

Theodore Dear Jr

July 28, 1950 - April 4, 2025

Theodore Dear, Jr. was born in Hazlehurst on July 28, 1950, to Theodore Dear, Sr. and Bobbie Ree Burt Dear. He was called home after his four-year battle with cancer on April 4th, 2025. A memorial service will be held April 13th, 2025, at his beloved church, First Baptist Church, Hazlehurst. Stringer Family Funeral Services is handling the arrangements. Honorary pallbearers are Samuel Zachary Dear (son), Samuel Moon, Dr. Bob Ford, Dr. Randy Hankins, Dr. Bob Walker, William Whittington Perkins, Reverend Rick Munn, and Mr. Jim Davis.

In Lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Baptist Children's Village or to the charity of your choosing in memory of Theodore Dear, Jr.

After graduating from Hazlehurst High School in 1968, Dr. Dear began his higher education at Copiah – Lincoln Community College. He was a member of the marching band and stage band, Circle K, and served as the delegate to the 22nd Mississippi youth congress of the Debate Club. He continued his education at the University of Mississippi, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts Secondary Education in Social Studies and History. While at Ole Miss he was a proud member of the Delta Si chapter of Alpha Tau Omega social fraternity. He was a Dean and Presidents list scholar at both Co-Lin and Ole Miss.

Dr. Dear proudly served his country for three years as a member of the United States Special Security Group, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence Department of the Army. He was stationed at the Pentagon and attached to

Ft. Shafter, Honolulu, Hawaii. While stationed there, he attended the University of Hawaii where he studied sociology. He was honorably discharged on February 25, 1976, as a Vietnam Veteran.

Upon his arrival back in Mississippi he began his education career with the Mississippi Department of Education at the Mississippi School for the Blind. He enrolled in a master's program at Mississippi College and obtained his master's degree in 1978 with a 4.0 GPA. He continued at Mississippi College and received his specialist degree in guidance and counseling in 1984, graduating with honors. While working on his specialist degree he simultaneously enrolled at the University of Southern Mississippi pursuing his master's in special education in the visually impaired. Braille and mobility courses were taken at the University of Kentucky in Louisville. Dr. Dear served for two years as high school guidance counselor in Crystal Springs, MS. While there he was initiated into Phi Delta Kappa, the nation's highest professional educational honorary fraternity. For the next thirty-five years, Dr. Dear served as the Director of the Comprehensive Homebased Intervention Program for pre-school blind and visually impaired children, ages birth to five. During this time, he was named adjunct professor for many state universities and Head Start, providing vision intervention services. He was also an international consultant for Dr. Lillie Neilson, Founder of Active learning, of Denmark, providing information and hands on information.

Dr. Dear became a proud father in May of 1980 when he welcomed the birth of his son, Samuel Zachary Dear. In 1989 he became a father of two with the birth of his daughter, Rachel Blaine Dear. For forty-four years and thirty-five years, respectively, he dedicated his life to being the best mentor, role model, father, and best friend to his two children who deeply loved and admired him. His world became even more joyful when he became "G2" to his two beloved grandchildren, Brayden Zachary Dear and Kayleigh Olivia Dear. He was always a very involved and loving father and grandfather. After his retirement from the Mississippi School for the Blind he made the most of his time making memories with his grandchildren, family and dear friends.

Dr. Dear was an active member in his church, First Baptist Church, Hazlehurst, where he was honored to serve as a Deacon and was a joyous member of the hand bell ensemble. He loved the Lord and he loved to serve others. He was an active member of his community and various social organizations. He was a proud member of the Order of the First Families of Mississippi, in which he held the title of Governor General for several years. He was also a member of the Sons of the Confederacy, Hazlehurst Friends of the Library, Hazlehurst Housing Authority, the Camellia Society, Hemerocallis Society, and many others.

He loved life, his family, friends, and fellowshiping with the Lord in the yard and garden of his home, lovingly known as Odonata. He was selfless and wanted to share life with everyone he met. He truly never met a stranger and somehow everyone had a connection back to his beloved Hazlehurst, Mississippi. After his cancer diagnosis he bravely and fearlessly fought his disease to his last breath. His family finds peace knowing he is resting, free of pain and cancer free, in the arms of our Heavenly Father.

He is preceded in death by his mother, Bobbie Ree Burt Dear, and father, Theodore Dear, Sr.; Brother-in-law, Mr. Thomas Hardy Burton, Sr.; Brother-in-law, Mr. Billy "Sherrill" Wallace, and nephew, Christopher Michael Dear.

He is survived by his beloved family; son, Samuel Zachary Dear and daughter in love, Jenna Leigh Jones Dear; daughter, Rachel Blaine Dear; grandchildren Brayden Zachary Dear and Kayleigh Olivia Dear; sisters Robin Janet Burton-Pennington (Joe); Jerri Blaine Dear Wallace; Bobbye Lynn Dear; Jane Marie Dear; nephew Thomas Hardy Burton, Jr. (Michelle); niece Lindsay Carol Burton; great niece Abigail Burton; Goddaughter Amanda Hammac Stysly; a host of extended family, church families and an abundance of cherished friends.

