



Final Tribute To Flanagan.....

Pallbearers carry the remains of Rev. T. J. Flanagan from Allen Temple AME Church, where funeral rites for the minister-journalist-artist were held. (Perry's Photo)

Flanagan: "Man Of Reality, Intellect," Says Bearden

By VINCENT McCRAW

A chorus of "amen" rang out Thursday during the eulogy Bishop H.I. Bearden lauded Thomas Jefferson Flanagan as "a man of reality who knew the drama of life."

Throughout Bearden's anecdotal eulogy, the more than 100 who came to pay final tribute to Flanagan at the Flipper Temple A.M.E. Church gave verbal acknowledgement as each apparently recalled personal encounters with the deceased.

Flanagan, Atlanta's premier poet, minister and writer with the Atlanta Daily World for two decades, died Monday morning at his northwest home of more than 60 years.

He was 93.

"He is our earthly loss, but heaven's gain. He was a man who set his sails for his life. He was a man of decision who relied upon God and not upon himself," said Bearden, a personal friend for many years.

As a poet, Flanagan became popular for his "Up From Georgia with My Banjo On My Knee" a regular feature of the Daily World. He had already begun writing for the Black-weekly Atlanta Independent before he met W.A. and C.A. Scott of the World.

He was cited by literary groups throughout the nation for his poetry. Flanagan wrote several books including, "The Road

to Mount McKeithan," written while he was still in Stewart County, Georgia and "The Canyons at Providence." He also published a hymnal.

As a painter, many of his oil works hang in galleries and facilities across the country. In Atlanta, his oil portrait of Bishop Wesley

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Flanagan

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Gaines hangs in the Big Bethel A.M.E. Church.

His home, noted Bearden, was filled many of the paintings especially of landscapes in which he and Bearden viewed during their trips around the state.

"He made his house into a home by the side of the road to help people--anybody who would come along needing his help."

In 1919, Flanagan moved to Atlanta from his hometown of Lumpkin and began work for the federal government's Railway Mail Service. He retired in 1950 after 33 years with the service.

Upon retirement, Flanagan entered the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church serving as presiding elder for years along with pastoring the Anitoch A.M.E. Church in Decatur.

"He lived an abundant life, using his talents well," said Bearden recalling when Flanagan once told him he didn't want a funeral but only to "be committed back to the earth."

Interment services were conducted at Southview Cemetery.

Other participants at the service included, Dr. R.T. Bussey; Dr. L.W. Hope; Father Edward Warner; Dr. David Jackson; the Flipper Temple Choir, Miriam Adams and Rev. J.C. Williams, pastor of Flipper Temple.

Serving as pall bearers were, Rev. L.H. Holmes; Rev. G.N. Jones; Rev. Ben

Gay; C.P. Coles; Richard Jinks and George Jinks. Honorary pall bearers were the A.M.E. Ministers Union, the Daily World Staff and the Atlanta Postal Alliance. Benjamin Johnson, acolyte and the A.M.E. Ministers Wives Alliances and church Stewardesses served as Flower Ladies.

Flanagan is survived by his daughter, Carrie Nell Flanagan Gadson, of Tuskegee, Ala.; Robert Bells Flanagan of Atlanta; a foster daughter, Lizzie Ruth Smith. Nieces and nephews and several grandchildren.

He was married to the late Willie Maude Bells for 52 years.