



Dr. Elizabeth Ann Saunders

April 12, 1948 - August 5, 2025

Elizabeth Ann Saunders was born on April 12, 1948 in Centralia, IL and grew up in Chester County, Tennessee. She passed away on Tuesday, August 5, 2025.

Dr. Elizabeth Ann Saunders, retired Freed-Hardeman University professor of education, was an accomplished woman with many "firsts" to her credit. After graduating valedictorian of her graduating high school class, she chose to enroll at Freed-Hardeman College the summer following. By the next summer, she had completed the requirements for an Associate of Arts degree, becoming the first black student to graduate from Freed-Hardeman.

She completed her baccalaureate degree Memphis State University where she was one of few black students living on campus. Following her graduation from MSU, she began her teaching career in the Haywood County School System. There she discovered a particular interest in helping students with literacy difficulties.

To better assist them, she returned to MSU to obtain a master's degree in reading. When school administrators saw the progress, the students had made, they asked her to develop a literacy laboratory. The daughter of educators, she taught in Haywood County for eight years from 1970-78, she

then returned to Freed-Hardeman to teach remedial reading and study skills in 1978, making her the first black member of the Freed-Hardeman faculty.

She continued her education at East Tennessee State University in 1983 where she earned her Doctor of Education degree, the first black woman to complete a doctoral degree at the university.

At Freed-Hardeman, she served in several positions: Instructor in the Department of Education and Center for Academic and Life Planning, Academic Advisor, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and Education, Director of Graduate Studies in Education, professor of Education, and Professor Emeritus in Education.

During her tenure at Freed-Hardeman University, she was the recipient of the Distinguished Professor Award, Faculty Merit Increment Award, Black History Award, and the Annie C. Tuggle Award for Christian Education.

She did not restrict her service to Freed-Hardeman. She was an active member of her local congregation, teaching Bible classes, Vacation Bible School and speaking at ladies' days. She was active in various professional organizations, presenting papers and conducting workshops at the state and national levels as well as internationally.

She served on the Henderson Board of Alderman for 14 years, occupying the seat held by her father, George Saunders. She served on the Advisory Board of Directors for the African Christian Schools. She traveled extensively, frequently on mission trips.

From 1995-1998, she was awarded FHU Recognition of Service Award. She was named the Civitan Club's Citizen of the Year in 2002. She was chosen as Volunteer of the Year by the Chester County Chamber of Commerce in 2008.

In 2014, she was one of the honorees at the Black History Program for promoting diversity on FHU campus. She was inducted in the Chester County High School Hall of Fame in 2018. Also, in 2018, She was chosen as Speaker for Tolling of Bell Program at FHU. In 2019, the Jackson (TN) Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. recognized her for her outstanding accomplishments and contributions to education. In 2020, Henderson-Chester County Chamber of Commerce recognized her as Citizen of the Year.

Dr. Saunders enjoyed reading, especially reading the entire Bible each year, walking, flower gardening, traveling, especially mission work, and learning about other cultures.

Cemetery Details

Oak Grove Church Of Christ Cemetery

120 Lott Road
Henderson, TN 38340

Previous Events

Graveside Service

AUG 8. 11:00 AM (CT)

Oak Grove Church Of Christ Cemetery
120 Lott Road
Henderson, TN 38340

Tribute Wall



“ *Rip Dear Cousin
Chester County and surrounding counties
going to miss you. Prayers lifted to every
heart you touched. Such a beautiful woman
inside and out*



Nedra Glenn - August 08, 2025 at 03:28 PM

FW

“ *My condolences to the family and friends of
Dr. Saunders.*



Frederick Wade - August 08, 2025 at 11:24 AM

HD

“ *Ann was a childhood friend and a beautiful
sister in Christ. We will remember her quiet,
gentle spirit and her laughter. To God be the
Glory. ❤️ Harry and Sheila Davis ❤️*



Harry & Sheila Davis - August 08, 2025 at 09:01 AM

SK

“ *Sharon Knight lit a candle in memory of
Elizabeth Saunders*



Sharon Knight - August 07, 2025 at 11:06 PM

KW

“ Dr. Saunders was one of my favorite professors at FHU. I loved learning from her. Love you, Dr. Saunders! 🌹



Karen Wyatt - August 07, 2025 at 06:38 PM



“ Irene Lancaster lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth Saunders



Irene Lancaster - August 07, 2025 at 10:41 AM

VH

“ Virginia Ann Herring-Trice lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth Saunders



