



# Dr. Clinton Colgate Nichols

January 24, 1935 - June 22, 2020

A Continuing Story of the Life of Dr. Clinton Colgate Nichols

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Dr. Clinton Colgate Nichols, D.Mus., a devoted and loving father, a phenomenal vocal musician, a caring and trusted friend and relative, and a passionate and committed Christian, died on June 22, 2020.

His daughters will always remember his desire to be his kids' best friend. His life will be fondly remembered and deeply treasured by the thousands who had the joy and inspiration of personally knowing him.

The son of Stanley Foster Nichols and Stella Colgate Walker Nichols, Clint was born on January 24,

1935, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where his father was working in horticultural enterprises. The

second of five children, Clint was born 11 months after his brother Ray.

As his father searched for work during the Great Depression, the family traveled multiple times

between Pennsylvania and Florida. Clint reportedly once announced "Down south, up north, down

south, up north – when do we make up our minds?" Keeping tabs on and keeping the two very young

children safely occupied often proved to be a significant challenge.

Once at a very young age the boys were assigned for a short while to stay in one bedroom with only

two beds and a chest of drawers. Everything else that could possibly be enticing for these imaginative

and energetic boys had been removed. After a very short bit of time blood-curdling

screams emerged from the bedroom. Rushing in to see what could possibly have happened, their mom discovered stair steps has been created with the chest's drawers and both boys were trapped beneath the over-turned chest.

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Attempting to occupy the rambunctious boys on one of the long trips from Pittsburgh to the Orlando area, their father created the perfect game. "Boys, look out the back window and see who can be the first one to tell me when the trailer comes off." It took only what seemed to have been a couple of minutes before Clint hollered "It's off! I win!" In fact, that was the very moment the trailer had lost its mooring and bounced off the road into an adjoining field. After such short-lived efforts to occupy the boys, singing seemed to do the trick – almost incessant singing. When Stan Nichols found work building levees on the Mississippi River, the family moved to Vicksburg, Mississippi. When the Second World War broke out, an immediate need arose for multiple airfields for military flight training in Arkansas – each of which required stable, grassed runways -- Stan Nichols' specialty. The family moved to Memphis, Tennessee, to enable Stan to help meet that wartime need. Eight months before the end of the Second World War, Clint's brother, Dave, was born with the birth of twin boys, Terry and Tim, following Dave's by only 15 months. Desperate for space to raise five boys and also to enhance their growing of plants for their landscaping business, Stan and Stella purchased a 310-acre farm near Eads, Tennessee, at that time nearly 20 miles east of Memphis. Clint truly enjoyed life on the farm and was always fond of animals Jasper, the Dalmatian, Rocky and

Rockette, the Boxers, and above all Majesty, the finest horse ever. Clint often recalled his memory of

“the boys” riding through the snow on a one-horse sled.

It was on this farm shortly after moving in that Clint stepped from the back door of the farm house and

headed for the barn to feed the chickens. He started to run but suddenly he couldn't put one foot in

front of the other fast enough. With a sickening lurch he felt himself falling to the ground.

After initial

misdiagnoses it was confirmed – twelve-year-old Clinton Nichols had polio, the illness that required

him to have a full leg brace for the rest of his life. It was only many years later that Clint got some

relief. When he was in New York City, Clint's doctor fitted him with a specially designed brace that

helped eliminate a great deal of his limp.

Despite the driving distance from home, all seven members of Clint's family were active members of

Bellevue Baptist Church in downtown Memphis, where all five of the boys made their faith public and

were baptized by Dr. Robert G. Lee, pastor. While in the church choir, Clint began singing solos at

Bellevue and was mentored by Dr. Tommy Lane, his minister of music.

Clint's mother was the first to recognize that Clint must have inherited his naturally beautiful tenor

voice from her father, Clint's grandfather, Lee Robinson Walker, who died as a very young father of

four during the 1918 influenza epidemic. Because of his exceptional voice, Lee was often sought for

solo appearances in the Pittsburgh area.

