

## AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER NEWS FROM ALLEN AND DEEDEE

20 September 2020 - Today we mailed our absentee ballots for this year's general election, reminding me of one of my favorite photos of my Dad. I took this picture as he exited the polls from a 2017 special election in Alabama. That was one of the last elections he was able to participate in before health problems prevented him. Dad always actively encouraged us to educate ourselves on the issues and exercise our hard-won right to vote!

**Michael Henry Hooten**  
March 1944 - August 2020



My Dad grew up in [Tuskegee](#), Alabama, influenced by his many heroes, including: his parents, Henry and Lillian, who enriched their community through service and through their work in physical therapy and in education; his uncles and aunts, who were builders and teachers; his grandfather Frank Carter, who farmed in Pensacola Florida (where Dad was born); and Dr. G. W. Carver, who had famously taught at Tuskegee, and who said "It is simply service that measures success."

Like his heroes, Dad emphasized the importance of getting up each day to go out and try to make a difference in the world. From the time he was a boy, he was active in the Scouts and in 4-H; as a young man, he fought for civil rights; throughout his adult life, wherever he was, he always took the opportunity to give others a helping hand and a listening ear, even strangers who came to the door. Dad was an avid photographer who viewed the world through an optimistic lens, believing the best of people and situations. Even in the ever-present face of adversity, he trusted that God would ultimately overcome evil with good.

While attending Michigan State University, Dad met and married K.J. Bethune (my Mom). They wed on campus in 1965, at the MSU Alumni Chapel. In their 24 years of marriage, Dad and Mom had two children (my brother Tom and me) and four cats. Dad's lifelong Spartan fandom led to a teasing "school rivalry" with the two out of his three siblings who were proud Notre Dame alumni.

Professionally, Dad worked for 30 years at city hospitals, in Lansing and then in Flint, Michigan; first in housekeeping and maintenance, and later in telecommunications.

He volunteered extensively in the community: with Hurley Medical Center; as a parent activist in the Flint Public Schools; and teaching Time Management courses with Mott Community College. He was also a supportive father and family member, encouraging us in our interests and activities, and driving us all between Michigan and Alabama and North Florida to visit with family every year. In retirement, Dad spent many years traveling throughout the USA with a mobile national health study, providing their technical set-up and support. He eventually returned to his hometown of Tuskegee to help care for his aging parents. He remained very active there in his church (Saint Joseph's) and community, as long as he was able. He also spent long hours online researching family history and working on the family tree.

Dad passed away on August 17th, after suffering years of strokes, heart problems, diabetes, and other health complications. He peacefully joined our ancestors, including his parents Henry and Lillian and his younger brother Herman.

Dad's earthly remains were laid to rest at Greenwood Cemetery, near his church and his childhood home. Because of the ongoing pandemic, the graveside service was live-streamed, so all of us prevented from traveling to Alabama could still take part. His sister Angela, cousins Cassandra and Lamar, and other friends and relatives were there in person. The rest of us family and friends — including his sister Nancy, his children (Tom and me), our Mom, the three grandchildren, and his dear nieces, nephews, cousins, and in-laws — participated online from wherever we were, including Michigan, Texas, Utah, New York, Florida, and France. We thank the Lord for modern technology, which has helped us to connect with one another via texts, emails, and video-calls.

In this troubled world, Dad generously shared his love, service, humor, and empathy. All of us left behind miss him greatly.

A couple of days after Dad's funeral, my brother Tom helped Thomas move back from Flint (where he had stayed since everything shut down in the Spring) back onto campus at Michigan State University. Thomas's second year of studies in Linguistics and Humanities seems to be starting well. They are trying to be very careful about enforcing health and safety measures, with masks and social distancing required everywhere. He does not have a roommate or suite-mates this semester, and all his classes are online, which can be a challenge.

Meanwhile, over here in France, the rest of us are hoping to sign up for some personalized language classes soon. Josiah and Phoebe only need to add live practice and increased confidence to all their years of French classes in school. Allen and I, on the other hand, have more bravery than knowledge. Everyday life here will be easier once we understand French!

Fortunately we can still accomplish our work in English, with some translation for meetings, which have been plentiful via Zoom. Zoom brought me a week-long global prayer conference in August, followed by another week of strategic planning with our ministry team. We are still trusting God for great things for this upcoming year; more on that next time! Meanwhile, thank you for praying for us, and for helping us try to make a difference in the world.

Serving with you, *Allen and Deedee*

