face to enjoy until they could be together again. When Tom saw the portrait, he took Debbie and the art home for his parents in Virginia to see and meet his new girlfriend.

One night, Tom shared his dream with Debbie over the phone. He said, "I

would like to have a business of my own, a contemporary home in the woods, an Irish setter dog, and a pretty woman to come home to.”

The Jarratt's were married 9 months later June 2, 1978, followed by a honeymoon in Jamaica.

Debbie, motivated to change the distance between their living circumstances, designed a resume with Tom's image in pen and ink that got the attention of a manager at The Plastics Division of The Jefferson Smurfit Container Corporation of America in Delaware. He got the job and a salary increase over his former job with General Motors. The manager said that the portrait made such an impact on him that he had to call Tom in and meet this witty guy. Tom took the job offer to be nearer to his new wife.

In that year, 1980 the family was transferred to Summerville, New Jersey, found the Lord Jesus Christ and were Baptized together. They joined a local church and grew in their new faith.

The two fell in love with a love that has lasted over 45 years. Tom said firmly, “And we will never divorce!” They built their lives with a three-fold cord, Jesus, Debbie, and Tom. They have never removed their wedding bands ever, in 45 years.

The couple made a commitment to read their Bibles cover to cover, to tithe to the Lord's local church, and to share Christ with everyone they knew. Soon Tom and Debbie were commissioned by the Lord Jesus to design Christian gospel witness greeting cards and other products for the Glory of God in the Christian bookstore industry. They wanted to proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ with the world. The Lord told them to create greeting cards with the salvation plan so that people could share their faith successfully.

Tom used his business skills to start their own ministry / business to promote Debbie's art with the WORDS of SALVATION. He researched the whole

Christian trade show industry and found ways to promote their business and called it, SEEDS EVANGELICAL GREETING CARDS.

Tom found a New Jersey printing house to make large runs of cards and prints and bought trade show space. Their first trade show was a huge success in Dallas, Texas, because the Lord gave huge favor and anointing upon the Jarratt's and the art that caused many large companies to get on board with the couple by licensing their art. Enesco produced Jarratt art for their huge giftware line of figurines, music boxes, ornaments, bells, thimbles, etc. Tom negotiated fabulous contracts with Thomas Nelson Bible Publishers to use Jarratt art on their huge line of gift books, prayer journals, gift bags, brag books, address books, party products, etc.

Spring Arbor distributors and Carpentree frame house partnered with Tom and Debbie to use Jarratt Christian art in their lines.

Tom, facilitated the deal at the New York Stationary Show that culminated with a contract with a major New England publisher, CR Gibson, for, Debbie, to design a Christian baby book and companion products for the African-American child. The book sold well for ten years and went into an encore reprinting when Babies"R"Us commissioned the reprint just for their stores. Copies of the book were being scalped when the book went out of print selling from \$300 to \$1,169.00 on Amazon.

The Lord coordinated everything behind the scenes to prepare what happened in their first 4-day trade show. Their first little 8'X10' booth generated \$50,000 in sales in four days, plus advances from major corporations for licensed agreements. Seeds Evangelical, a "mom and pop" business was launched successfully!!! Tom became the president and CEO of his own company, Seeds Evangelical Greeting Cards. He was truly the happiest in those days because he thought he had huge shoes to fill inspired by his successful father who paid his own way through college selling newspapers and became a wealthy businessman!

Christian bookstore owners wanted to be able to furnish products that helped their customers share their faith in Christ with friends and family. The Jarratt's got bags and bags of letters from those customers who had successfully led family and friends to Jesus. A bookstore owner called Tom, and told him about a woman who was just saved in his store while reading the Seeds Evangelical card called "My Testimony." She cried like a baby while calling upon the name of Jesus Christ! A mother received salvation through Christ when getting their "Bryanne" card. A brother dying from AIDS received salvation in prayer as the family read to him from a Jarratt SEEDS card just before he died.

Another woman called to get more of their SEEDS Christmas cards. She testified that she sent a card to a coworker and he returned to thank her and had many questions. He received Jesus Christ and now they are married. She said, "What a blessing those cards are!"

Seeds Evangelical published successfully for 11 years until the Christian bookstores industry went into decline.

After a successful employment at Duke University in their surgical procurement department, Tom retired with his wife and moved to Cape Coral, Florida. They purchased a lovely retirement home on a canal with two boat docks and continued their faithful service to their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Tom is considered a faithful man by everyone who knows him. He did everything he could to provide for his family during economic down turns. He has served the Lord as a deacon in 2 different churches through the years. He has faithfully served Jesus Christ for 43 years never slowing down. His wife Debbie, calls him a faithful man who loved and served his LORD, and encouraged family, and friends; raised and loved his daughter Pamela (deceased) in the Lord, advised and prayed for his daughter, Marquise, and

has guided and taught his grandson, John Christian Jarratt for 12 years to love the Lord and serve Him all his days. Even though there have been blips in his conduct, the prodigal has returned to the Lord.

