



Dr. Roderick Raynor Paige, Sr.
June 17, 1933 to December 9, 2025

One of the nation's preeminent education leaders, appointed as the seventh United States Secretary of Education by President George W. Bush, as well as having the distinction of being the first African American and school superintendent to hold that position in the president's cabinet, Dr. Roderick R. Paige, Sr. passed into the arms of God on December 9, 2025, at the side of his beloved wife, Stephanie. Dr. Paige was 92 years old. A father, husband, sibling, and deeply treasured friend to so very many.

On January 21, 2001, the United States Senate confirmed Dr. Paige as the U.S. Secretary of Education. His leadership was bold, inclusive, visionary and always focused on delivering excellent education in every American school, community college, and university. All of them were his vigilant priority. Supporting the bold vision of President Bush to eliminate the soft bigotry of low expectations and sharing the president's deeply-held conviction that a quality education for every child is a civil right, Dr. Paige worked tirelessly to help architect and design the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, subsequently signed into law on January 8, 2002. NCLB represented an historic moment as some of the most impactful federal legislation ever created for the improvement of k12 education in the country's history. Dr. Paige led the implementation effort for NCLB in close partnership with states and districts with a focus on improving student academic achievement for all children.

On the day of our national tragedy on September 11, 2001, Dr. Paige was with President Bush at the Emma E. Booker Elementary School in Sarasota, Florida when the president first received word of the attack on our country. He spoke often of that moment and its significance. Dr. Paige returned to visit Emma E. Booker Elementary School on the first anniversary of September 11. When speaking to children after that tragedy, he would say to them, “You are told that you are our future. This is true. But you are also our here and now. We owe it to you to insist that you are an equal part in our national healing.”

Prior to his elevation as the nation’s top educator, Dr. Paige was elected as trustee for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) Board of Education where he served for two elected terms before being appointed HISD superintendent of schools in 1994. He is credited with significant increases in test scores, across all student demographics, in an urban district that was experiencing substantial growth in enrollment comprised of rich diversity. Dr. Paige was renowned for his visionary, dignified leadership. As superintendent, he helped support the launch of KIPP schools from a powerful idea into a celebrated charter school organization with a vast national footprint as well as providing HISD as a launch-pad for another great national success story, Teach for America.

Dr. Paige is a graduate of Jackson State University and Indiana University, earning his BA, MA, and Ed.D. He served in the United States Navy before commencing a career as a NCAA Division I football coach, athletic director, university professor, and Dean of the College of Education at Texas Southern University. From November 2016 to June 2017, Dr. Paige served as the interim President at his alma mater, Jackson State University.

In the years after his public service as Secretary of Education, Dr. Paige served on numerous boards including: Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, News Corp, the Chartwell Education Group, the Broad Foundation, Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Universal Technical Institute, American College of Education, the New England College of Finance and Business, Strake Foundation, Texas Charter School Association, the National Council on Economic Education’s Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, the Foundation of Blended and Online Learning, Lone Star Flight Museum, and Patten University. In addition, he was a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (Boule) and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

Dr. Paige received numerous distinguished honors in his life. Among them are the 2000 Harold W. McGraw Jr. Prize in Education, National Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators in 2001, and one of two top educators in the country by the Council of the Great City Schools in 1999. Above all, he was honored to have his legacy enshrined through the Roderick R. Paige Elementary School in HISD, the Rod Paige Middle School in Monticello, Mississippi, and the Roderick R. Paige Building housing the College of Education at Texas Southern University.

In 2006 he authored *The War Against Hope* and in 2010 published *The Black-White Achievement Gap: Why Closing it is the Greatest Civil Rights Issue of Our Time*.

Roderick Raynor Paige, Sr. was born in Monticello, Mississippi on June 17, 1933, the oldest of five children of Raynor C. Paige and Sophie E. Stephen Paige. Having parents who were educators, his father as a public-school principal, and his mother as a school Librarian, Rod and his siblings, Elaine, Alphretta, Raygene, and James, were taught the importance of education at an early age. After graduation from a public high school, Rod's skills as a football player earned him an athletic scholarship from Jackson State University, where he attended, majored in physical education, and earned a bachelor's degree in 1955. Rod joined the Brentwood Baptist Church when he moved to Houston serving on the Deacon and Usher boards. He was a member for more than 55 years.

Dr. Paige is survived by his devoted, loving wife, Stephanie; his children, Rod Paige, Jr. and Danielle Robinson; siblings, Elaine Witty and Raygene Paige; a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins; and, his longest living friend of over 74 years, Dr. Walter Reed.

Funeral arrangements:

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2025

Lie in state: 9 AM to Noon. Everyone is welcome to pay their respects.

The Rod Paige Education Building
Texas Southern University
3100 Cleburne Street
Houston, Texas 77004

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2025

Lie in state: 1 PM to 2 PM
Funeral service: 2 PM

Brentwood Baptist Church
13033 Landmark Street
Houston, Texas 77045

Reception immediately following service.

In lieu of flowers, those desiring to honor his legacy are invited to do so by contributing via the QR code or link provided which will support the Paige Scholarships and Paige Documentary.

QR Code:



[Donation Link](#)



Rod Paige with George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, 2001



Dr. and Mrs. Rod Paige (Stephanie)



Dr. and Mrs. Rod Paige (Stephanie) and daughter Danielle Robinson



Dr. and Mrs. Rod Paige (Stephanie) and daughter Danielle Robinson