





One of Isaac Banks's jobs was postal worker, where he delivered mail to people in Shakopee. He was at the post office for 33 years, and in his final years Isaac was a postal supervisor at Spring Lake Park, Minnesota.

Isaac Banks was born to Chester Levi Banks, Sr. (1914-1986) and Daisy Bernice Austin Banks (1912-1952). He was the ninth of ten children, and was born in Belzoni, Mississippi on November 9, 1948.

His grandparents were Isaac Ike Banks, Sr. (1882-1956) and Leola "Pet" Jenkins Banks; and Jerry Davis Austin (1885-1969) and Lily Lillie Mae Howard Austin (1893-1977).

Isaac spent his childhood with his siblings in Belzoni. At age seven, Isaac heard the story of Rev. George Lee, who was shot to death in Belzoni in 1955, after using his pulpit and printing press to urge other Black Mississippians to vote. He became one of the first African Americans to register to vote in the mostly Black Humphreys County. And when he helped register more than ninety other Black voters, white leaders spoke with concern over growing African American power in the Mississippi Delta. Lee continued his work in the face of threats and electrified crowds of thousands with his speeches, according to *Mississippi Today* and *Jet Magazine*.

"Pray not for your mom and pop," Rev. Lee told the crowd. "They've gone to heaven. Pray you can make it through this hell."









Weeks later, shotgun blasts hit Lee in the face as he was driving home on May 7, 1955, and his Buick smashed into a house. The sheriff claimed the lead pellets found in his shattered jaw were fillings from his teeth. His killers were never found, as the governor of Mississippi, Hugh L. White, refused to investigate the case. Many consider Lee the first martyr of the modern civil rights movement.

It was a hard time for Mississippians, so when Isaac graduated from McNair High School, he headed north to Moorhead, Minnesota where he graduated with a teaching degree in math and history.

Isaac Banks then worked for 33 years of service at the United States Postal Service, starting at the U.S. Post Office in Shakopee. On his route, Isaac often stopped to talk to the people in Shakopee, including Rose Marie Weidner Schleper, who chatted with Isaac about his experience in Mississippi, where Rose's sister, Sister Bev Weidner, O.S.B. was working on civil rights. Rose remembered talking to Isaac about the time that her sister was put in jail for chewing gum in the courthouse when they were challenging rights there (and while the judge spit chew into a spittoon, a receptacle made for spitting into, especially by chewing and dipping tobacco users, while forcing Sister Bev into jail).

On November 11, 1972, Isaac married Leanne Margaret Shear, daughter of Warren Ivan Shear (1917-1982) and Ethel Mae Tholund Shear (1922-2016). They lived in Shakopee from 1986 until 1997. Isaac and Ethel's daughter, Corrine Elizabeth, was born May 2, 1990.

Isaac worked at the U.S. Post Office, Anchor Glass in Shakopee, and part-time he delivered newspapers. Resilient and hardworking, Isaac survived two kidney transplants and gained the adoration of many *Minneapolis Star Tribune* customers whom he met on newspaper delivery routes throughout the years.

In 2007, Isaac retired after 33 years of service at the United States Postal Service.

He was a lifelong Bible scholar. Isaac loved his alum associations, family and friends, music, comics, baseball cards, distance running, bowling and serving people.

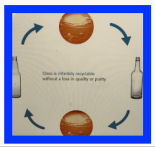
Isaac dedicated his life to God as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in 2010. Kingdom Halls are places for people to assemble for Bible study and Christian association. Sometimes nearby congregations help financially to erect a Kingdom Hall. In January 1970 the Shakopee congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses was formed, and meetings were first held in the local bank. To help this new group build a Kingdom Hall, seven congregations in the area contributed funds for the project.

The Shakopee Kingdom Hall is rustic in style, matching the homes in that rural area. Since it is















Isaac Banks's father, Chester Levi Banks, Sr. (1914-1986)





Isaac Banks's grandparents, Isaac Ike Banks (1882-1956) and Leola "Pet" Jenkins Banks, born in 1888.