Virginia Ann Herring-Trice - August 07, 2025 at 10:29 AM

DH

“ Dorrان Howard lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth Saunders



Dorrان Howard - August 07, 2025 at 12:27 AM

TS

“ *Tamela Baldrige Sain lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth Saunders*



Tamela Baldrige Sain - August 07, 2025 at 12:07 AM

TN

“ *Nobody taught teaching better than she. Through exponentiality she has blessed millions of learners and has inspired thousands of teachers.*

Tim Neal - August 06, 2025 at 09:07 PM

VJ

“ *Velma Johnson lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth Saunders*



Velma Johnson - August 06, 2025 at 04:28 PM

JP

“ *Elizabeth was an outstanding Christian woman and a true friend. We will miss her.*

Josephine Price - August 06, 2025 at 04:20 PM

JC

“ Jeff & Cathy Cozzens purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Dr. Elizabeth Ann Saunders.



Jeff & Cathy Cozzens - August 06, 2025 at 09:26 AM

JC

“ Jeff & Cathy Cozzens planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Elizabeth Ann Saunders.

Jeff & Cathy Cozzens - August 06, 2025 at 09:26 AM

SS

“ Dr, Saunders was my professor and student teacher advisor while I was a graduate student at Freed-Hardeman. She was a very caring individual. I learned a great deal from her. She will truly be missed.

Sherman Sain - August 06, 2025 at 07:29 AM

II

“ Dr. Saunders was a humble yet effective servant of God. Her influence is far reaching as she positively affected every student she came in contact with while matriculating on the campus of Freed-Hardeman. I never took a class taught by her, yet I learned many life lessons from her Godly example and kindred spirit. It was her passion for Christian education that won me over, positive attitude, and her beautiful smile that was constant. Dr. Saunders made an indelible mark on the students and staff who made up the FHU family. Rest in power my sister! I'm praying for her family and school colleagues as well as the students to be able to fill the void Dr. Saunders' absence will leave with fond memories of the joy she brought to us all. Earth holds no sorrows that heaven can't heal. Blessings & peace, Isaiah Echols, II Class of 1989. 🙏❤️🕊️

Isaiah Echols, II - August 06, 2025 at 02:48 AM

BF

I grew Up with Elizabeth Saunders, I knew her father and mother. We graduated from Vincent High school on May, 1966.my birthday is April 11 and hers was April 12, 1948. She was a special friend and will be missed. I will miss wishing her a happy Birthday. Brenda Howell Floyd

Brenda Howell Floyd - August 06, 2025 at 10:40 PM

TW

Rip Elizabeth Saunders a beautiful person.

Twanda Thomas Wallace - August 07, 2025 at 06:05 PM

SG

“ I tried to earn extra credit by offering to wash her car. She said instead of washing her car, spend that time studying. I was only kidding but she wasn't kidding. Much respect for her. She was one of the best professors I ever had. Rest in Peace Dr. Saunders

steve gatin - August 06, 2025 at 01:21 AM



“ Pray for the family their lose



Annette Brister - August 06, 2025 at 12:56 AM

GL

“ She was a very important part of my Masters degree and the training I received from her has been invaluable. She cared deeply. Thankful to have had you in my life, Dr. Saunders.

Gail Leatherwood - August 05, 2025 at 11:27 PM

LH

“ I started classes at FHU 2014, Dr.Saunders was very inspiring and encouraging to me. She helped me in many ways and always made sure I could attend worship service. She will be greatly missed.

Louise Hoard - August 05, 2025 at 09:59 PM

AC

“ My heart is heavy, My sister in Christ, my friend, my teacher and my encourager is no longer here with us. Dr. Elizabeth Saunders was such an inspiration to me, she encouraged me to serve the Lord and the love of teaching others. I will cherish our Sunday morning and Wednesday evening talks, serving together at funerals and gospel meetings, Ladies Luncheon, birthdays and community projects. We will truly miss my sister, my friend.



Amie Croom - August 05, 2025 at 09:51 PM

MM

“ *Maria Morlan lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth Saunders*



Maria Morlan - August 05, 2025 at 06:05 PM

RL

“ *She was always, very kind and encouraging. I really admired her when I was growing up. She always treated everyone like they were special. RIP, she will be remembered for a long time.*

Rochelle Mickens Lancaster - August 05, 2025 at 05:51 PM

MA

“ *Maudena Atkins lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth Saunders*



Maudena Atkins - August 05, 2025 at 04:26 PM