

Rev. Richard Lawrence McFarland (1917-2002)

By Jerry Long
c.2024



Rev. Richard L. McFarland



Daviess County, Kentucky Celebrating Our Heritage, 1815-2015
(Evansville, IN, M. T. Publishing Company, Inc., 2015),
“Daviess County Bicentennial Chronology – 200 Historical Events,”
by Jerry Long in celebration of Daviess County’s Bicentennial, p.17:

1985, 11-5 Rev. Richard L. McFarland (1917-2002), Baptist minister and funeral home director, won a seat on the Owensboro City Commission. He was the first black to be elected to an office other than the school board in the county. In 1979 Jean Higgs had been appointed to fill a vacancy on the city school board and in the next election was elected to the post.

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 17 September 2002, p.2B:

The Rev. R. L. McFarland Sr.



The Rev. Richard L. McFarland Sr., 85, of Owensboro died Friday, Sept. 13, 2002, at his home. The Owensboro native worked at SouthCentral Bell, pastored at Mount Calvary Baptist Church for 46 years, was moderator emeritus of Green River Valley District Association and a member of Mount Pisgah Lodge 20. He served four terms on Owensboro City Commission, two terms as mayor pro tem and was a Kentucky Colonel. A son, Richard L. McFarland Jr., died Oct. 5, 2001.

Survivors include his wife, Ruby T. McFarland; four sons, Freddie R. McFarland, Dwight T. McFarland and Roger S. McFarland, all of Owensboro; and Alison S. McFarland of Campinas, Brazil; three daughters, Nestra M. McFarland of Owensboro, Patricia M. Oberg of Bountiful, Utah, and Susan McFarland of Salt Lake City; 17 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren.

Services are at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Fourth Street Baptist Church in Owensboro. Entombment will be in Owensboro Memorial Gardens. Visitation is from 4 to 8 p.m. today at Fourth Street Baptist Church. The body will lie in state from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. today at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Owensboro. Masonic services will be conducted at 7 p.m. today at Fourth Street Baptist Church by Mount Pisgah Lodge 20. McFarland Funeral Home in Owensboro is in charge of arrangements. Expressions of sympathy may take the form of donations to Mount Calvary Baptist Church New Church Building Fund, c/o National City Bank, Owensboro.

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 14 September 2002, pp.1A & 2A

**McFarland, former mayor pro tem, dies at 85
Minister opened door for black politicians**

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

The Rev. R.L. McFarland, who rose from delivering packages for a downtown department store to serving six terms on the Owensboro City Commission – the last two as mayor pro tem – died Friday morning at his home. He was 85.

McFarland, who in 1986 became the first black candidate elected to paid public office in Owensboro or Daviess County, began working behind the scenes in politics as a 12-year-old in 1929 – handing out election materials in Logan Meredith's successful race for mayor.

At the time, he had no political ambitions himself.

"When I was a young man, no one thought any black person would ever be elected to city government," McFarland said in a 1996 interview. "That just wasn't the way things were."

"He was a great man," Mayor Waymond Morris said Friday. "He made great contributions to Owensboro, especially in leading the way for other African-Americans to serve on the City Commission."

In the 1996 interview, McFarland said he felt "like John the Baptist, opening the doors for other blacks" in local politics.

That happened in May 1995, when David Adkisson resigned as mayor and Morris, then a city commissioner, was elected mayor. Olive Burroughs, who had finished fifth in the last City Commission election, was appointed to succeed Morris on the commission.

Burroughs won the post at the polls that fall, becoming the first black woman elected to city or county office here.

"Rev. McFarland was a pioneer," said Burroughs, who is now seeking her fifth term on the commission. "His being the first elected black official in Owensboro opened the door for me. And serving with him for one term was an historic occasion."

Morris said McFarland was a calming influence during times of tension on the City Commission. His achievements included the creation of a program that saw city officials visiting local industries to discuss their needs, Morris said.

"He was a close friend," Morris said. "We remained close even after he left office."

The lack of opportunities for blacks in Owensboro during his youth didn't discourage McFarland's lifelong interest in politics.

"When I got older, I took a more active role, driving people to the polls," he recalled.

But McFarland was too busy holding down at least two jobs at a time and helping his wife, Ruby, raise eight children to think about running for office, even when integration came in the 1960s.

"I had eight kids," he said. "I had to work more than one job to support my family. I worked 18 hours a day for more than 30 years."

After graduating from the all-black Western High School as valedictorian of the class of 1935, McFarland went to work as a deliveryman for a downtown department store. At night, he cleaned buildings.

When World War II was heating up, McFarland got a job as a janitor in an Evansville defense plant, driving back and forth from Owensboro. He was partially disabled in a fall there, but he continued to work.

Ruby McFarland recalled once that there was a time when her husband "had three kids and me in college. I was going to mortuary school in Louisville and coming home on weekends. He was working two jobs and taking care of the children."

McFarland entered the ministry at age 29, preaching his first sermon on Jan. 26, 1947. He served as pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church for 46 years, beginning his ministry there on Aug. 19, 1956.

"He was one of the great ministers of this community," said the Rev. George Sebree, pastor at Fourth Street Baptist Church, who had known McFarland for 20 years. "He was dedicated to his

work, to his people and to community service. He gave his best - even when he wasn't really able to do it."

McFarland had also served as pastor or interim pastor at Sweeney Street Baptist Church, Little Union Baptist Church at Calhoun, Little Flock Baptist Church at Sorgho, Bethlehem Baptist Church in Utica, Strother Chapel Baptist Church in Livermore and Bryant Chapel Baptist Church in Whitesville.

In 1968, he and his wife bought what is now McFarland Funeral Home and he served as its secretary-treasurer.

By 1985, McFarland had retired from BellSouth after almost 29 years as a supply serviceman.

That was the year that "a delegation of both white and black people came to see me and asked if they could submit my name as a candidate for city commissioner," McFarland said in 1996. "I prayed about it, and the Lord didn't tell me no. I felt it was the Lord interceding. My being here (at City Hall) is the Lord's will."

He won the first of his six terms in office in 1986, serving until Jan. 1, 1997. McFarland received the most votes of any candidate in the last two races he won in 1992 and 1994 and served as mayor pro tem during those four years.

When he ran for office in 1985, McFarland said, "There was a sense of hopelessness in Owensboro. You were ashamed to take people downtown. There was glass on the sidewalks from broken windows. Grass was growing in the cracks."

He was proud to have seen downtown Owensboro turn around during his years in office.

