

Stan McKenzie, husband of first female AME bishop, dies at 76

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) in the [August 25, 2021](#) issue



(Courtesy of AME 10th Episcopal District)

Stan McKenzie, the husband of African Methodist Episcopal Church bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, died on July 21 in Dallas after a brief illness. He was 76.

Less than two weeks before, McKenzie's wife—the first woman bishop in the denomination's 205-year history—praised her spouse at the retirement service for bishops during the AME Church's General Conference.

"He is unique in that his ego does not get in the way of me being who I am, and I don't get in the way of who he is," she said in Orlando, Florida, on July 9. "This is a man that listened to every sermon before you heard it and listened to it patiently and supportive—this is the man who, when God called me to preach, said 'yes' because he knew that God was calling us together."

The bishop said she, in turn, supported her husband's career when he was an NBA player for teams that included the Baltimore Bullets, the Phoenix Suns, and the

Portland Trail Blazers. His basketball career concluded with the Houston Rockets, and he holds a more-than-50-year record for the most free throws attempted in one quarter.

After he retired from the NBA in the 1970s, McKenzie was employed for more than 20 years in the personnel services and human resources fields. In 2000, with his wife's election as bishop, McKenzie became the first man to serve as an AME episcopal supervisor of missions and children's work, the role traditionally held by female spouses of bishops.

Bishop Anne Henning Byfield, president of the AME Church's Council of Bishops, described his service as stellar. He supported community service projects, fostered entrepreneurial programs, and was instrumental in "helping to fill 11 tractor-trailer trucks that went down into Mississippi and to Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina."

"Stan McKenzie modeled male leadership as a Supervisor of Missions with creative and imaginative ways," Byfield said in a statement. "At the same time, he was [Vashti's] partner in ministry, marriage, and family. He served as a model for male supervisors who followed him." —Religion News Service