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McClain, Joseph Tolbert (1965 – 1968)

Pastors of First Baptist Shelby

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Joseph McClain - Biography

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Joseph Tolbert McClain was born in the Capitol City of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, on May 27, 1919. He represents two families: the Chastains, maternally, with his mother's first name being Eula, and his paternal side being of Christian Ray McClain.

Joseph Tolbert McClain graduated in succession the elementary and secondary levels, also received his B.A. from Oklahoma Baptist University. His graduate theological work was all taken at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; while there he earned the Th.M. and Th.D. degrees.

Upon graduation from the Seminary in 1947 with the earned Th.D. degree, he was called to begin the Bible Chair at Texas Technological College in Lubbock, Texas. Soon after that he was called to be a full professor of Bible at the Howard Payne College in Brownwood, Texas, and stayed there over three years. He was on the faculties of two Southern Baptist Seminaries, Golden Gate and Midwestern, in their formative years as Southern Baptist institutions. At the Ouachita Baptist College (now University), Arkadelphia, Arkansas, he was divisional head of Religion and Philosophy. There he remained five years and enjoyed a great deal of success in teaching and involvement in the Baptist work throughout the state of Arkansas.

The pastorates of Dr. McClain have been the Liberty Baptist Church of Duncan, Oklahoma. This was his first church. It was a full time church, but in the rural part of southern Oklahoma. It was here that he cut his pastoral teeth in the Lord's ministry. The Riverside Baptist Church of Riverside, Texas, was the church that put him through seminary. While the pastor of Riverside, he received both of his advanced degrees, the Th.M. and Th.D. degrees. This church shall always rank as an important

milestone in his ministerial life. The First Baptist Church of Seagraves, Texas, was the first really great church that he was pastor of, great in the sense of responsibility and service. In that part of west Texas this church is one of the pivotal pastorates. The next church that he was pastor of, and this came after having taught at Ouachita Baptist College, was the Maywood Baptist Church of Independence, Missouri. It is the most vital and the biggest church of any denomination in Independence, Missouri. Upon having served the Maywood Church five years, Dr. McClain began the pastorate where he is at the present, First Baptist Church, Shelby, North Carolina. At the writing of this article his stay has been a year and a half. And so his history alone will have to write the rest of what should be recorded.

In 1940 he was united in marriage with Cleo Cornett of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Five children have been born to this union and are still living and they are: Joseph Tolbert McClain II, Bary Duke McClain, William Conner McClain, Darla Ann McClain and Christian Ray McClain II. At their coming to the First Baptist Church in Shelby, Joseph and Duke were above the age of twenty-one, two being in their teens and the youngest being only ten years of age.