

# ALUMNI

# *Hall of Fame*

## 2025

## HONOREE



### **CHARLIE THAMES JR.**

*(POSTHUMOUSLY)*

Charlie M. Thames Jr., a native of Walnut Grove, Mississippi, earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Education from Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1951. He went on to receive a Master of Science degree in Agriculture Education from Tennessee State University in 1964, with further studies at Mississippi State University.

Thames began his career as a vocational agriculture teacher in 1951 at Wesley Chapel/O. E. Jordan High School in Carthage, Mississippi. He later taught at Henry Weathers High School in Rolling Fork (1965–1970) and at Edinburg High School in Edinburg (1970–1984), retiring after 33 years in education.

A pioneer among Black vocational agriculture teachers during the segregated school era, Thames worked under the New Farmers of America (NFA), a national organization supporting African American youth in agriculture. Following the 1965 merger of NFA and the Future Farmers of America (FFA), Thames became the first Black president of the National FFA Teachers Association. He mentored students in public speaking, leadership, and livestock and crop judging, guiding them to success at local, state, and national competitions.

His contributions were recognized with multiple honors, including induction into the Mississippi Vocational Agriculture Teachers Hall of Fame (1993), the National Vocational Agricultural Teacher Association's Outstanding Service Award (1985), and state-level Teacher of the Year awards in 1981–1982.

In addition to his teaching career, Thames served as a certified teacher trainer for student teachers through partnerships with Alcorn State University and Mississippi State University. He was deeply involved in his community as a deacon, Sunday school teacher, choir leader, Master Mason, and World War II veteran. He played a key role in memorializing African American veterans in Leake County and in planning the Mississippi State Veterans Home in Kosciusko.

Thames died on Jan. 29, 2002. His wife, Otis Crosby Thames, passed away in 2020. They are survived by their son, Charles Lyndale Thames, a 1971 graduate of Alcorn State University.