In 1992, the Owensboro Human Relations Commission created the Rev. R.L. McFarland Leadership Award in his honor.

McFarland summed up his life, saying: "I've tried to make the world a little better for my having been here. I'm not a media hound. I believe in letting the work I do speak for me."

Arrangements are pending at McFarland Funeral Home.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 18 September 2002, p.7A:

Editorial: McFarland was more than just a trailblazer

In 10 years with the Brooklyn Dodgers, Jackie Robinson hit more than .300 in six seasons, was a National League Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year, was a six-time All-star and played in the World Series six times.

Yet, beyond the most die-hard of baseball fans, Robinson is remembered primarily as the man who broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball.

For trailblazers like Robinson, their courage, their ability to take giant leaps where others were denied small steps, overshadows everything else they accomplished in life.

Owensboro lost its own pioneer last week with the passing of the Rev. R. L. McFarland. Elected to the City Commission in 1986, McFarland became the city's first black candidate to be elected to office.

"When I was a young man, no one thought any black person would ever be elected to city government," McFarland said in 1996. "That just wasn't the way things were."

Things are different today, and for that we have McFarland to thank. He not only helped change the mind-set within the black community – for whom he served as a role model for others to follow – but he helped change race relations throughout all of Owensboro.

But as great an accomplishment as that is, as the community remembers McFarland, it shouldn't be forgotten that he was much more than just a trailblazer – he was a strong leader who made significant contributions in his six terms on the commission.

McFarland was described by Mayor Waymond Morris as a calming influence on the City Commission during tense times. He first brought up the idea of naming a street after Martin Luther King Jr., which became a reality last year. Always concerned about being a moral leader, McFarland helped lead the movement to remove pornography from Owensboro.

McFarland was an enthusiastic supporter of business, looking for ways to attract and retain local industries. He was a part of the pro-merger campaign in its early days and was also a part of the initial movement to cleanup Greenwood Cemetery. McFarland was a board member for Downtown Owensboro Inc., and worked diligently to make downtown a place residents were proud of and wanted to visit.

McFarland helped open the door to politics to a part of society that had previously been left on the outside. In doing so, he helped open the minds of many and went on to show his leadership extended beyond breaking barriers.

As for his legacy, McFarland once said, "I've tried to make the world a little better for my having been here."

Owensboro is certainly a better community for having known the Rev. R. L. McFarland.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 19 September 2002, pp.1A & 2A:

Mourners celebrate his legacy at funeral

'A giant has fallen,' pastor tells hundreds

By Justin Willis, Messenger-Inquirer

The Rev. R.L. McFarland was remembered Wednesday as a man of dedication and commitment who devoted his life to Christian principles and served as an example for others in the community.

McFarland, 85, died Friday, but an estimated crowd of more than 350 gathered at Fourth Street Baptist Church to celebrate his legacy.

In addition to celebrating McFarland's role as the grand patriarch of a large family, speakers remembered him as a pastor, friend, trailblazer and an Owensboro city commissioner beloved by much of the city.

At least four ministers spoke at the 2 1/2-hour service that included songs, speeches by city and state elected officials, friends and written statements about McFarland from other churches. Guests at the service crowded the pews and filled the church choir loft, and about 25 people stood along the aisle through the service.

The Rev. M. Garswa Matally from Wing Avenue Baptist Church met McFarland in 1994 when Matally arrived in Owensboro. The two immediately started a friendship, and Matally considered McFarland a mentor.

"His life in one word was the word `commitment,' " Matally said. "He was very committed to friendship."

In an era when fathers leave children, people leave jobs and pastors commonly switch churches every three years, McFarland was an example of stability and dedication, Matally said.

McFarland entered the ministry at 29, preaching his first sermon on Jan. 26, 1947. He served as pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church for 46 years, beginning his ministry there on Aug. 19, 1956.

McFarland went on a mission trip to Liberia in 1976, and Matally is a native of Liberia. The two found a connection that developed into a close friendship over the next eight years, Matally said.

"From that day on I just cherished every day with him," Matally said.

Together, Ruby McFarland and her husband of 62 years raised eight children. The couple has 17 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. While raising the children, R.L. McFarland frequently worked two jobs.

By 1985, McFarland had retired from BellSouth after almost 29 years as a supply serviceman. He was approached that year by a group of black and white people who encouraged him to run for Owensboro City Commission.

He won the first of his six terms in office in 1986, serving until Jan. 1, 1997. McFarland was the first black candidate elected to a paid public office in Owensboro or Daviess County.

He received the most votes of any candidate in the last two races he won in 1992 and 1994 and served as mayor pro tem during those four years.

The Rev. Larry Lewis, pastor of Zion Baptist Church, praised McFarland for making great strides for residents of Owensboro.

"There's a lot of things I could say about this man," Lewis said. "He was a servant."

Alfred Reed, a pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Earlington, attended the service to represent the Kentucky Baptist Association. "A giant has fallen," Reed said. "He has touched lives all over the world."

McFarland's office at Owensboro City Hall was next to former City Commissioner and current Owensboro Mayor Waymond Morris' office.

Morris choked back tears as he read a prayer for McFarland. Morris' family spent time with McFarland's family, Morris said.

Morris admired and respected McFarland, who always prayed for guidance when handling issues as an elected city official. McFarland realized the importance of his work as a city commissioner and supported annexation, economic development and the city's infrastructure, Morris said.

"He especially prayed on those issues that made him uncomfortable," Morris said. "He knew he had the lives of the citizens of Owensboro ... people were always his main concern."

Sen. David Boswell, a Sorgho Democrat, said each person is put on the earth for a reason, but McFarland was put on the earth for multiple reasons. McFarland served as a father, pastor, public servant and his family helped much of the community through their grief at the family's business, McFarland Funeral Home, Boswell said.

"The community is a better place to live in," Boswell said. "Because of R.L. McFarland."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 11 August 2001, pp.6B & 4B:

Old-time preacher McFarland won't retire from God's work, but he's slowing down

By Karen Owen, Messenger-Inquirer

At nearly 84 years old, the Rev. R.L. McFarland Sr. doesn't take his ministry for granted. He thanked God for another chance to be in church Sunday.

He's also preparing a younger assistant, a relative, to someday take his place.

"You'd be foolish to think there's always going to be the Rev. R.L. McFarland Sr.," the pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church said recently, sitting in his living room at home at 610 Elm St.

He's celebrating his 45th anniversary at the church this month.

That doesn't mean McFarland plans to retire. Far from it.

