

## **Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection**

**This link provides the specific resource information which documents and undergirds the biographical resource information on a specific Florida Baptist pastors, church staff or significant laity leaders.**

The link you have chosen connects to the specific individual's resource files that provide the basis for information which the Historical Society has used to develop the respective biographical profile. The sources attached may include copies of articles gleaned from back issues of the *Florida Baptist Witness* and other news publications. Other resources include books, historical journal articles and church histories that are cited as documentation for the biography.

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**Saunders, John E. Sr.** (1928-2019) was born in Paoli, Indiana, the son of Rev. J. Guy and Nida Cooke Saunders. He graduated from Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Saunders was ordained to the gospel ministry in 1957 and served as the pastor of churches in Indiana and Maryland. He served in ministry positions on the staff of the Baptist Convention of Maryland, Director of Missions in Missouri and on the staff of the Florida Baptist Convention as director, Church-Pastor-Staff Relations Department from 1983-1992. Saunders and his wife, Beverly Graham Saunders had four children.

# Personal Data

FLORIDA BAPTIST CONVENTION

1230 Hendricks Avenue  
Jacksonville, Florida 32207  
904-396-2351



## John E. Saunders

Director, Church-Pastor-Staff Relations Department  
Served the Convention from 1983-1992

**Primary Responsibility:** To provide assistance to local church personnel search committees, and be available for counseling and career assessment requested by church staff and their families; to provide guidance and consultation to church staff and/or local churches on conflict resolution.

### Office of Public Relations

**Birth:** Paoli, Indiana, January 21, 1928      DOD 2019

**Marital Status:** September 4, 1948      **Spouse:** Beverly Graham Saunders

**Children:** Catherine Oldenberg (Mrs. Jerry)      (November 18, 1949)  
John E., Jr.      (September 27, 1953)  
Carla Enix (Mrs. James)      (October 6, 1961)  
Carrie Burlette (Mrs. John)      (February 19, 1964)

**Education:** Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville,  
Kentucky, B.D., 1959  
Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tennessee  
B.A., 1955  
Mars Hill Junior College, Mars Hill, North Carolina,  
A.A., 1950

**Military:** U.S. Navy, 1946-1948  
U.S. Naval Reserve, 1948-1955

**Previous Experience:** Director, Cooperative Missions Department, Florida  
Baptist Convention, 1983-1989  
Director of Missions, Clay-Platte Baptist Association,  
Kansas City, Missouri, 1980-1983  
Baptist Convention of Maryland, Lutherville, Maryland,  
1961-1980  
    Brotherhood/Church Music Secretary, 1961-1966  
    Brotherhood Secretary, 1966-1972  
    Director-Coordinator, Department of Cooperative  
    Missions, 1973-1980  
Pastor, North Point Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland,  
1959-1961  
Pastor, Olive Branch Baptist Church, Dillsboro, Indiana,  
1957-1959

**Church Membership:** Coastal Baptist Mission, a mission of First Baptist Church,  
Jacksonville Beach, Florida

John E. Saunders Sr. MOORESVILLE The Rev. John E. Saunders Sr., of Mooresville, passed from this life into eternal life Saturday, Oct. 5, 2019. He was born Jan. 21, 1928 in Paoli, Ind., to the late Rev. J. Guy Saunders and Nida Cooke Saunders. He graduated from Covington High School in Covington, Va. After High School he served in the U.S. Navy from 1946 to 1948, serving most that time on the U.S.S. Washington. Returning from his service in the navy he graduated from Mars Hill Junior College in Mars Hill (where he met and married the love of his life, Beverly Graham), Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. The Rev. Saunders was ordained to the gospel ministry in 1957 and served as the pastor of churches in Indiana and Maryland. Later he served in ministry positions on the staff of the Baptist Convention of Maryland, Director of Missions in Missouri and on the staff of the Florida Baptist Convention. In 1992 he retired but continued to serve as an interim as pastor at Southside Baptist Church and Derita Baptist Church in Charlotte and First Baptist Church of Cornelius, as an associational missionary and on a state Baptist convention staff. John and Beverly finally retired to their home on Lake Norman in 1996. The Rev. Saunders was also active as a church consultant for many years. In later years he served as missions pastor at F.B.C., Mooresville and at age 80 began the Food for Days ministry to help feed children in local schools. While serving as the Brotherhood Director for the Maryland Baptist Convention he was the director of the boy's camp for many years, where he touched the lives of many boys and young men many of whom went on to serve as pastors and ministers. The Rev. Saunders and his wife were instrumental in the starting of Coastal Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla. His wisdom and insight were helpful as he worked with pastors and churches as a consultant for growth. He was predeceased by his parents; his sister, Dorothy Sue Graham; brother, Keith Saunders; and great-grandson T.J. Johnson. He is survived by his wife of 71 years, Beverly Graham; brother, Joseph Saunders; sister, Mary Smith (Thurman); daughter, Cathy Oldenburg (Jerry); son, John Jr. (Sally); daughter, Carla Enix (Jim); and daughter, Carrie Holder (Derrick). Also surviving are grandchildren whom he loved very much and who loved their Papa, Jennifer Greene (Ben), Kristin Kipp, Ryan Saunders (Crista), Amy Honeycutt (Taylor), Rachel Enix, Jacob Enix, Nicole Decker (Blaine), Jessica Holder, Deaven Holder; great-grandchildren, Ashley and Daniel Nibbana, Haley and Luke Saunders, Merritt Honeycutt; and many nieces and nephews. The Rev. Saunders loved to work in his woodworking shop. He never owned a home that he did not want to remodel. In recent years he started Papa John's Candies selling his home-made candy at the Mooresville Farmer's Market and making clocks to give to friends and family. He was a man of many talents which he used for the glory of the Lord and to share his faith in Jesus. Visitation was held Tuesday, Oct. 8, from 7 to 9 p.m., at Cavin-Cook Funeral Home in Mooresville. A celebration of his life will be held today (Wednesday, Oct. 9), at 2 p.m., at First Baptist Church in Mooresville, with Dr. Jerry Cloninger, Dr. Jim Goodson and Dr. John Saunders Jr. officiating. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Food for Days, P.O. Box 175, Mooresville, NC 28115; or First Baptist Church, Mooresville building fund, 150 South Church St., Mooresville, NC 28115. Cavin-Cook Funeral Home in Mooresville is serving the family of Mr. Saunders. Condolences may be made to the family at [www.cavin-cook.com](http://www.cavin-cook.com).