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## For Immediate Release

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## City bids farewell to local servant, pastor, civil rights activist Dr. Noel Battle to lie in state at City Hall

Stonecrest, GA – While the nation completes its celebration of life for two civil rights giants, Mayor Jason Lary along with several local leaders are preparing to bid farewell to a local civil rights activist, entrepreneur, servant, leader, educator, and pastor. The Reverend Dr. Noel Battle died last week after an extended illness, according to his wife of 62 years, Martha Battle. Dr. Battle was 87. He will be the first person honored to lie in state at Stonecrest City Hall on Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>.

Battle gained recognition in the early 1960s in Southwest Atlanta where he launched Battle Building and Contracting and Battle Shell Service Station. Battle's contracting company later became known as Battle and Battle Building and Construction company and was credited for building homes for many prominent black professionals including Alfonso Dawson, a well-known funeral director, and Rev. A.D. Williams King, a civil rights activist and brother of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Battle and prominent developer Herman J. Russell were the first two black contractors to receive commercial construction loans from black-owned Citizens Trust Bank in the 1960s.

Battle built his entrepreneurial career on service starting with the U.S. Army, where he served as a Private First Class medic. Soon after his honorable discharge, Battle became an advocate for equal pay for Blacks in the construction industry and served as president of the Local Union 234 for six years. Battle later served as the superintendent of the Atlanta Housing Authority for 20 years before retiring to pursue ministry fulltime. In 1987, he established First Comfort Missionary Baptist Church. Battle served as a chaplain for the DeKalb and Fulton County Sheriff's Offices.

The civil rights activist was passionate about education, having attended Atlanta Area Technical College, Kentucky State University, Carver Bible College, and the American University of Theology where he earned his master's and doctoral degrees in theology. He was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated and the Prince Hall Masonic Order.

Mayor Lary said, "It's important that we give honor to those who have paved a way for us. I want to make sure that we recognize the sacrifices that Dr. Battle and other civil rights activists made. It is because of them that I can fulfill Dr. King's dream and stand before you today as Mayor Lary." The mayor said that Battle was instrumental in the efforts to form Stonecrest and, for this reason, he will make history as the first person to receive the honor of lying in state at Stonecrest City Hall. Public viewing is from 1 to 4 p.m., Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. Social distancing and COVID-19 precautions will be in practice. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Battle's family will hold a private, invitation-only homegoing service at 11 a.m. on Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup> at First Comfort Missionary Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga. and Greenwood Cemeteries. The service will stream live at <https://www.stocksfuneralhome.com>.

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