"I'll die in the ministry," he said. "Nowhere in Scripture do you ever find where the Lord tells you to leave ministry."

"I won't say I'll pastor till I die. I'll preach till I die."

Breathing problems are making it hard for the former Owensboro City Commission member to keep up with his flock, however.

He leaned heavily on the Communion table during the closing prayer at the end of a two-hour service Sunday.

The service included two sermons and the Lord's Supper. McFarland preached the first sermon – the children's sermon. "It's a funny thing," he said recently at home. "I don't have any trouble at all when I'm preaching."

About 100 people comfortably filled the padded pews of the old church at 507 Plum St. Many of them were children, who filled the amen corner to overflowing when McFarland called them forward.

The world shouldn't have to guess they are Christians, McFarland told the youngsters, leaning against the podium. "Faith must work. Faith does not make a man lazy."

He warmed to his topic, speaking more rapidly and forcefully. "If you've been born again – I mean really born again - you can't hide it."

He switched to the subject of honoring one's parents. "You can cut short your days just by being disobedient," McFarland said. "How many of y'all know that, children?"

Then he turned much of the service over to his protegee, his brother's 37-year-old grandson, Mark McFarland.

Mark McFarland was living in Hopkins County until recently but has been helping out at Mount Calvary since April.

"The years have taken a toll on me, but Mark's a good speaker," McFarland said at home.

"It's time to get ready to build that new church!" his relative told the congregation. "God is getting ready to move!"

The older minister nodded in agreement at times, sometimes leaning forward in his chair as if mentally urging his protégé on.

He's mentored three young preachers before. All have their own churches now, McFarland said.

What God has given, no one can take away, he said. "The young men need that practice. I've never been jealous of my ministry."

"He's good with young preachers," agreed the Rev. Ronald Holmes, pastor of Asbury United Methodist Church here and Barnes Chapel United Methodist Church in Beaver Dam. "He gives us young preachers good advice."

McFarland has been in the ministry 53 years .

"I like his style," said Mary Helen Cross, Mount Calvary's oldest member at age 96. "He's calm. He knows what he's doing and saying. He's not jumping."

"He tries to do what the members agree," she said. And, "He's true for what he says he's going to do."

Richard Lawrence McFarland was born the youngest of eight children. His father, a custodian, was an active church deacon.

"All my life I've been around the church. My life has been in the church," McFarland said.

He started out doing custodial work himself as a young teen, then drove a delivery truck for downtown department stores before going to work for the telephone company in 1950.

He met his future wife, Ruby Taylor of Sorgho, when he was just 12 and she was 9. They married 10 years later.

"I felt called to the ministry way back," said McFarland, but "I ran from it for five years."

Beyond high school, his only education has been reading on his own. "I've got I don't know how many translations of the Bible," McFarland said. A massive concordance lay on a nearby coffee table.

He began his ministry at several small churches around the area, then moved to Mount Calvary in 1956.

The church was "down to just a few members at that time," McFarland said. "Some of my family couldn't understand why I'd give up what I had."

"It was a struggle for years and years and years."

The church building had been erected hastily sometime around 1935; many mistakes had been made, McFarland said. "When it came a rain, you could baptize down in the basement because there was that much water."

He continued to work at South Central Bell, retiring in 1979. He and Ruby McFarland also went into the funeral business, buying the former Haynes Funeral Home. She and two of their eight children take care of most of the daily operations there.

In 1985, McFarland became the first black elected to the Owensboro City Commission. He served until 1996.

He never dreamed he'd be at Mount Calvary so long, McFarland said. "Some of the mothers that were children when I went there, now they are grandmothers."

He's managed such a long tenure because of "my love for people," McFarland said.

"I wouldn't pastor anywhere there's fussing and fighting. I don't argue. If things get a little warm or somebody gets out of sort, I'd much rather go about my way and let them cool off."

Last year, McFarland encouraged his congregation to start raising money for a new building.

Many of his members are on fixed incomes, Cross noted. And "He's the kind of pastor who doesn't believe in selling" to raise money for the church. "He's one of those old-time preachers."

Holmes is trying to get other area churches to help raise the \$200,000 to \$400,000 for the project. "He hasn't asked us to do anything, but I think we ought to help raise the funds," Holmes said.

"He's a very spiritual brother. I'm just proud of him."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 11 October 1996, pp.1A & 2A:

Election '96: Owensboro City Commission
McFarland proud of achievements since taking office

By Tracy L. McQueen, Messenger-Inquirer

Although he and fellow incumbents have been under fire by some of the challengers in this year's race for city commissioner, Mayor Pro-tem R.L. McFarland says he is proud of his record.

When he first ran for city commissioner in 1985, unemployment was nearly 10 percent. He said the future of the city was bleak.

The most recent figures show an unemployment rate of just 4.1 percent for Daviess County, which is among the lowest rates of the last 20 years. McFarland said most people are optimistic about the future.

"There's a sense of pride," McFarland said. "When I went on board, none of this existed."

He said attracting jobs to the community has been his chief concern since joining the commission 11 years ago. He said some of his opponents seem to have forgotten how much the local economy has improved.

"I'm proud that I've been a part of what's been done the past 11 years," McFarland said. "They can't take that away."

McFarland, 79, is the pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church and the first African American to be elected to the city commission. He is the oldest of eight commission candidates in the Nov. 5 election, in which the top four vote-getters will win two-year terms that begin in January.

Some of his opponents have criticized McFarland for being too complacent and too willing to go along with the majority without question.

But Don Owsley, who is retired from Green River Steel, said McFarland is effective because he has patience and can work with others on the commission. He said McFarland has worked diligently during his years on the commission.

"They don't know what they're talking about," Owsley said. "It's easy to be a critic."

Owsley said McFarland is effective, even if he is quiet.

"He doesn't take the limelight or the credit," Owsley said.

If he is re-elected, McFarland said he will continue to work to attract jobs.

"That's always been my interest," McFarland said.

He also believes the city must continue its strong commitment to public safety. Half of the city budget goes to police and fire protection.

"Regardless of how much improvement you make in the city, no person will feel secure unless you have a safe city," McFarland said.

City officials have hired a consulting firm to conduct an extensive study of the police department and recommend changes. City officials also are searching for a new chief.

McFarland said he expects the study and the new chief to be positives for the department. He also hopes the city will be able to build a new police headquarters.

He said he is pleased with the police department's community policing efforts in the west end and its new substation at Towne Square Mall. He hopes the new chief will build on those programs.

