

Message from the Morris Funeral Home Family:

Morris Funeral Home of Bennettsville to Close After 111 Years of Service

After 111 amazing years of service to the beautiful families of Marlboro County and surrounding communities during their times of bereavement, it is with heartfelt gratitude that we announce the closing of Morris Funeral Home of Bennettsville on August 31, 2025.

While closing our doors was an extremely difficult decision, it is the right decision at the right time. Our family is choosing to focus on the living...something our Dad didn't get to do. Most funeral home owners don't, so we are extremely proud of the decision we've made and the grace God continues to show us as we embark upon a new season. Our closure marks the end of an era. Yet, our love and loyalty to you and yours to us, is what will keep our Great-Grandfather's and our Father's legacy alive for eternity!

Founded in Bennettsville, South Carolina in 1914 and originally located beside Shiloh Baptist Church on what is now the James S. "Jimmy" McLeod, Sr. Memorial Highway, Morris Funeral Home is one of the oldest Black family-owned and operated funeral homes in the state of South Carolina that has provided continuous service since its inception and is still family-owned and operated today. Founder Joseph H. W. "Joe" Morris, Sr. and his wife, Mamie D. Johnson Morris, moved our family to Bennettsville from Columbia, South Carolina. At that time, Joe Morris was a licensed embalmer, funeral director and partner at Johnson, Bradley and Morris Funeral Home in Columbia.

Young Joe Morris was known in this community as a beloved master brick mason, musician and devoted family man. When he founded Morris Funeral Home in 1914, Joe Morris is credited as the first black licensed "undertaker" in Marlboro County, filling a vital role by providing quality, dignified, courteous and professional service to Black families, regardless of family means or resources, during Jim Crow segregation (from the early 1900s to the 1960s), when white "undertakers" would not serve Black families.

With dignity and compassion, Joe Morris provided quality, courteous, professional care and fostered a legacy of excellence upon which three other Morris Family owned and operated funeral homes were founded. Joe Morris mentored his brother, Coppin Harold "Bee" Morris, Sr., to open Morris Funeral Home in Laurinburg, NC in 1935 and later, Red Springs, NC in 1950. As the Morris Family brand continued to grow, Joe Morris' son, Joseph H.W. Morris, Jr, opened Morris Funeral Cottage in Cheraw, SC in 1936.

James S. "Jimmy" McLeod, Sr., served as manager of Morris Funeral Home of Bennettsville from 1964 until 1972, and owner after Joe Morris, Sr., his maternal grandfather who raised

him, suffered a debilitating stroke. Jimmy McLeod, Sr. continued to build upon the work his grandfather started and elevated the Morris Funeral Home brand.

After Joe Morris passed, Jimmy's commitment to continue to provide quality, dignified, courteous, professional service never wavered. He proudly served the families of this community until his death at the age of 71, in 2011.

Since his passing 14 years ago, Jimmy's eldest daughter, Tracey McLeod-Williams, her husband Myron Williams and our devoted Morris Funeral Home Family Staff, some of whom have been with us for well over half a century, continue to selflessly give their all to ensure that the hallmarks of the Morris Funeral Home brand and the many acts of love and loyalty that have created our enduring legacy, live on.

Dr. Maya Angelou said... "If you're going to live, leave behind a legacy. Make an impact on the world that can never be erased."

To the generations of families who have entrusted your loved ones to our care over the last 111 years, your love and loyalty have left an indelible imprint on this city, county, community, state and our hearts...forever. Because of you, the impact of Morris Funeral Home's legacy can never be replicated or erased.

From the depths of our hearts...**Thank You** for 111 years of love and loyalty. You are and always will be an integral part of our Morris Funeral Home Family and Legacy!"

With Love & Gratitude,

Tracey, Myron, Mia, Erica, Jimmy Jr. and the entire Morris Funeral Home Family Staff