Clint graduated from Bartlett High School near Memphis. Clint received the Bachelor of Music

Education degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. He received the Master of

Sacred Music degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1959, while serving as

Minister of Music at First Baptist Church in Amite, Louisiana. Clint was ordained into the ministry at

First Baptist Church, New Orleans.

Clint served as Minister of Music in many churches over a period of sixty-five years. The following is a partial listing of those churches:

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- Amite, LA (First Baptist)
- Bay Springs, MS
- Chattanooga, TN (Brainard Baptist)
- Columbus, MS (First Baptist)
- Grenada, MS (First Baptist)
- Hattiesburg, MS (38th Avenue Baptist)
- Liberty, MS (Liberty Baptist)
- Louisville, MS (First Baptist)
  
- Morristown, TN (First Baptist)
- Oxford, MS (First Baptist)
- Pascagoula, MS
- Petal, MS
- Picayune, MS (New Palestine Baptist)
- Valdosta, GA
- West Point, MS
- Whitehaven, TN

Clint gained acclaim with the Knoxville, Tennessee, Symphony Orchestra while a professor at Carson

Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee.

Clint was given an assistantship at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida, in voice and opera.

Jarvis Rose had heard about Clint before they actually met. Her first reaction was fear because she saw

him play the lead in Pagliacci as a clown who kills his wife. On the FSU campus in the Fall of 1964,

Clint officially met Jarvis Rose Allen when she was 21 years old. Jarvis Rose Allen was a favorite

singer at First Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Florida. In the Spring of 1965 Clint was invited by

George Starke, minister of music at First Baptist Church, to sing solos with Jarvis Rose

Allen in  
“Elijah” at First Baptist Church.

The first date for Clint and Jarvis Rose included a dinner to celebrate Clint’s 30th birthday and a drive

from Tallahassee to Marianna, Florida, to meet her family.

Clint was a partner in owning a Piper Tri-Pacer aircraft. He occasionally flew Jarvis Rose home to

Marianna. Their first flight together was on a Saturday over Tallahassee. She asked Clint how long he

had had his license and he told her that he had taken his check ride that morning. What an expression

she had on her face!

Clint and Jarvis Rose made several flights to visit Clint’s parents in North Carolina.

Clint and Jarvis Rose were asked to sing for a Baptist Student Union service at FSU. They sang “He

Lifted Me” – this, their first song, became their most favored song for the 50 years they sang together.

Clint was minister of music and youth at Northside Baptist in Valdosta, Georgia. He would fly to

Valdosta on Wednesdays and some weekends. On many Sundays, Jarvis Rose and Clint sang together

at church. They flew to Morristown, Tennessee, and sang for a revival. Just after that revival weekend,

in mid-April, 1965, Clint asked Jarvis Rose to marry him.

Clint was supposed to sing a German piece for his student recital. He changed the song to “Be My

Love” (from A Great Day) and dedicated it to his sweetheart – a shock and surprise to all.

Jarvis Rose and Clint were married on August 7, 1965, at First Baptist in Marianna, Florida. Clint’s

nephew, Lee Nichols – Ray and Corinne’s young son – was ring bearer in the wedding.

Frequently and beautifully, Clint and Jarvis Rose – the tenor and mezzo soprano – sang together. The

newlyweds remained in Tallahassee while Jarvis completed a B.A. in music education.

Clint and Jarvis Rose moved to New York City so that Clint could study at the Metropolitan Opera. As

the story goes, Clint had an opportunity to audition for Rudolph Bing, head of the Metropolitan Opera.

At the conclusion of the audition Bing had two comments. The first was “You have the most beautiful

voice I have heard since I heard Enrico Caruso” (famous Italian operatic tenor, 1873-1921). The second comment was devastating – “You will never be able to do the stage work” (because of his limp from having had polio).

Clint went on to do a lot of stage work anyway. Clint received three major study/travel grants in opera, sang leading tenor roles – Oedipus Rex, Pagliacci – with the New York City Opera (during Plácido Domingo’s time there), was tenor soloist at Riverside Church, was soloist with the American Symphony Orchestra in Carnegie Hall, sang at Lincoln Center, Town Hall, State Theater, Los Angeles Forum, coached with Metropolitan Opera coaches, and won several vocal competitions. Clint became well known in New York opera circles as a tenor who sang with keen thrust, eerie force and accuracy.

