



## Dr. Thomas "Tom" Alexander Kinchen

December 28, 1946 - January 11, 2024

Thomas Alexander Kinchen was born on December 28, 1946, in Thomasville, Georgia to Annie Lou and George. He grew up in the Red Hills Region of Thomasville at Greenwood Plantation where his father was Plantation Foreman.

A graduate of Central High School, he went on to receive a Bachelor of Psychology from Georgia Southern College and Master of Education from the University of Georgia. "Tommy" taught English at Swainsboro High School then served as Supervisor of the Juvenile Probation Program for the State of Georgia where he created several groundbreaking programs. During this time in his life, Kinchen served in the Georgia Army National Guard as an M16 Sharpshooter and was sent with his battalion to the Augusta riots in 1969.

God called Tommy into ministry, and he became a bi-vocational pastor. Several months after buying their dream home, the family went to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1976 where he received both Master of Divinity and Doctor of Education degrees and served as Vice President.

Tom then went to West Virginia from August of 1986 to April of 1990 as the Executive Secretary Treasurer of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists. While in West Virginia, Florida Baptist Theological College in Graceville reached out and he became the school's 6th President in 1990.

Given 18 months to either turn the college around or have it shut down, the challenge was accepted. With his unique vision, FBTC grew beyond expectations to become the Baptist College of Florida (now the Baptist University of Florida) with Kinchen retiring after 32.5 years.

Dr. Kinchen held several titles in his life, but his favorites were Handsome Dude, Mr. Incredible, Dad/Daddy, and Paw Paw.

The love of his life is wife Ruth Ann. They met at Georgia Southern College and married in August of 1967. Theirs was a love that grew every day, and they were each other's best friend. He always credited her for her love, strength and Christian service as she ministered alongside him especially as First Lady of the college.

Tom and Ruth Ann have two children, Dr. Thomas Alexander (Alex) Kinchen Jr., a church planter living in Lexington, Kentucky (married to Gretchen), and Prof. Lisa Ann Kinchen (formerly Potter) former Adjunct Professor of Music at BUF, living in Graceville. He loved his children dearly, prayed for them daily, and nothing was more important than a phone call or visit from them or chance to make them laugh.

Six grandchildren called him "Paw Paw" and he loved every minute of it. Alex and Gretchen's children are Samantha Worthington (28) and husband Chase, Thomas Kinchen III (23) and Jackson Kinchen (6).

Lisa's children are Neal Potter (28) and wife Shawna, Brianna Potter (26), and Evan Potter (24).

Extended family includes sister-in-law Martrelle Kinchen, sister-in-law Gail and her husband Dr. Trap Bowen, nephew George Kinchen III and wife Hilke, and niece Melinda Hall.

Preceding him in death are his father, George Henry Kinchen, his mother, Annie Lou Castleberry Kinchen, his sister, Dr. Norma Jean Kinchen Leatherman, and his brother, Dr. George Henry (Harry) Kinchen Jr.

Tom loved music, practical jokes, helping others, his family, friends, community, tractor, pastor and church, the mountains, Christmas, traveling, hunting, fishing, antique cars, renovating, gardening, people watching, children thinking he was Santa, telling stories and jokes, the Georgia Bulldogs, teaching Sunday School, and most importantly Jesus.

No one was ever a stranger to him, and you always felt like part of the family. He could wear jeans as well as a suit (with suspenders!) and be just as comfortable in both. He had a smile as bright as the sun and laugh as infectious as Covid. He read the "Cajun Night Before Christmas" every year and still gave gifts from Santa. He always had time to "set a spell" and never went anywhere without telling someone about Jesus or inviting them to church. He could never be called shy and the only thing bigger than his personality was his voice. He clicked his heels in parking lots, would rather eat dessert than dinner, and didn't like vegetables. He grilled a mean steak and hamburgers and made legendary enchiladas. He had a line of people that came to him for advice but always said he "didn't know much about anything." He was godly, humble, owned up to his mistakes and was forgiving. He always had his door (and arms) open, a rocking chair available, and a mirror on his desk so he could see you coming through the door. He wrote a personalized song for each grandchild when they were born and took credit for his son's drawing and daughter's singing abilities. He never liked to say goodbye...

Heaven received a precious gift on the afternoon of January 11, 2024. While he will be remembered for many things, Dr. Kinchen will never be forgotten for

how he "Changed the World Through the Unchanging Word."

Visitation will be held on Sunday, January 21, 2024, from 2-5pm at Damascus Baptist Church in Graceville, Florida where Dr. Kinchen was a member, Sunday School teacher and Deacon.