Tom Jarratt has done everything he could to love and serve His church, community, and the Lord, to make Him famous in this world. The Jarratt's have enjoyed a purpose driven life serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

In more recent years of retirement in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Tom participated in the calling program at a church faithfully visiting the sick and shut ins every week. Even during his recent illness, he faithfully requested every doctor and nurse to receive Jesus Christ and be saved from sins punishment with tears. One evening his tearful appeal led an ER nurse to give her heart to Jesus Christ.

William Thomas Jarratt, III will be missed by many who knew him. He loved to study his Bible, listen to great teachers and preachers, and enjoyed praise and worship music! He loved to hear from the Lord what God wanted him to do for someone and act on it!!!

He liked everyone and could converse on many subjects intellectually with all kinds of people.

He is survived by his wife Debbie Bell Jarratt, sister, Jocelyn M. Jarratt, brother, John F. Jarratt (Shelia), daughter, Marquise Jarratt Williams (Richard), extraordinary friend and adopted daughter, Gail Rabonne, grandsons, John C. Jarratt, Caleb William Torain, granddaughters, Gabrielle Rodriguez Hamlett, Zoe Melinda Torain, great-grandchildren, Landon and Marlei Hamlett, In laws, Thomas B Rooker and (Margaret), aunt, Fredericka Phelps, nieces, Johneen Jarratt, Mel Jarratt, Miriam Rooker (Michael), Aaliyah and Jacob Torres, Pamela and Paula Phelps, Carmen and Allayna Sessions, nephews, John Christopher Jarratt, E. Wesley Jarratt, Isaac Rooker. Other kin, Donna and Ed Bell, Kenneth Rooker, and a host of other friends and relations; Annette and Lonnie Solomon, Kenny and Fran Vaughn, Emma and Tim Fields, The

Welsh's, Eddy Knight (Linda), Carl Lumpkin, Barney Lawrence (Brenda),  
Terrance Maloney, Darlene, and Jim Freshour.

Homegoing Service for Tom will be 11:00 AM, Saturday, September 23, 2023  
at Palmetto Pointe Church of God. Viewing will be held one hour prior to the  
service. Burial will be Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at Eastview Cemetery in  
Petersburg, VA.

To sign an online guestbook, please visit [www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com](http://www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com).  
Goldfinch Funeral Home, Beach Chapel is serving the family.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **23**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Palmetto Point Church of God  
2901 Fantasy Way  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29579

## Funeral Service

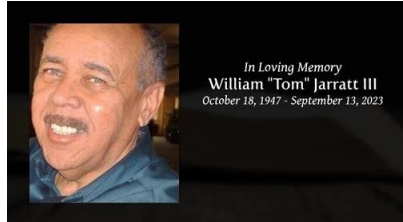
SEP **23**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Palmetto Point Church of God  
2901 Fantasy Way  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29579

# Tribute Wall



“ *Goldfinch Funeral Services created a Tribute Video in memory of William Thomas "Tom" Jarratt III*



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**Goldfinch Funeral Home** - September 18, 2023 at 10:46 AM

SB

“ *Deepest condolences to the Jarratt family in your time of loss and bereavement. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Sarita & Arita Brown*



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**Sarita Brown** - September 23, 2023 at 11:35 AM

RJ

“ *To the family of Tommy Jarratt III  
I was saddened to hear of the passing of Tommy.  
I remember him well when he lived in Petersburg.  
I was a co-worker of his mother Anna Jarratt.  
May God's comfort and peace be with your family.  
Rev. Sylvia E. Jones Associate Minister  
Friendship Baptist Church, Hopewell, VA.*

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**Rev. Sylvia E. Jones** - September 21, 2023 at 03:43 PM

RD

“ *rdcox53@verizon.net purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of William Thomas "Tom" Jarratt III.*



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**rdcox53@verizon.net** - September 20, 2023 at 04:08 PM

RM

“ *Tom was a great friend and Christian man. He always had a smile and was quick to give the Lord credit for all his mercy and grace. He gave me a bracelet prior to my leaving on a mission trip to Belize. It was Proverbs 27:17... "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another " Tom was definitely an "Iron Sharpener". He will be missed.*

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**Reid McBride** - September 18, 2023 at 09:22 AM