



Mr. Moses Benjamin Kelly

February 21, 1923 - December 5, 2019

Public Viewing for Mr. Moses Benjamin Kelly will be Sunday, December 15, 2019 from 4:00 P.M. till 7:00 P.M. at A. A. Dicks Funeral Home, located at 2548 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29201.

Services for Mr. Moses Benjamin Kelly will be held on Monday, December 16, 2019 at 10:00 A.M. at Good Aim Baptist Church, located 1308 Cherokee Blvd, Elgin, SC 29045. Interment will follow at Fort Jackson National Cemetery, 4170 Percival Road, Columbia, SC 29229.

In lieu of flowers, the family request that monetary donations be made to the Memory Tribute established in the name of Moses B. and Eleanor Kelly with the Alzheimer's Association of South Carolina, 140 Stoneridge Drive, Columbia, S.C. 29210 or send your donations to www.alz.org/sc

Moses Benjamin Kelly will forever be remembered and honored as a man of character, honesty and integrity. Widely known for his leadership ability, his impeccable and classic dress acumen, "Kelly" also affectionately known as "Sarge", 1st Sgt., or "MB" by his loving wife Eleanor, was a walking testament to determination, commitment, tenacity and his ability to lead and inspire others by setting an example of unparalleled excellence. Today, we do not mourn his absence, but rather celebrate his incredible life and legacy, as well as his notable and distinguished service to his fellow man and country.

Moses, at 96 years young and a nonagenarian upon his death, lived a life worthy of a best-selling novel or a highly rated movie. He served 22 years in the U. S. Army and 23 years with the U. S. Department of Treasury, U. S. Secret Service Division, and provided Presidential protection to five (5) former U. S. Presidents (Nixon, Reagan, Ford, Carter and Bush).

Moses was born on February 21, 1923 in the City of Uno, a small southern town in Madison County, Virginia. He was the fourth of six children born to a farmer and housewife, William and Martha Finks Kelly. As a young boy, he always dreamed of doing

big things and moving to another city, far beyond the boundaries of small-town Uno, Virginia to escape the daily rigorous labor of working on his father's farm. But even as he dreamed of a better life, he worked diligently to help his father till the land with an unspoken determination that one day he was going to escape the rigors and regimen of farm life. His father eventually hired him out to the largest white farmer in the area where he was paid \$.50 an hour. By the time he was 18 years old, he had worked his way up to \$18 a month. As soon as the opportunity became available for him to leave Uno, he was on the first bus out of town, on his way to Washington, D. C., where he found employment with the U. S. Government Printing Office as a Forklift Operator earning \$.48 an hour. Moses approached his new job with true grit and fierce determination, and before long was recognized by management as an excellent employee and received a raise from \$.48 an hour to \$.62 an hour. Shortly thereafter, he was drafted by the military which offered an even better opportunity toward fulfilling his dreams. It was, indeed, the beginning of one of the best chapters of his life — not just for himself, but for everyone who would later encounter him, during his lifetime, and set him on the path to continued hard work and unbridled success.

In 1943, Moses was drafted into the 24th Infantry Regiment of the U. S. Army Air Corps, which was initially active from 1869 to 1951, and again from 1995 to 2006, It was among the first U. S. Army divisions to see combat in WWII and among the last to stop fighting. More importantly, it was made up of African American soldiers, better known as “Buffalo Soldiers”. The regiment was notable for serving the country when systematic racism was overt, and when black troops were treated as "second class citizens" due to segregation. Moses served as a member of this infantry regiment until 1946. Shortly thereafter, he joined the regular Army at the height of WWII and received his basic training at Sheppard Field Air Force Base in Texas. There, he was one of two African American recruits out of a total class of 36 students. Sheppard Field, at that time, was, and remains the largest military training base in the world and provides training for all branches of the military, DOD agencies and foreign nationals. At Sheppard Field, Moses a stellar and outstanding recruit and student. After completing his basic training, he was assigned to the Hamilton Army Airfield Base in California.