McFarland said he is concerned about juveniles' increasing involvement in crime - as both the victims and the criminals.

He would like to see the police department, along with other agencies in the community, continue working to reverse that trend.

"I'm going to do all that I can to make Owensboro a better place to live," McFarland said. One of McFarland's greatest strengths is bringing people together, according to Jim Glenn.

"He's worked honestly and diligently for the community," said Glenn, an associate professor at Owensboro Community College. "He's tried to listen to everybody in the community." McFarland finished sixth among 14 candidates in the primary, the worst finish in his political career. Owsley said McFarland can continue to be a productive commissioner if voters give him the chance.

"He has a lot of wisdom," Owsley said. "He's been a commissioner for all the people."

Profile: The Rev. R.L. McFarland

Born: Aug. 25, 1917 Address: 610 Elm St.

Occupation: Pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church

Family: Wife, Ruby McFarland; eight children

Education: Western High School Elected offices held: City commissioner since 1986

On the issues: Says job development, public safety and youth are the top three issues facing the city

[note: R. L. McFarland lost in his bid for re-election on Tuesday, 5 November 1996.]



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 8 November 1989, pp.1A & .

McFarland new mayor pro tem

By Dan Heckel, Messenger-Inquirer

The Rev. R.L. McFarland Jr., the first black man ever elected to the Owensboro City Commission, became the first black mayor pro tem Tuesday.

"I was never more surprised in my life," McFarland said. "I thought I was third, but (fellow commissioner) Alan Braden told me I was number one. I thought he was pulling my leg."

The top vote-getter in the City Commission election is traditionally named mayor pro tem, meaning he's second in charge behind the mayor.

McFarland gathered 5,273 votes, 45 more than current pro tem Waymond Morris, who got 5,228. Incumbents Alan Braden and Jack Ross received 5,217 and 5,080 votes, respectively.

The lone challenger, Jim Brockman, finished fifth for the third time in his political career with 4,308 votes.

McFarland said the similar amount of votes for the four incumbents shows the people are happy with the current administration. "We work as a team. (Mayor) David Adkisson provides the leadership and has lots of ideas we can work with," McFarland said.

McFarland, elected to his third term, said he hopes he's acting as a role model for the black community by being the top vote-getter. "I hope it lets others know that follow me that it's possible, if you're accessible and listen to the needs of the people."

Morris, re-elected to a fourth term, said he was happy to see the people so satisfied with the work of the commission. Morris received criticism from three of the commission candidates Friday for the way he was campaigning to remain mayor pro tem. Tuesday, he said he was just glad to be on the commission.

"I'm very competitive in everything I do. I want to be first," Morris said. "But I'm happy for Rev. McFarland. If anyone was going to knock me out of there, I'm glad it was him."

Braden, re-elected to his fourth term, said it didn't matter what order the candidates finished. He said he was happy with the city voter turnout, and that the people were satisfied with the commission as a team.

Ross, re-elected to his fifth term, said it was the second time he had come in fourth, but his vote counts the same as the top three vote-getters. "The main thing is to get into the top four."

Ross said he was elated McFarland was mayor pro tem. "The reverend is a nice guy and he understands the problems of the people."

Brockman was cheerful in defeat, saying again that he filed so a race would be held. "It's important for the Democratic process. I have always run well in the past, but I just haven't had quite enough support."

He said he would not rule out running again for the commission.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 28 February 1985, p.1A:

Last-minute candidates make bids for office

Small field seeking city commission seats

By Keith Lawrence Messenger-inquirer



The Owensboro City Commission race has its smallest field in more than 20 years, and only once in the past two decades have fewer people sought Daviess County offices.

Late filings Wednesday brought the final field in the city commission race to five men with the addition of the Rev. Richard L. McFarland Sr. of 610 Elm St. to the four incumbents. That

means no city commission race in the May 28 primary; instead, the non-partisan selection of four commissioners will be made by voters in November.

McFarland is one of two blacks seeking office locally this year. The other is Jacondino Brizendine, a candidate for constable in the eastern division.

Rosalee Pearson Stone of 2704 Sunrise Drive Wednesday became the only woman to file this year. Mrs. Stone, as an independent candidate for county commissioner in the central division, will advance to the general election without opposition.

Daviess is one of only five counties in Kentucky with no women or blacks in elected office other than school board.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 3 November 1985, p.5D:

R.L. McFARLAND, SR.
for City Commissioner

THIS I BELIEVE

- We should utilize tax incentives to promote new industries.
- We should squarely face the drainage problem at last.
- We should explore every avenue to induce our young people to stay in Owensboro.
- We should work for the equal funding of agencies by the city & county.
- A city commissioner should represent all the people.

THIS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- I am married to the former Ruby Taylor (for 45 years) and we are the parents of 8 children.
- As a former employee of South Central Bell, I was responsible for more than a million dollars of inventory.
- For the past 29 years I have been the pastor of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church.
- I am a member of the Owensboro-Daviess County Literacy Council.
- I was the recipient of the Human Relations Award in 1983.

A MAN OF PROVEN QUALITY

Public Advertisment Paid for by R.L. McFarland Campaign, 1011 Olive, Box 1000, Owensboro, KY 40301



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 6 November 1985, p.1A:

Newcomers score victories

McFarland becomes first black ever to win City Commission seat

By Keith Smith, Messenger-Inquirer



The Rev. Richard McFarland and his wife, Ruby, celebrate at their home at 610 Elm St. after McFarland won Tuesday night a City Commission seat.

A 68-year-old Baptist minister made local history Tuesday when he became the first black ever elected to the Owensboro City Commission.

"I'm deeply appreciative of the support of the citizens of Owensboro," said the Rev. Richard McFarland, the lone challenger in the five-man city commissioner race.

He ousted incumbent Mike Wellman, whose campaign was haunted by misdemeanor charges pending against him. Some of those charges are drug-related.

"We just got out there and tried to get out the vote," McFarland said. He was beaming Tuesday night as he and a group of supporters celebrated the win at his home. A city precinct map was attached to one wall.

He said he prayed and "asked if it was the Lord's will that I be the first to break the ice."

McFarland came in fourth in the race and there were just 406 votes between he and Waymond Morris, who got the most votes with 6,411. Those men will be joined in January by incumbents Jack Ross and Alan Braden.

Wellman came in fifth 4,743 votes behind McFarland. Wellman only got 1,262 votes.

"I don't hold a grudge," Wellman said. "The people spoke and that's the American way."