The family would like to express their deepest gratitude to First Baptist Church, Hazlehurst, Reverend Chris Goolsby (First Baptist Church Hazlehurst), Dr. Kevin Cooper (Grace Crossing Baptist Church Madison),

Reverend Rick Munn, The University of Mississippi Medical Center, Methodist Rehab, Copiah County Medical Center, Arden Hospice, Dr. John C. Henegan Jr., Dr. Patrick P. Dailey, Dr. Randy Hankins, Dr. Preston McDonnell, Mrs. Lauren Thompson, FNP-C, Mr. M. Luke Brasel, PA-C, and the broad team of nurses and entire staff of Copiah County Medical Center.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 13. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church Hazlehurst
151 Caldwell Drive
Hazlehurst, MS 39083

Memorial Service

APR 13. 4:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church Hazlehurst
151 Caldwell Drive
Hazlehurst, MS 39083

Tribute Wall



“ *Sandra Cliburn sent a virtual gift in memory of Theodore Dear Jr*



Sandra Cliburn - April 14, 2025 at 11:34 PM



Love and Prayers With Ya'll...John 14....A legacy of love and a life well lived....Forever In Our Hearts

*Sandra Cliburn
Freddie Cliburn*

Sandra Cliburn - April 14, 2025 at 11:37 PM

DL

“ *I met Ted in 1992, when I arrived at the Mississippi School for the Blind. For the next 23 years, he made working at MSB the most enjoyable place to be, especially during our Administrative Meetings and Summer Inservice. Ted was always so full of life. Whenever I was feeling down or needed a good laugh, I would find myself going to Ted's office, because I knew I would feel better once I left him.*

Zach & Rachel, your dad talked about you all the time, and it was evident that he loved you all very much. Hold tight to the precious memories of your dad. I'm sorry I'm not able to be there today, but know that you all are in my prayers!

*Diann Lewis-Turner
Talladega, Alabama*

Diann Lewis-Turner - April 13, 2025 at 03:06 PM

MP

*Sweet memories, Diann ❤️
Marla Peters*

Marla Peters - May 03, 2025 at 08:55 PM

MP

I have known Ted for 40+ years through the MS School f/t Blind. His professionalism & friendship meant the world to me. He made the world a much better place not because he tried, but because he could not help himself. To Zach & Rachel & to Ted's 4 sisters, his legacy of love & devotion to all of you & to our Heavenly Father will always be a memory I will forever cherish.

Marla Peters - May 03, 2025 at 09:04 PM

AA

“ I have known him since grammar school. Him being part of my life through the Hazlehurst School District, Copiah-Lynchon Junior College, and after that was a blessing. He always had a smile and caring for his classmates and friends. I can remember helping him put his siblings Christmas presents together. You all didn't know that. Also, riding with him to Copiah- Lynchon, meetings in the bookstore, going swimming at Copiah creek, helping him work on the old red 1959 Chevrolet and going to visit him at the F&F mini mart, where he worked while going to school. Great memories. I am sorry that I did not get to visit him before his passing. He will be missed. Class of 68, our class continues to get smaller.

Archie Jerome Adams - April 11, 2025 at 12:43 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Theodore Dear Jr.

April 11, 2025 at 11:30 AM

SN

“ I sure miss Ted working in the yard. Great guy and great personality. I will forever be grateful for every time he helped me and I will miss our talks in the yard. Great neighbor. RIP my friend.

Shellie Newman - April 10, 2025 at 07:47 PM



“ Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray was purchased for the family of Theodore Dear Jr.



April 09, 2025 at 04:33 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Theodore Dear Jr.

April 09, 2025 at 04:33 PM

BL

“ Ted was always so full of joy and wonderful ideas. He was friendly and kind to everyone. He loved his children, grandchildren, and other family members immensely. He fought a valiant battle with his illness and made it take second place in his daily living. He was a pleasure to know.

Brenda Lewis

Brenda Lewis - April 09, 2025 at 12:13 AM

SH

“ All of our love and prayers for the family!

Barry & Sandra Scott Haven



Sandra Scott Haven - April 07, 2025 at 11:23 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Theodore Dear Jr.



April 07, 2025 at 02:38 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Theodore Dear Jr.

April 07, 2025 at 02:38 PM

CM

“ Cindy & Aaron Monk lit a candle in memory of Theodore Dear Jr



Cindy & Aaron Monk - April 06, 2025 at 09:08 PM

JC

“ Sonny and I send our love and prayers to Ted’s family.....we were always included in the “Friday night gathering” if we were in town from Texas.....I am Sheila’s sister and know the love shown to each other in this group. How very special each and everyone was and is.....God bless

june clement - April 06, 2025 at 08:11 PM

JC

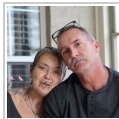
“ Big prayers for Zach, Jenna, Rachel, his precious grands, his loving sisters who were so dedicated to him during his illness and the many, many friends that loved him! I have know Ted since before grammar school. THIS IS A HARD ONE!!! He was such a BIG part of the Class of 68.
I know that “Dr. Ted” was all about everything Hazlehurst. He will be missed by so many!! So, until I see you on the other side, I love you!
❤️

Janice Higdon Cook - April 05, 2025 at 03:48 PM

GA

No one can fill Ted’s shoes. His bigger than life persona was only matched by his generous and loving heart. His tremendous love of God and country, family and friends and every living creature is inspirational.

Gail - April 05, 2025 at 05:48 PM



I only knew Ted for a short time, but he always made me feel like I was part of Hazlehurst. He will be missed by everyone, he had such a big heart and always something nice to say. My prayers are with his family and especially to his granddaughter, he just loved it when she would call him g2 and their trips to the park. Rest in peace in GODs home my dear friend.

John MaryLeah Easterbrook - April 06, 2025 at 12:44 PM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Theodore Dear Jr.*



April 04, 2025 at 04:09 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Theodore Dear Jr.

April 04, 2025 at 04:09 PM