In 1948, Moses was assigned to overseas duty in Japan, where he began to distinguish himself as an exceptional leader and military soldier. Even though he served in a segregated Army, and during a time when the military was transitioning from segregation to open service for all races, Moses was a dedicated and excellent soldier. Dutiful in even the most mundane tasks amid widespread racial oppression and discrimination, he moved every obstacle to success out of his path by completing tasks and assignments with a high level of proficiency, dedication and excellence. He was determined to be the very best, a

trait that became the fodder of his entire life. Even as he excelled, challenged the unjust and tough assignments given to him by always completing them with unquestionable excellence and a fierce determination to succeed.

In 1950, Moses was assigned to Ft. Knox, Kentucky, where he was selected to attend the coveted Non-Commissioned Officers Academy. Upon completing his studies at the Academy, he was immediately selected to teach Leadership Principles and Leadership Traits.

Moses was assigned to Camp McCauley, Austria in 1953, where he was one of two African American instructors out of a total of 36 students. In Austria, he continued his teaching duties, and before long, his superiors began to notice him and how he conducted his training classes, responded to, challenged, and encouraged his young recruits. There was something about him and his style of teaching that intrigued them. His superiors observed as Moses challenged his students to think outside their comfort zone and in doing so, create possibilities that they did not know existed. Known as a "Master Motivator", he inspired and motivated the minds of very difficult and incorrigible men. When the Commanding Officer visited the base in Austria, Moses was always expected to teach several classes in the presence of the General.

In 1961, Moses was promoted to the rank of First Sergeant, the highest U. S. Army NCO rank, as one of only a handful of African Americans to be appointed to this rank at a time was continually under extreme pressure to further segregate its officer ranks. In this position, Moses was responsible for the administration of a company of over 150 enlisted men and officers. He was also responsible for promoting the Army Career Program and, together with the Commander, conducted classes and exercises on infantry and guerilla tactics to platoons. He also assisted the Commander in the administration of military justice and discipline, counseled enlisted men on personal problems; and maintained a close liaison with the Red Cross. His toughness was noted among other Officers as well as the Commanding Officer and quickly earned him the nickname of "Tops" because he ran his Army unit with a stem hand. Moses aggressive style transformed scared young boys into brave and confident men. He took upcoming Officers and made them into true leaders able to operate on the world's stage. Over the years, he became known for his exceptional leadership and mentoring skills and his effectiveness as a leader. Even his Commanding Officers would solicit his recommendations before making strategic decisions.

As an avid enthusiast for educational learning, Moses attended numerous military training opportunities, including Military Administration (Camp Gifo, Japan), Military Police (Camp

Gifu, Japan), Non-Commission Officer Training (Kobe, Japan), M-48 Familiarization Course (Vilseck, Germany), U. S. Armed Forces Institute (Ft. Knox, Kentucky), Method of Instructions, 3rd Infantry Division, at Ft. Benning, Georgia, Military Course of Instruction, U. S. Army Armor Center, and the NCO Academy at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. Moses additionally served in Germany and Korea continuing to teach soldiers. In 1965, he retired from the Army, after 22 years of notable and distinguished military service to his country.

After leaving the Army, Moses was convinced that he still had much to contribute to his country, and that his administrative and leadership skills could be utilized in Law Enforcement. He began working at the U. S. Treasury Department in Washington, D. C. in 1965, where he was initially employed as a Security Officer. He was responsible for enforcing extraordinary protective procedures in restricted areas where live securities and huge sums of currency and coin were handled, particularly in exhibit areas where narcotics, counterfeit money, weapons, irreplaceable historical documents and articles, and other items of considerable value including providing protection to vast sums of money, negotiable securities and precious metals, critical and highly classified property, documents and materials and equipment related to national security. In this position, Moses also provided protection to the Department of Treasury property and ensured the personal safety of high-ranking Treasury officials, including the Secretary of the U. S. Treasury.

Continuing to seize upon every available opportunity for advancement, in 1967, Moses transitioned to the U. S. Secret Service, a department within the U. S. Department of the Treasury, where he had the honor and privilege of serving on the Presidential Details for five (5) former presidents, Nixon, Carter, Ford, Reagan, and Bush.

