

*Samuel J. Alford*  
 Jun 10 1923 - Sep 18 1994  
 AAFA# 0378

**In Memoriam: Samuel J. Alford, 1923-1994**

By Gil Alford, Executive Director

**S**amuel Jackson Alford, M.D., died September 18, 1994. He was AAFA member #590 and had been working with association members on our Alford family history since before the association was formed.

The son of Samuel Jackson Alford and Ada Lee Jacobs, he was born in Orlando, Florida, June 10, 1923. He traced his family on back through Peno Elmo Alford and Margaret Mikell; William R. Alford and Sarah Loadholtz; Hansford Alford and Jincy Mann to John Alford born about 1787 in Spartanburg County, South Carolina. Hansford, his wife and family were some of the early pioneers of Florida.

At the age of twelve Sam and his mother joined the Jacksonville First Seventh-day Adventist Church. His interest in the church continued during his lifetime where he taught a Bible class and sang bass in the choir. He and his father used to go hunting and fishing frequently and it was a pastime he continued to indulge as an adult.

He had his sights on some life's goals at a young age. While attending Jacksonville Junior Academy he responded to a teacher, when asked what he was going to be: "I'm going to be a doctor and a pilot." He never lost sight of that dream. He also attended

Forest Lake Academy in Orlando, and Andrew Jackson High School where he graduated in 1941. He studied at Southern Missionary College near Chattanooga, Tennessee and Washington Missionary College in Washington, D.C.

During World War II, since he was a student making a B average, he was given a Presidential deferment. Considering that he was working his way through school, that in itself was an accomplishment. Fortunately he had received some previous training in working on boilers at Forest Lake Academy, so he approached his college president to ask if he could be the college boiler man. The president did not want to consider it but Sam insisted indicating that it was necessary for him to stay in school. He was given a six week trial provided he continued to maintain the B average. He worked boilers at night and went to class during the day.



FAMILY PRACTICE  
 AVIATION MEDICINE

Sam graduated from medical school, The College of Medical Evangelists (known today as Loma Linda Univer-

sity) in 1948, interned at St. Luke's hospital in Jacksonville, Florida and then did an ob/gyn residency there as well. He continued his practice at St. Luke's for most of the remainder of his life. He was an Aviation Medical Examiner and President of the Attending Staff Association.

His love for flying never dampened. He even built a plane with one of his friends. In addition to flying he gave flight physicals to those who were seeking their license. He started an air ambulance service that could transport patients to other hospitals to receive critical care. He was a member of the Shriners Flying Fezzes. He established a foundation to offer financial assistance to medical graduates coming to Jacksonville in the beginning of their residency. It was also he who began the local practice of training fire fighters as emergency medical technicians—a common practice today.

After his residency in the hospital in Jacksonville he served two years with the Air Force as a physician in Enid, Oklahoma. Thus he served with many of us during the Korean conflict in the U.S. Air Force. When he returned to Jacksonville, he entered a joint practice with Dr. Elmer Leitner that continued until Dr. Leitner retired 32 years later.

Other memberships included the American Medical Association, Duval (County) Medical Society, Wm. B. Barnett Lodge 187, Morocco Temple,

and the Scottish Rite Bodies.

When his secretary, Diane Kirkman, learned that AAFA was writing a memorial biography about Dr. Alford, she offered the following:

*I have had the privilege to be able to receive the many telephone calls that have come in this week from patients and friends of Dr. Alford. All are saddened by our loss, but many have taken this opportunity to share with me a special memory of Dr. Alford and to tell me how important he was in their lives.*

*Many people talked about how Dr. Alford would visit their homes when they or their children were too sick to come to the office. One long time patient remembered that she lived near downtown when her children were small, and Dr. Alford would stop by their house very early in the morning on his way to the office to check on her children when they had measles.*

*Another mother told me that when she went into the hospital to give birth to her son, Dr. Alford came by to check on her progress and told her he thought she would give birth to a girl. The mother told Dr. Alford that Dr. Leitner had already told her that he thought it would be a boy and since that was what they were counting on, she'd just wait for Dr. Leitner.*

*A pilot remembered that when Dr. Alford was just learning to fly, he would come out to the airport and sit in the control tower hour after hour listening to the air traffic controllers so that he would get their 'lingo' just right.*

*Another patient remarked that Dr. Alford didn't just treat your physical ailments but always had time to listen to your troubles, and usually that helped as much as any medicine you could take.*

The following are some excerpts from some of his communications with AAFA over the years, many coming by e-mail:

"Howdy: just a note to let you know our local family reunion will be 1st Sun day April (7th) at SWIFT CREEK CEMETERY & Church just south of Olustee, Fl. Hope 'Wick' Alford will be with us, anyhow we'll be slowly getting organized. There are several Alfords in Fl. who are members of Prodigy—are any of them also members of AAFA? I have written to some & will write more as time permits. So long for now. Sam" [Wick did attend one of their reunions.]