Clint and Jarvis Rose worshipped at Manhattan Baptist Church (SBC) where they were members.

When Clint completed his contract at NYC Opera, he and Jarvis Rose moved back to Tallahassee.

Clint had several singing engagements, including Mississippi Baptists’ Gulf Shore Assembly where he was when he received word that the delivery of his first child was within hours and Jarvis Rose was already in the hospital in Tallahassee. Clint drove the 6+ hours and got to Jarvis Rose about 30 minutes before son Coleman was born in 1969.

Clint entered a competition at the Opera of the Palm Beaches and won 1st place (\$1,500) singing “Nessun Dorma.”

Clint completed his Doctor of Music degree in music performance (voice) from Florida State University at Tallahassee, Florida.

Clint moved his family to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, to accept a faculty position at the University of

Southern Mississippi and to work at Temple Baptist. The family had four good years in Hattiesburg— daughter Roselyn was born in 1971 and Clint soloed in several productions there under the direction of Bob Mesrobian, a great drama director. Feeling the need to be more related to Christian music and education, Clint accepted the chairmanship of Fine Arts at Wingate College in Wingate (near Charlotte), North Carolina. The family enjoyed their year in North Carolina before going to New Orleans, Louisiana. Clint accepted the chairmanship of the Music Division at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. During their nine years at the Seminary, the family traveled for singing engagements in many churches either by twin-engine plane or thirty-foot motor home. Daughter Amy Naomi was born in 1978. At the seminary Clint enjoyed riding his bicycle along campus streets in the summertime. Clint took a sabbatical leave and moved the family to Kansas City, Missouri, so he could be at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. They took their pony, Jody, who kept son Coleman busy. The family bought four acres in Picayune, Mississippi, and moved there from New Orleans. The three children learned how to work on a small farm. Daughter Cindy Marie was born in 1983. Coleman and Roselyn were active in the youth group at First Baptist and learned leadership skills during their Jr. and Sr. high school years. Clint served as the Dean of Music at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, for one year before spending several years away from academic life, freelancing in business and ministry.

The family moved for a short time to Grenada, Mississippi. Clint and Jarvis Rose served churches in

Memphis and north Mississippi. Clint taught at Germantown Baptist's Music Conservatory. Clint was an inspirational soloist for years at the Methodist Camp at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Clint was a soloist with the New Orleans Philharmonic Orchestra, Knoxville Symphony, and Birmingham Opera Association, to mention a few.

In addition to worship leadership in churches, Clint taught voice at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi; at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; and at Jones Junior College in Ellisville, Mississippi

As an ordained minister, Clint baptized all of his children and officiated at all three of his daughters' weddings.

It was on his birthday while at the University of Southern Mississippi that Clint performed "Tenor at 70," a phenomenal concert demonstrating the wide diversity of his musical repertoire and the strength, precision and clarity of his voice.

The following are among the many albums and recordings Clint and Jarvis Rose released:

- Clint and Jarvis Rose Nichols "In Concert"
- Clinton C. Nichols [Larry Allen, Organ]
- Clinton Nichols, Tenor [opera selections]
- He Lifted Me
- Jarvis Rose Sings Songs of Her Lord
- Sacred Songs by Clint Nichols
- Sing Ye Praise
- The Old-Time Religion: Clint Nichols Sings
- Walk With Me Lord
- Worship Songs of Clint and Jarvis Rose

For their most recent 23 years, Clint and Jarvis Rose lived on an 8-acre mini-farm in western

Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and were active members of Main Street Baptist Church. In their later years

they moved their membership to First Baptist Church in Sumrall, Mississippi, the church where their

son, Coleman, and his family were members and where Coleman served as Youth Pastor. Clint was instrumental in organizing a Nichols family reunion in Alabama's Cheaha State Park in 2003.

He was an inactive member of the CenturyMen (a national, auditioned men's chorus of professional Christian musicians) and was active in church music and teaching over sixty-five years. Clint and Jarvis Rose blessed thousands with their music across the country, on concert tours, singing in churches, revivals, conferences, at the Southern Baptist Convention, and at a Sugar Bowl prayer breakfast when Archie Manning was the speaker. God anointed and blessed their music ministry for fifty-five years in churches, academics and professional singing. They sang together on over 2000 occasions.