He said he'd like to think he lost because of the charges pending against him and not because he didn't do a good job in City Hall.

The charges are false, he said, but he thinks most people have already convicted him in their minds. The news media also played a role in his defeat, he said. Every time his name was mentioned, he said the media also mentioned the charges.

Morris, the 49-year-old principal of Daviess County High School, said he really doesn't know why he came out on top in the race. He said he's spoken his opinion on a number of issues.

"I'm doing what the people want me to do," he said. "I guess that's what that means."

Traditionally, the City Commission elects the commissioner with the most votes as mayor pro tem and that person takes over mayoral duties in the mayor's absence.

"Mr. Ross, Mr. Braden and I have all been very, very close," Morris said. "The majority of the people that went to the polls showed their confidence in us."

Ross, the mayor pro tem now, said there wasn't much difference between the four winners and was not upset by second place.

"Of course I enjoy what I do. I wouldn't have run again if I didn't," Ross said. "I feel very good about it."

Just 34 votes separated Ross and Morris, and Ross was just 29 votes ahead of Braden.

Ross received 6,377 votes, Braden received 6,348 votes and McFarland received 6,005 votes.

McFarland, the pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church, had never sought office before and he said he did it this year because he's retired now from South Central Bell and has time to devote to the commission. He is also an official of McFarland Funeral Home.

Wellman, 35, is the owner of Wellman's Bar-B-Q and he has said the past two years on the commission have been smooth. He got the second-highest number of votes in the 1983 city commission race.

In August, Owensboro police charged him with five counts of second-degree unlawful transaction with a minor and two counts of impersonating a public servant. According to some of the warrants, he is accused of assisting juvenile males to ingest marijuana and an inhalant. One unlawful transaction count alleging that he helped a juvenile male violate the city's curfew ordinance has been dismissed.

Wellman also faces charges of impersonating a public servant and terroristic threatening in Henderson County.

The five-man field was the smallest in about 20 years and the race was one of the cheapest.

Braden, a certified public accountant, spent the least of the five candidates. A political newcomer in 1983, Braden won his second term by finishing third Tuesday. He finished fourth in 1983.

He said he was pleased by the turnout because there were no state, national or mayoral elections this year.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 3 January 1986, p.1C:

New City Commission takes office

By Gary Karr, Messenger-Inquirer

Flashbulbs popped and instant cameras whirred at City Hall Thursday as the Rev. Richard McFarland Sr. was sworn in as Owensboro's first black city commissioner.

Most of the approximately 50 people who attended Thursday's swearing-in ceremony were members of Mount Calvary Baptist Church, where McFarland is minister. Some of them brought cameras to record the occasion.

In a short speech after he took the oath of office, McFarland said while city commissioner he would continue to follow his motto, Proverbs 3:6, which states: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." McFarland said he was proud to be the first black elected to office in Owensboro but said he hoped his election would mean race would not be an issue in future elections.

He said the black community in Owensboro is encouraged by his election. "I think we've shown them that they can achieve their goals," McFarland said.

Mayor Jack Fisher, who praised McFarland's election as a "great step forward," said more black candidates may consider running for office. But, Fisher said, "I still believe the people elect their representatives on the basis of the person, not if they are black or white."

McFarland took his seat on the commission Thursday along with Alan Braden, Jack Ross and Waymond Morris, who were re-elected in November. McFarland, the only challenger, defeated incumbent Mike Wellman by more than 4,000 votes.

Wellman gave a short speech before leaving office, in which he urged the new commission to "make decisions that are fair to all the citizens in Owensboro."

He said the top priority for the city should be to "do whatever it takes, whatever it costs, to bring industry to the city."

Wellman, who faces misdemeanor charges scheduled for trial this month in Henderson and Daviess district courts, said the charges played a role in his defeat, though they may not have been the complete reason for his loss.

"I still swear to this day that I am not guilty," he said.

Morris, who received the most votes in the November election, was voted by the new commission as mayor pro-tem, replacing Ross. Traditionally, the top vote-getter in the election is voted mayor pro-tem.

Fisher said Morris' party registration as a Republican did not deter other commission members, who are Democrats, from keeping to the tradition. "The commission is non-partisan and we have to operate that way. There's no need to break precedence here," he said.

Morris said, "I hadn't even thought about it before I came to the meeting today."



The Rev. Richard McFarland is photographed with Mayor Jack Fisher at City Hall Thursday morning by his son, Dwight McFarland, shortly after being sworn in as a city commissioner.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 18 July 1979, p.2C:

Harding Home director meets with DHR officials

Mary Harding Home's new administrator, the Rev R. L. McFarland, met for the first time with Kentucky Department for Human Resources officials Tuesday at the home at 1314 W 7th St.

The DHR instructed the Mary Harding board on procedures to obtain the license the board has been denied for the past two years, McFarland said.

Once licensed, the home for the elderly could accept about six more residents, raising the total to 12, he said The home also would be eligible to apply for funds from various agencies.

"We're desperately in need of funds," he said Tuesday.

McFarland was appointed administrator five weeks ago by the home's board of directors. The former administrator, Miss Emma Edwards, 87, resigned in mid-May after 28 years of service.

An Owensboro native and pastor at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Owensboro, McFarland said his other hopes for the home include installing central air conditioning and painting the home's interior.

McFarland said he is not sure how long it will take for the home to be granted its license after a series of inspections.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 12 June 1974, p.7C:

McFarland to head drive for new recreation center

The Rev. R.L. McFarland has been named general chairman of a \$100,000 drive to build a new Community Recreation Center.

Associate chairmen are Billy Chandler and Mrs. Gleason Hanley.

Other chairmen and co-chairmen of the various divisions are Richard Holeman and Mayor Waitman Taylor, major firms; Richard Brown and Mrs. Louella Pry, civic and social organizations; Kenneth Willis and Charles Leachman, small businesses; and the Rev. Charles Bare and the Rev. R.L. Coleman, professional division.

Unie Frank Posey and Mrs. Anna L. Martin, fraternal organizations; Mrs. Addie Talbott and J.B. Tandy, foundations and celebrities, Mrs. Ambrose Settles and Mrs. Juanita Wilhite, governmental employes, and Wesley Acton and Miss Frances Lashbrook, education division.

Mrs. Mary L. Morris and Donald Owsley, finance; Mrs. Nena Lewis and Miss Sheila Meadows, correspondence; Miss Camille Berkley and the Rev. Larry Lewis, publicity; Mrs. R.L. McFarland and Mrs. H.L. Neblett, orientation; Miss Phyllis Buck and Fred Reeves, special events; and Nathaniel Thompson and Mrs. Merle Mason, printing.