Celebration of Life Service will be held on Monday, January 22, 2024, at 1:00 pm also at Damascus.

The family asks that any monetary donations be given to Damascus Baptist Church in memory of Dr. Kinchen for the construction of a Family Life Center, 5083 Hwy. 77 Graceville, Florida 32440.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN **21**. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Damascus Baptist Church  
5083 Highway 77  
Graceville, FL 32440

## Celebration of Life

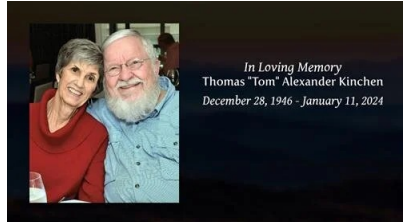
JAN **22**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Damascus Baptist Church  
5083 Highway 77  
Graceville, FL 32440

# Tribute Wall



“ James & Lipford Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Thomas "Tom" Alexander Kinchen



James & Lipford Funeral Home - January 20, 2024 at 06:47 PM

LA

*This is a precious and awesome tribute to my dad and a true celebration of his life! James and Lipford has the most amazing, loving, caring, and empathetic team that helped make everything about the entire funeral process as "easy" as it could be. Thank you!!!!*

**lisa ann** - February 06, 2024 at 10:36 PM

JM

*I'm late on the scene....my apologies. Came across this update through FL Baptist Convention website. I served on the staff of then, FL Baptist College and remember Dr. Kitchen as a premier educational leader and a Prince of Preachers. Enjoyed his friendship and gift of encouragement. His most distinctive attribute was his love for our Savior and His sacred Word. I was blessed to cross his path !*

**JOE MOLINA** - April 19, 2025 at 04:40 PM

TG

“ I met Dr Kinchen in 99 when I started school at the FBC. We went thru a couple name changes while there as Dr Kinchen was moving the college into a new direction. I remember him as a jolly soul and as said above he had a big smile. My prayers go out for family and many people he touched as he went throughout his life ministering the Word of God. We can rejoice that he is home with the Lord, but may the Lord comfort the hearts of those who will mourn his loss from thier lives. Love to you all and God Bless you all.



Tony and Faith Gushlaw - January 17, 2024 at 09:57 PM

RA

Thank you for your post and comfort. - Ruth Ann and family

Ruth Ann - February 06, 2024 at 10:32 PM

CO

“ Dr. Kinchen made a huge impact in our lives. We always loved his jokes, his storytelling, and his love for ALL people. We will miss him dearly. Rest In Heaven.

Love,  
Dr. Kenric & Evelyn Conway

Conway - January 16, 2024 at 02:15 PM

RA

Thank you for your post and thoughts. He loved telling those jokes! - Ruth Ann and Family

Ruth Ann - February 06, 2024 at 10:30 PM

LK

“ He was my father, my friend, and my daddy and I miss him with all my heart.

*I'm so proud to have shared him with so many over the years, but even prouder that he shared Jesus (especially with me).*

*Walk with Jesus Daddy. I love you!*

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**Lisa Kinchen** - January 16, 2024 at 01:01 PM

HL

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



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**Hannah Loy** - January 15, 2024 at 06:31 PM

RA

*Thank you for sharing Hannah! Beautiful pictures ❤️*

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**Ruth Ann** - February 06, 2024 at 10:28 PM

EH

“ Dr. and Mrs. Kinchen not just were president and first lady of our college, but friends. Dr. Kinchen had to be the most approachable and visible college president I had ever met. A lot of presidents have that mantle that makes them untouchable, above it all. Not Dr. Tom, as I began calling him later. I went to church with him in his later years. There was a grace he carried that I experienced with no one else. He let you get to know him and could call you by name. I loved that, it made me feel seen, cared for, and important. As you can see, he will be missed by many. But he is Home now and I know he wouldn't trade places with any of us though he loved us all. Prayers for Mrs. Ruth Ann and the kids and grand.

Elaine Harlow - January 15, 2024 at 06:13 PM

RA

Thank you for your post and prayers! - Ruth Ann and Family

Ruth Ann - February 06, 2024 at 10:27 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



James & Lipford Funeral Home - January 15, 2024 at 04:07 PM

RK

This was Tommy's favorite picture of us - Ruth Ann

Ruth Ann Kinchen - January 15, 2024 at 04:54 PM

RS

I love this picture!! Praying for you and the family.

Rebekah Shutt - January 16, 2024 at 12:51 PM

GB

*The deep love between the two of you shows in your radiant faces.  
Love you both. Ruth Ann's baby sister*

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**Gail Bowen** - January 18, 2024 at 01:30 PM