Clint had a multi-engine aircraft rating. He enjoyed golf and his tractor. In addition to his life-long engagement in music and music ministries, financial realities sometimes required alternate economic

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endeavors. Clint and Jarvis Rose were Amway Direct Distributors. Clint also for a time sold insurance and Radiant Barrier energy saving insulation.

Clint was preceded in death by Jarvis Rose (Allen) Nichols, his wife of almost 55 years; by his parents; by three of his brothers: Raymond Lee Nichols, Timothy Howard Nichols and Terry William Nichols; and by his son Clinton Coleman Nichols.

He is survived by his daughter-in-law and widow of Clinton Coleman Nichols, Naomi (Barber) Nichols, and by their three children: Katelyn Emmalee Nichols, Coleton Chandler Nichols, and Ceanna Grace Nichols.

He is survived by his oldest daughter Roselyn Lee (Nichols) Holder, wife of Erik Holder. He is survived by his second daughter Amy Naomi (Nichols) Pearce, wife of Russell Pearce and their five children: Joseph Patrick Pearce, Isabella Rose Pearce, Michael Gabriel Pearce, Allen James Pearce, and Solomon Robert Pearce.

He is survived by his youngest daughter Cynthia ("Cindy") Marie (Nichols) Langford, wife

of Andy

Langford and their two children: Leeann Marie Langford and Andrew Coleman Langford. He is survived by his sister-in-law and widow of Raymond Lee Nichols, Corinne (Ridolphi) Nichols

Adams Nienhuis, married to Art Nienhuis.

He is survived by his brother David Walker Nichols, husband of Chini Nichols.

He is survived by his former sister-in-law, Alice (Smith) Nichols, former wife of Terry Nichols.

He is survived by his sisters-in-law, the sisters of Jarvis Rose: Lynda Ruth (Allen) Barfield, married to

Charles Barfield; and Ragenia Lee ("Jeannie") (Allen) Shelton, married to Jackie Shelton.

A Celebration of Life service will be held at First Baptist Church, Sumrall, Mississippi, at 10:00 am on

June 29, 2020. A time for personal sharing will be available beginning at 9:15 am. The Church has

requested that visitors wear appropriate face coverings and practice social distancing.

The family has requested, in lieu of flowers, gifts to support your choice of the following organizations

and programs, all of which were near to Clint's heart:

First Baptist Church of Sumrall: Student Ministry

(169 Center Ave, Sumrall, MS 39482; <http://www.fbcsurall.org/giving/>)

The CenturyMen

(c/o Kim Bowen, 793 Barbara Drive, Talbott, TN 37877; <http://thecenturymen.com/donate/>)

First Priority of South Mississippi

(Post Office Box 15847, Hattiesburg, MS 39404; <https://fpsouthms.org/priority-partner/>)

Main Street Baptist Church

(11 Main Street Boulevard, Hattiesburg, MS 39402; <https://mainstreetbaptistchurch.org/give/>)

# Previous Events

## A Celebration of Life Memorial Service

JUN **29**. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church  
169 Center Ave  
Sumrall , MS 39482

# Tribute Wall

RS

“ I was blessed to study under Dr. Nichols at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary while pursuing the Master of Music Degree. I always appreciated the fact that Dr. Nichols never deviated from his commitment to God's Word. Although he stood with the very best of vocalists in the secular world, he was not ashamed of our Lord. It was a privilege and honor to know him. Renee Scheidt, Salisbury, NC; MCM, NOBTS, 1984

Renee Coates Scheidt - July 02, 2020 at 07:12 PM

DW

“ I express sorrow to the family of Dr. Clinton Colgate Nichols. I pray our Lord's love, comfort and strength for each of you. Thankful for the faithful life of service and witness of Dr. and Mrs. Nichols.

Dan West - June 27, 2020 at 10:31 AM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Clinton Colgate Nichols.



June 26, 2020 at 07:55 PM