Persons interested in donating to the fund who have not been contacted by a campaign worker may send their contribution to Citizens State Bank in care of the Community Recreation Center.

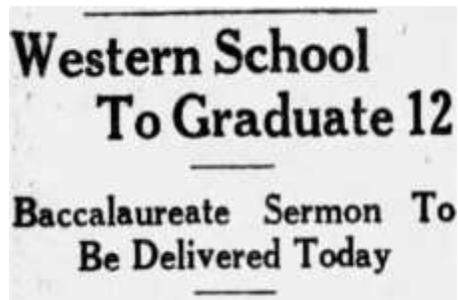


Notes on McFarland Family

by Jerry Long

Richard Lawrence McFarland, Sr. married Ruby Rosella Taylor on 15 June 1940 at the Little Flock Baptist Church near Sorgho in Daviess County, KY. Ruby, daughter of Junius Van Taylor (1890-1974) and Lillian Marie Thruston (1893-1965). Richard L. & Ruby (Taylor) McFarland had eight children – Richard Lawrence, Jr. (1941-2001), Freddie Rueben (1943-), Dwight Taylor (1946-), Nestra Marie (1950-), Alison Sloane (1952-), Patricia Rosella (1956-), Susan (1957-) and Roger Scott McFarland (1963-).

Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 26 May 1935, p.7B:



The baccalaureate sermon for the Western Colored High school graduates will be preached at the Fourth Street Baptist church at 11 o'clock this morning by the Rev. E. H. Smith, pastor. The class night program will be held at the Elm Street church Monday night. The Tresart medal for scholarship will be awarded on this program. Wednesday will be field day. The exercises will be held in the Fifth Street park.

Commencement exercises will be held at the Fourth Street Baptist church at 8:15 o'clock Friday evening. S. E. Hoard, of Bowling Green, will deliver the address. Diplomas will be awarded at the close of the exercises to the following: Richard Lawrence McFarland, valedictorian; Morris Bell Gaddis, salutatorian; Bertha Lee Davis, James Robert Crump, Viola Vivian French, George __stein Flowers, Martha Lillian __, Wilhelma Margaret Simmons, Clara Roberts Shauntee, Cornelia McKinney Earl, Mary Francis West and- Margaret Helen Shauntee.

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 17 January 1952, p.17

County Court Orders

The Rev. R. L. McFarland qualified to perform marriage ceremonies in Kentucky and gave \$1,000 bond with the Rev. B. F. Green as surety.

Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 25 December 1976, p.1D:

Remembrances of Christmases past



Each year I had a wagon, which wasn't always brand new, and I got a drum. Now I appreciate how my parents had to struggle to give each (8) of us a toy or two for Christmas. I never knew then how much sacrifice went to provide our gifts. We were a close family and always had plenty of food and a warm place to stay. —Rev. Richard L. McFarland, pastor, Mt. Calvary Baptist Church

Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 24 June 1990, p.7D:



Rev. and Mrs. McFarland

The Rev. and Mrs. Richard Lawrence McFarland Sr. of 610 Elm St celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary June 16, 1990, with a renewal of vows ceremony at Mt Calvary Baptist Church, where the Rev. Richard Gordon of First Baptist Church, Murphreesboro, Tenn., officiated. After the service, there was a reception at the H.L. Neblett Center.

McFarland and Ruby Rosella Taylor were married June 15, 1940, at Sorgho. Officiating was the Rev. Lafayette Thruston, pastor of Little Flock Baptist Church, and attending the couple were Monroe Taylor, brother of the bride, and Pauline Winstead. The Rev. and Mrs. McFarland operate McFarland Funeral Home. He is mayor pro-tem of the Owensboro City Commission and is pastor at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church.

The McFarlands have eight children, 14 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. The sons are Richard L. McFarland Jr. of Englishtown, N.J.; Freddie R. McFarland of Aurora, Colo.; Alison S. McFarland of Batavia, Ill.; Dwight T. McFarland and Roger S. McFarland, both of Owensboro. The daughters are Patricia McFarland Oberg of Salt Lake City; Susan McFarland of Riverton, Utah; and Nestra McFarland Harris of Owensboro.

Richard Lawrence McFarland was born 26 August 1917 in Owensboro, Daviess County, KY. He was the son of James Daniel ('Dan') McFarland & Agnes Elizabeth ('Dee') Bullett and grandson of Nestor McFarland & Hannah Wayne and Elijah Bullett & Rachel Stout. Richard's birth certificate records his mother's name as Elizabeth Bullet and the US Social Security Index lists his parent's names as James D. McFarland & Agnes E. Bullit. Richard's parents were both natives of Daviess County, KY. Dan McFarland was born 5 June 1873 and died 6 June 1940 at his home, 1535 Sweeney Street, in Owensboro, KY. He married Lizzie Bullett on 3 September 1903 in Owensboro, KY. Agnes Elizabeth Bullett, also known by the nicknames of Dee and Lizzie, was born 1 April 1883 and died 24 August 1959 at 1535 Sweeney Street in Owensboro, KY. Dan & Lizzie McFarland were buried at Greenwood Cemetery in Owensboro, KY. Dan & Lizzie McFarland had eight children – James Daniel (1904-1973), George Lenox (1908-1983), Mae Pearl (1912-1997), William Henry (1914-1967), Richard Lawrence (1917-2002). Josephine E. (1921-1922) and two other children died in infancy.

Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 7 June 1940, p.12:



Dan McFarland, for 25 years janitor at the Kenyon flats, died at 10:45 p. m. Thursday at his home, 1535 Sweeney street. Survivors are the widow, Dee McFarland; one daughter, Pearl Lewis; four sons, J. D., George, W. H. and Richard McFarland; a brother, George McFarland, and three grandsons, all of Owensboro. Funeral services will be held at the Sweeney street Baptist church at 2:30 p. m. Sunday. The United Brothers of Friendship will attend in a body. The Rev. Curtis Gordon, assisted by the Rev. J. W. Wright, will conduct the funeral. Burial will be in Owensboro.

Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 25 August 1959, p.12:



Mrs. Agnes Elizabeth (Dee) McFarland, 76, of 1535 Sweeney St. died Monday at her home at 8:15 p.m. following a stroke.

A native of Stanley, Ky., she had lived in Owensboro the past 60 years. She was a member of the Sweeney Street Baptist church.