"There are several Alfords on Prodigy in Florida, and I have taken the liberty of giving them your name and number for more info. They are as follows [names omitted]"

"Hi: I'm sorry that I didn't get to the meeting because of a severe bout of the flu. But because of his wife's health Wick didn't get there either. My brother went but has not come back or at least checked in as yet. To answer your other ? I have not resolved things as yet prob. not until July '91 (I hope), Then I'll be glad to take on some work for the Assoc." [His other problem was matrimonial. His success with wives did not follow the pattern set in medicine and aviation.]

"Gil: I have renewed my dues and from the meeting the other day I will send you by mail what we have been able to put together. It's not complete but maybe you can correlate it with yours for confirmation. I plan to do some more research and I will share the findings with you. Also wrote to Willie Alford [died February 1995] to offer any help I can give. Thanks for your help."

"Hi! Just got my knee replaced and will be back in business in a couple more weeks. Plan to see you in Destin in October. Will be in touch in a couple of weeks to offer any help I can."

"Happy Holidays and the best of the year to come. May all of the ALFORD AMERICAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION prosper and grow through this next year. With Relative Affection."

"My leg is doing well, and it is my one year anniversary of the by-pass and doing well. So long now . Sam."

"Hi—I'm planning my other knee surgery about 24th November, so I will drop Prodigy for the time being. Look forward to seeing you all at a future meeting. Thanks for all the help you have been. Sam."

That was the last we heard from him. Survivors include his sons; Michael L. Alford, Stephen D. and Jewell Alford; daughter and son-in-law, Joni A. and Ronald J. Burnes; brother Howard R. Alford, sister Margaret A. Adams, grandchildren Joshua Burn[e?]s and Michelle Alford. Entombment in Riverside Memorial Park with Masonic Rites. Active pallbearers were the members of the Morocco Temple Flying Fez Assn.

[An obituary was published on 21 September 1994 in the *Florida Times Union*, Jacksonville, FL. The information contained in it is included above.] ♦

Samuel J. Alford 0378  
b. Jun 10 1923 & d. Sep 18 1994  
Lived in Jacksonville, FL  
Family HAN812SC/JOH797SC  
Attended 0 meeting(s).

**SAMUEL J. ALFORD**  
AAFA #378

Sea by Marge Gray, AAFA #590

**THE FLORIDA 77MES-UNION**  
**Jacksonville, FL-Wed., 21 Sept**  
**1994**

Dr. Samuel J. Alford, M.D., 71, died September 18, 1994. Born in Orlando. he graduated from medical school in 1948. served his residence here and has always practiced in Jacksonville. He was an Aviation Medical Examiner and President of the Attending Staff Association. Dr. Alford served in the Air Force during Korea. His memberships included the American Medical Assoc., Duval Medical Society, Wm. B. Barnett Lodge 187, Morocco Temple, and the Scottish Rite Bodies. Survivors include his sons; Michael L. Alford, Stephen D. and Jewell Alford; daughter and son-in-law, Joni A. and Ronald J. Burnes; brother, Howard R. Alford, sister; Margaret A. Adams, grandchildren; Joshua Burns and Michelle Alford. Funeral service will be held Thursday at 11:00 AM in the Chapel of Hardage-Giddens Funeral Home, 729 S. Edgewood Ave. with Pastor John McKinney, officiating. Entombment will follow in Riverside Memorial Park with Masonic Rites. The family request those desiring send memorials to Jacksonville First Seventh-Day Adventist Church or Morocco Temple Kiddie Fund. Family will receive friends 6:30 until 8:30 PM Wednesday (today) at the funeral

home. Active Pallbearers will be members of Morocco Temple Flying FEZ Assoc.

AAFA NOTE: See "In Memoriam: Samuel J. Alford, 1923-1994" in *AAFA ACTION*, Spring 1995, p. 19.

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