

Obituary: Dean Nolan Finley

August 22, 2023

Dean Nolan Finley, a national Southern Baptist leader in youth evangelism more than three decades, died July 27 after an extended battle with Parkinson's. He was 71. He was born June 28, 1952, in Springfield, Mo., to George and Opal Finley. He received his Master of Religious Education Degree, Master of Divinity degree and Ph.D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He served 19 years as youth evangelism consultant at the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board and more than seven years at the Missouri Baptist Convention. He was one of the primary drivers for programs such as DiscipleNow, True Love Waits and See You at the Pole. With Richard Ross, he co-chaired YouthLink 2000, an event where more than 9,000 students expressed a willingness to missionary service if God called them, 4,985 committed to full-time Christian ministry, and 1,492 made professions of faith in Christ. Finley taught as visiting professor at each of the six Southern Baptist seminaries, as well as Rockbridge Seminary and Canadian Baptist Theological Seminary. He also taught at Missouri State University, Bryant University, Campbellsville University, Ozark Technical College, Crowder College and Regent University, and he mentored doctoral students at the University of Phoenix. He wrote more than 200 youth evangelism articles, videos and audio programs and contributed to many more. He served more than 10 years on the Christian Educators Association board. He traveled to all 50 states and more than 25 countries, making friends and sharing the gospel everywhere he went. He was preceded in death by his parents and



three siblings. He is survived by daughters Abigail Dawn Anderson and Rebecca DeAnn Mays; their mother Beverly Finley; multiple grandchildren; and a brother, David Finley. A celebration of life is scheduled at 10:30 a.m. on Sept. 2 at First Baptist Church of Springfield, Mo. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Dean Finley's memory to the Missouri Baptist Student Union Alumni Association or the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.