Survivors include one daughter, Mrs. Peal Lewis; four sons, J. D., Leo, R. H. and the Rev. Richard McFarland, all of Owensboro, and one brother, Andrew Bullitt, Sorgho, Ky.; 13 grandchildren; one great-grandchild.

The body is at the Griffith Funeral Home.

[Note: her death certificate gave her place of burial as the Greenwood Cemetery.]

14203
State File No. _____
Registrar's No. 246

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
Department of Health
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

Form V. S. 1-A
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Bureau of the Census

Registration District No. 410 X Precinct Registration District No. 2145

1. PLACE OF DEATH:
(a) County Daviess
(b) City or town Owensboro
(c) Name of hospital or institution:
(d) Length of stay: In hospital or community 1535 Sweeney Street
(years, month, or days)

2. USUAL RESIDENCE OF DECEASED:
(a) State Kentucky (b) County Daviess
(c) City or town Owensboro
(d) Street No. 1535 Sweeney Street
(e) If foreign born, how long in U. S. A.?

3(a) FULL NAME Nan McFarland
3(b) If veteran, Name war _____ No. _____
3(c) Social Security No. _____
4. Sex male 5. Color or race white 6(a) Single, widowed, married, divorced married
6(b) Name of husband or wife Mrs. H. McFarland
6(c) Age of husband or wife if alive 56 Years
7. Birth date of deceased: June 5 - 1913
(Month) (Day) (Year)
8. AGE: Years _____ Months _____ Days _____ If less than one day _____ min.

9. Birthplace Daviess County Ky.
10. Usual occupation farmer
11. Industry or business Flats
12. Name Master McFarland
13. Birthplace Ky.
14. Maiden name Hannah Wayne
15. Birthplace Ky.
16(a) Informant's own signature Mrs. Du McFarland
(b) Address 1535 Sweeney Street Owensboro Ky.

17. BURIAL, CREMATION OR REMOVAL
Place Greenwood Date June 9 1940
18(a) Signature of funeral director Agnew and Huttling
(b) Address 721 West Ninth Street Owensboro Ky.
(c) 6-8-1940 (Date received by local registrar) (b) Lilla Cox (Registrar's signature)

19. Signature Agnes E. McFarland (M. D. or other) Address 872 W 5th Date signed 6/8/40

20. DATE OF DEATH June 6, 1940
21. I hereby certify that I attended the deceased from Aug 20 39 to June 6, 1940, that I last saw him alive on June 6, 1940 and that death occurred on the date stated above at 10:15 P.
Immediate cause of death myocarditis & coronary artery disease
DURATION _____
Other conditions no (include pregnancy within 3 months of death)
Major findings: _____
Of operations: 932-111C
Of autopsy: _____

22. If death was due to external causes, fill in the following:
(a) Accident, suicide, or homicide (specify) _____
(b) Date of occurrence _____
(c) Where did injury occur? In or about home, on farm, in industrial place, in public place? _____ (Specify type of place) 6820
While at work? _____ (e) Means of injury _____
23. Signature _____ (M. D. or other) Date signed 6/8/40



Gravestone of James Daniel McFarland
at Greenwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY

The homes of Richard Lawrence McFarland, his parents and grandparents were enumerated as follows in the following US federal census reports of Daviess County, KY:

Daviess County, KY 1870 Census, Uppertown Precinct, p.332A:

	Age	race	occupation	birth place
McFarland, Nester	32	Black	farmer	KY
“ Hannah	30	Black		KY
“ Henry	14	Black		KY
“ George	10	Black		KY
“ Fountain	9	Black		KY
“ Nancy	7	Black		KY
“ Jerry	4	Black		KY
“ Richard	2	Black		KY

Daviess County, KY, 1880 Census, Owensboro, p.297A:

	age	relationship	race	occupation	birth place
McFarland, Nester	47	head	Black	farmer	KY
“ Hannah	42	wife	Black	housekeeper	KY
“ George	21	son	Black	farm hand	KY
“ Nancy	16	daughter	Black		KY
“ Jerry	14	son	Black		KY
“ Richard	10	son	Black		KY
“ Daniel	6	son	Black		KY

Daviess County, KY 1900 Census, Owensboro, Sweeney Street, p.5B:

	born	relationship	race	birthplace of person, father & mother
McFarland, Nestor	Mar 1832	head	Black	widowed, rents home 9 children 3 living KY-KY-VA
“ Richard	Oct 1865	son	Black	married 6 years, day laborer KY-KY-KY
“ Dan J.	Jun 1872	son	Black	single, day laborer KY-KY-KY

“	Etta	Mar 1877	d.-in-l.	Black	married 6 years 3 children 2 living	KY-KY-KY KY-KY-KY
“	Virginia	Sep 1895	dau.	Black	single	KY-KY-KY
“	name missing	1898		Black	single	KY-KY-KY

Daviess County, KY 1910 Census, Owensboro, 1620 Moseley Street, p.195B:

	age	relationship	race	birthplace of person, father & mother
McFarland, Dan	37	head	Black	married 1; bank janitor; rents KY-KY-KY
“ Elizabeth	30	wife	Black	married 1 – 7 years 3 children – 2 living KY-KY-KY
“ James D.	5	son	Black	KY-KY-KY
“ George L.	1 7/12	son	Black	KY-KY-KY

Daviess County, KY 1920 Census, Owensboro, 1535 Sweeney Street, p.101B:

	age	relationship	race	birthplace of person, father & mother
McFarland, Dan	46	head	Black	no occupation; owns home KY-KY-KY
“ Lizzie	35	wife	Black	married KY-KY-KY
“ James	15	son	Black	single KY-KY-KY
“ George L.	11	son	Black	single KY-KY-KY
“ Pearl M.	7	son	Black	single KY-KY-KY
“ William H.	5	son	Black	single KY-KY-KY
“ Richard L.	2 4/12	son	Black	single KY-KY-KY

Daviess County, KY 1930 Census, Owensboro, 1535 Sweeney Street, p.197:

	age	relationship	race	birthplace of person, father & mother
McFarland, James D.	56	head	Black	apartment janitor; owns house married at age 34 KY-KY-KY
“ Elizabeth	49	wife	Black	married at age 27 KY-KY-KY
“ George L.	21	son	Black	drug store delivery KY-KY-KY
“ Fannie M.	17	daughter	Black	single KY-KY-KY
“ William H.	14	son	Black	single KY-KY-KY
“ Richard L.	12	son	Black	single KY-KY-KY