During his career with the U. S. Secret Service, he attended and excelled in numerous training academies and training opportunities, including the Federal Law Enforcement Academy in Glynco, GA and the U. S. Secret Service Special Agent Training Center in Beltsville, MD. In addition, he attended and excelled in extensive firearms training and in defensive driving techniques. In each training, Moses, who was an expert in the use of assault weapons, to be a masterful hand in his specialty, "Shooting", in which he was at the top of each class for marksmanship. He qualified as a Marksman with the .38 Caliber Revolver and the Uzi. Moses was so good that other Officers used to wager bets to new recruits who sought to challenge his marksmanship superiority.

Throughout his career with the U. S. Secret Service, Moses made advance trips to numerous countries to prepare for Presidential trips or trips for other high-ranking

government officials traveling outside the U. S. His advance trips served to assess the need for manpower, equipment, hospitals and evacuation routes for emergencies, fire and rescue and coordinating with other public service personnel in gathering intelligence information, establishing security checkpoints, conducting required background checks and limiting the secured areas.

Moses's first Administrative and Protective Presidential Detail was providing protection to President Nixon. During this assignment, he served at the La Casa Pacifica, the President's Western White House in San Clemente, California from 1969 to 1974. Returning to the Washington, D. C., he served on special details for President Ford from 1974 to 1977 and for President Carter from 1977 to 1981.

From 1981 to 1989, he was assigned to former President Reagan's western White House, Reagan's Ranch, also known as the Rancho del Cielo or "Heaven's Ranch" atop the Santa Ynez mountain range in Santa Barbara, California. During this assignment, he and Eleanor relocated to Santa Barbara, California during President Reagan's two terms of office.

At the end of President Reagan's term in office in 1989, Moses returned to the Washington, D. C., area and joined the Presidential Detail for President George H. W. Bush. He served most of his time at the President's family seaside estate compound in Kennebunk Port, Maine. This was his last protective presidential detail with the Secret Service.

On April 30, 1990, Moses retired from the U. S. Secret Service after serving 23 years and six months, for a total of 45 years of dedicated career service to his country. Throughout his career with the U. S. Secret Service, he participated in numerous protective details and provided protection not only to Presidents and Vice Presidents and their families, but also to presidential candidates, foreign dignitaries and visiting heads of state. He worked on numerous investigative assignments and traveled extensively throughout the U.S. and abroad with the Presidents he served, as well as with some of the most powerful and recognized leaders in the free world, carrying the burden and responsibility of protecting them and keeping them safe and out of harm's way.

After retiring, he and Eleanor returned to Blythewood to joyfully live out their retirement years. Once settled in Blythewood, Moses joined the Good Aim Baptist Church and was baptized. Eventually, he began teaching the Adult Sunday School class and was elected as a Church Trustee. In 2014, he was chosen, along with other WWII veterans to participate in one of many Honor Flights to Washington, D.C. He was selected as "Man of the Year" by the Good Aim Missionary Baptist Church in 2016. He was also a very proud

member of the 24th Infantry Association, the Buffalo Soldiers Regiment.

Not one to sit around for long, Moses indulged in many interesting activities. He created a pond and stocked it with a variety of fish, although he had never fished. However, the birds ate up the fish faster than he could restock the pond. Never one to be defeated, he returned to his familial roots, farming, and planted all kinds of vegetable seeds and fruit-bearing trees. The rabbits and other animals quickly ate up the few vegetables that grew. He was never able to see results from his garden except a tomato or two, and those he devoured with such great satisfaction! The family has yet to see the results of the numerous fruit trees that he planted many years ago.

Moses put his farmer's hat on yet again and decided to purchase farm animals, goats and a cow. The grandchildren loved the animals, and he enjoyed their squeals of fun and laughter when they visited as they fed and played with the animals. However, the caring for the animals proved too much for him and he had to give that up. His final venture was the restoration of an antique 1963 T-Bird, that he originally purchased for a grandson, which his daughter is bringing to final fruition.

Moses had the rare honor and excitement of serving at the highest level of government with distinction in two separate rewarding and exciting careers. We are so very proud of his accomplishments and his achievements including the numerous awards he received, far too many to mention. The family's scrapbooks of memories are filled with citations, letters, pictures and personal notes of thanks from Presidents, Heads of State and ordinary folks who came to know him during his life's journey. Above all, he was a great husband to Eleanor, his "puddin foot", and a great son to his mother and father ensuring their care and comfort until their deaths. And when he and Eleanor moved to South Carolina, he showed that same compassion and love and assisted her in taking care of her mother and father until their deaths.