Isaac Banks's maternal grandparents, Jerry Davis Austin (1885-1969) and Lily Lillie Mae Howard Austin (1893-1877).

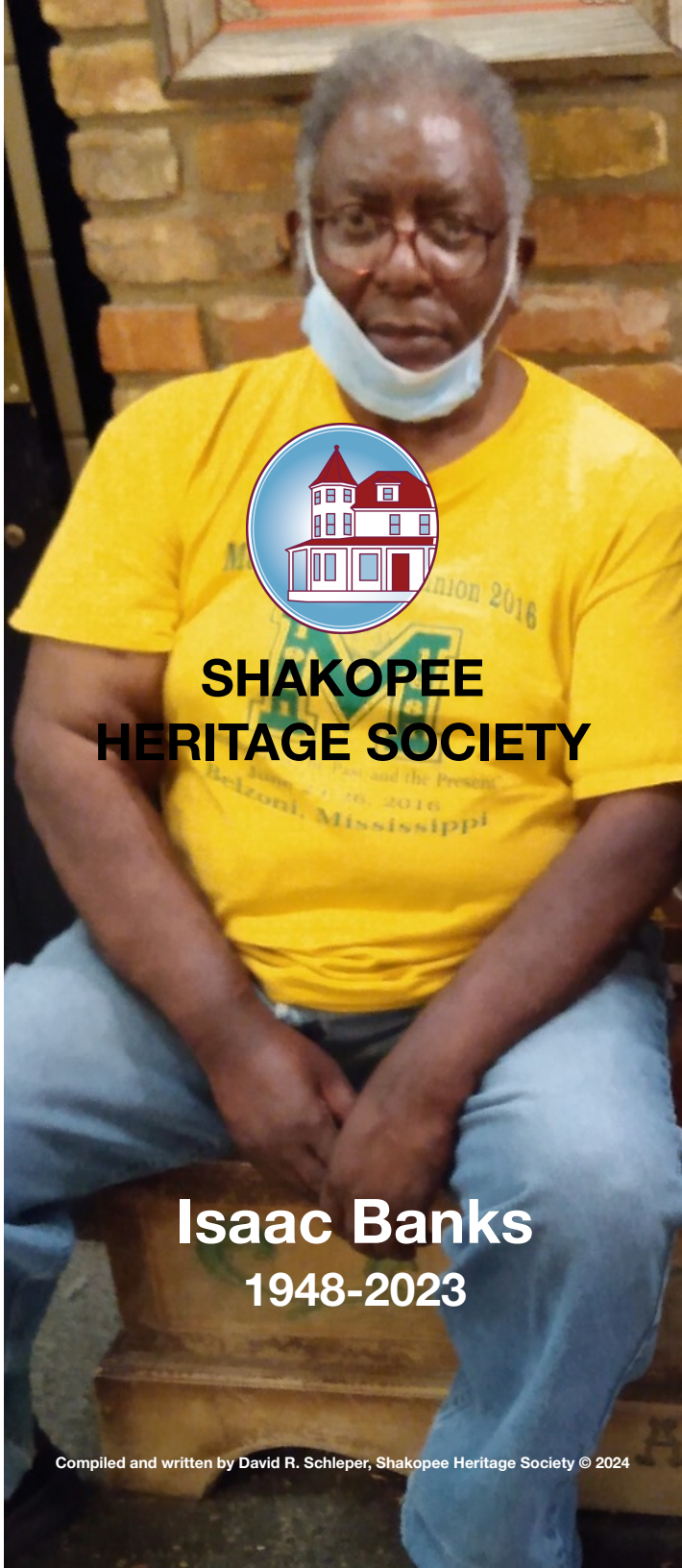


built into a slope, it has a walk-in basement that serves as the main entrance. In the basement is a good-sized entry area, with washrooms, cloakroom, library, literature area, as well as a small apartment where visiting ministers can stay. Access to the auditorium on the floor above is by the stairway in the entry area.

Isaac Banks passed away at the age of 74 on Friday, March 17, 2023, in Prior Lake. A funeral service was held April 22, 2023, at the Prior Lake Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.



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Isaac Banks
1948-2023

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