Daviess County, KY 1940 Census, Owensboro, 1535 Sweeney Street, p.345A:

	age	relationship	race	occupation	birthplace
McFarland, James D.	66	head	Black	janitor rooming house; owns house	KY
“ Dee	55	wife	Black	married	KY
“ Richard L.	22	son	Black	single; janitor private home	KY

Daviess County, KY 1950 Census, Owensboro, sheet 25:

1535 Sweeney Street	age	relationship	race	occupation	birthplace
McFarland, Elizabeth	68	head	Neg.	widowed	KY

1517 Sweeney Street

McFarland, Richard	38	head	Neg.	married; delivery man retail store	KY
“ Ruby	32	wife	Neg.	maid Daviess County Hospital	
KY					

Richard Lawrence McFarland, Sr.’s grandparents were former slaves. His grandfather, Nestor McFarland was born c1832 KY. In the Civil War draft registration records for Daviess County, KY, 1863-1865, Nestor McFarland was recorded as being 35, colored, laborer, and his owner was J. H. McFarland. John H. McFarland was reported to be the owner of 18 slaves in the 1860 slave schedule for Daviess County, KY; this record only gives the slaves’ sex and age, no names are recorded. Among the 13 male slaves owned by John H. McFarland in 1860 the closest to the age of Nestor McFarland is a male that was 27 years old.

The book, History of Daviess County, Kentucky (Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1883, pp.55-56) contains the following biography of John H. McFarland (1798-1887):

Hon. John H. McFarland, of Owensboro is the oldest living resident of Daviess County, having spent more than seventy-five years within the limits of the county. He was born in Person County, N. C, April 26, 1798. His grandparents on his father's side emigrated from Ireland in 1690. His maternal grandparents, Chambers by name, came from Scotland at a very early day. His parents were Walter and Lucy (Chambers) McFarland, and came to Daviess (then Ohio) County in 1805. Mr. McFarland remembers well the journey from North Carolina, and while on a visit to that State in 1875, was able to point out the place where his father lived, and where he himself was born. The McFarlands started from North Carolina in September, and halted within a mile of where Lewis Station [ed. note – later Utica in Daviess County] now stands, on the third of November. Settlements had been made in that vicinity by one or two persons. Captain Ben Field and Adam Shoemaker, and the same year Joshua Griffith put up a house, which he occupied with his family the next season. There were no other persons living except at a distance of several miles, and the whole number of families living within the present limits of Daviess County was less than a dozen. Robert [sic – should be Walter] McFarland bought 200 acres of land south of Owensboro, and made the first whisky and brandy ever made in this county. He died in 1811, aged forty-six years. John was fourteen years old at the time of his father's death. The first school he attended was kept by an Irishman named Andrew Kelly, two miles southwest of Lewis Station, and was probably the first taught in Daviess County. Oct. 26, 1816, when under nineteen years of age, he married Elizabeth, daughter of Joshua Griffith, of Baltimore, Md., and immediately went to farming, which occupation he has followed the greater part of his life. He was the most extensive farmer and tobacco-raiser in the county, often realizing \$5,000 a year from the crop. Each year he planted 130 acres. After a married life of seventeen years, Mrs. McFarland died, leaving eleven children. In 1834 Mr. McFarland married Harriet Leaman, the first child born in the city of Owensboro. By this marriage there have been seven children.

In 1857 he became a resident of Owensboro. He was a serious sufferer by the events of the war, and since then has given up active business to a great extent. During the war he was cultivating 130 acres of tobacco, which he lost entirely, besides losing \$40,000 in slaves. On one occasion he saw a company of guerrillas approaching the house. He had at this time \$6,000 or \$7,000 in the house. As not a moment could be lost, he handed the money to a negro boy, who rolled it up and hid it in a pile of rubbish, and it thus escaped the eyes of the guerrillas; it was soon restored to its owner.

In his politics Mr. McFarland was an old Henry Clay Whig, and an active worker in that party. In 1848 he was elected to the Legislature on the Whig ticket. He served one term, and made an honest record, as an efficient member, and a conscientious servant of the people. During the war of the Rebellion Mr. McFarland maintained the union of the States and the supremacy of the Government according to the Constitution and laws; since the war he has acted with the Democratic party. Mr. McFarland has spent a life in honor and usefulness. He is well worthy to stand as an example of the men who reclaimed Kentucky from the wilderness, and prepared it for the abode of subsequent generations.

John H. McFarland (1898-1887) after moving into Owensboro in 1857 resided at the south west corner of what is now the intersection of Ninth and Federica Street. Ninth Street had formerly been called McFarland Street. Prior to 1871 it was named McFarland Street in honor of John H. McFarland, who was prominent in the affairs of Daviess county in its early days ("Where the Owensboro Streets Get Their Names", Owensboro Messenger, 21 March 1909, p.10). On 16 July 1906 the name of McFarland Street was changed to Ninth Street (Owensboro Messenger, 17 July 1906, p.1).

Nestor McFarland was a Mason. In 1879 he was one of 10 members who established the Masonic Guiding Star Lodge, No. 14 (History of Daviess County, Kentucky, Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1883, p.394).

Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday 7 January 1900, p.8:

"Sunday services at Sweeney-street Baptist church. Sunday school at 9:30, also election of officers at the close. Every pupil requested to be present. Preaching at both hours by the pastor, Rev. J. H. May. Morning subject, "Wonderful Things." Night subject, "Shiloh's Gathering." Everybody invited and made welcome. Prayer meeting Wednesday night will be led by Bro. Nester McFarland.

Nestor McFarland died on 12 July 1909 at his home on Sweeney Street in Owensboro, KY. He was buried in Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery. His wife, Hannah Wayne, had died between 1880-1900. The children of Nestor McFarland & Hannah Wayne included – Henry (c1856-after 1870), George W. (1860-1940), Fountain (c1861-after 1880), Nancy (c1863-after 1880), Jerry (c1866-after 1889), Richard (c1868-after 1920) and James Daniel (1873-1940).

Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 18 July 1909, p.13:

Colored Column

Mr. Nestor McFarland died Monday at his home on Sweeney street. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. C. Bean at Sweeney street church. He leaves a wife and three children. Interment Elmwood.



Mr. Nestor McFarland died Monday at his home on Sweeney street. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. C. Bean at Sweeney street church. He leaves a wife and three children. Interment Elmwood.



See also biography of Rev. Richard L. McFarland's wife, Ruby Taylor McFarland (1920-2023), in the "Black Kentucky Pioneers" section on the website West-Central Kentucky History & Genealogy.