Moses was full of life and laughter and a great storyteller. He was quick to tell anyone who listened to the story of his life, and had a way of capturing his audience, as every great storyteller does, with unbelievable stories of adventure, excitement, narrow escapes, monumental victories, unbelievable defiance, and everyone enjoyed hearing it over and over again. By the end of the story, you were either in tears from laughter or disbelief at his audacity and fearlessness. He always ended his stories by saying, "It's been a good ride and I have enjoyed every minute of it."

During his season of life, Moses lived to the fullest. He was compassionate and always gave freely to those who were in need and never expected anything in return. He truly had

a heart of unmerited kindness.

We salute the man, the husband, father, grandfather, uncle, brother-in-law and friend, and are so proud that he became an outstanding example of what happens when you are determined to change your life to change your future. Moses said that "It is never about how many degrees you have or what school you attended, or how much money you have in the bank or the kind of car you drive, but rather it is all about how well you have performed and succeeded in your responsibilities.

From him, we have learned that it is not about the destination, but it is about the journey and what a wonderful and incredible journey it has been for him. History may not remember Moses Benjamin Moses, but to those whose lives he has touched, his memory will forever be pierced in their spirit and his wisdom immersed in their souls.

Please leave the family your condolences and prayers.

The Kelly family, acknowledges with grateful appreciation, all of your kind expressions of love and sympathy.

Thank you for helping us care for our families. A. A. Dicks, Sr. and Staff.

Cemetery

Fort Jackson National Cemetery
4170 Percival Road
Columbia, SC, 29229

Events

DEC 15 **Public Viewing** 04:00PM - 07:00PM
A. A. Dicks Funeral Home
2548 Main Street, Columbia, SC, US, 29201

DEC 16 **Celebration of Life** 10:00AM - 01:00PM
Good Aim Baptist Church
1308 Cherokee Blvd, Elgin, SC, US, 29045

Comments



“ I shall always remember my Uncle Moses as a fellow serviceman. I remember my mom proudly talking about her baby brother, Uncle Moses and his wife, Aunt Mary. Although Aunt Mary stayed stateside most of the time, I remember my Uncle being by her side when she passed a few years ago. Their marriage lasted over half a century. My heart goes out to cousins Moses, Jr., Pat and Martha. It's barely been five years since Aunt Mary died and now they've lost their father! He was the last of his family generation. And I've lost a dear man who was witty, galant, and proud to be a WW II Army veteran. I enjoyed coming down to visit and listening to his many service stories. He had a lot of them ! I'll miss our talks, Uncle Moses. Most of all, I'll miss sharing our family stories when we celebrate Veteran's Day each year. I love you "Sarge", but God loved you more! Now you and Aunt Mary are back together for all eternity. Condolences to, Eleanor.

Dr. Yardley Nelson Hunter - December 15, 2019 at 09:09 PM



“ To Eleanor, Doris and the Kelly Family,

Love and prayers to the Kelly family. We feel so fortunate to have met this wonderful father, husband, friend and soldier. What a legacy Moses leaves behind. Blythewood is so fortunate and proud to have Moses and his family as part of the community along with Alice and Elijah. What an incredible history to leave his family and his community.

God Bless,

Margaret and Mike Kelly

Margaret Kelly - December 11, 2019 at 12:15 PM



“ One of the great influences in my life. He will always be a better dad than I am a son. Gonna miss you big guy. Love you much. Thanks for showing me what a real man looks like and acts like.

bruce branch - December 09, 2019 at 04:25 PM



“ To the beloved Kelly family,

I know what it's like to lose a father that meant the world to you. Mr. Moses Kelly became a friend , when he would come into the pharmacy years ago. Whether it was for Mrs. Alice or Eleanor, he was always friendly and kind. The community of Blythewood has lost a true patriarch. May our Lord and Savior comfort you all through these times of a tremendous loss.

God Bless,

"Mayor" J. Michael Ross R.Ph.

Mike Ross - December 09, 2019 at 01:23 PM