



June 12, 1959 – June 03, 2024



**MEMORIAL SERVICE**

Sunday, June 30, 2024, 1:00 P.M.

North American Division Headquarters  
9705 Patuxent Woods Dr., Columbia, MD 21046

# LIFE SKETCH



Arne Nielsen, beloved husband, father, brother, and friend to many was born on June 12, 1959, and passed away unexpectedly on June 3, 2024, in Baltimore, Maryland.

Arne was a tremendous man of great faith. He was widely known and appreciated for his leadership through collaborations with colleagues and his dedication to being an authentic leader and his tremendous commitment to the ministry of

Adventist education. Arne was also known for his great heart, seeking to uplift and serve the underprivileged and underrepresented among us.

He was born in Ghana, West Africa, to missionary parents from Denmark. He was the third out of four siblings with an older brother, older sister, and younger brother.

His early years on the mission field instilled in him a love of service, heart for mission, and ability to connect with people from all walks of life. Obviously, the impact of serving with his parents in the mission field had an indelible impression upon his life and marked his life for service.

After graduating from Andrews Academy, Arne went on to finish a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education/Health at Andrews University. He graduated on June 5, 1983, and married Teen in the afternoon of that same day.

In 1988, he received his Master of Divinity from Andrews Theological Seminary. In 2021, Arne earned his Ph.D. in leadership from Andrews University after successfully defending his dissertation titled "Coaching and Being Coached: A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Education Leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists."

The Nielsen family moved to Africa in 1996, where Arne spent seven years as principal and business manager for Maxwell Adventist Academy in Nairobi, Kenya.

Even though 20 years have passed, his impact on lives there remains evident and his connection to the people he served still lives on.

When he left Kenya, he went to Idaho Conference and served as superintendent of education from November 2003 to July 2006.

From July 2006 to December 2010, he served as superintendent of education at the Florida Conference and as vice president for Integrated Youth Ministries from January 2011 to February 2014, leading Children's and Family ministries, Youth and Young Adults Ministries, Camp Ministries, and the education department in a joint venture to disciple God's children.

He served as the NAD director of secondary education and accreditation from 2014 to 2018.

In November 2018, Arne was voted to serve as the division's vice president for education, a role he fulfilled until his passing.

## ***Impact in the North American Division***

A lifelong educator, Arne believed that the real object of education, through the work of the Holy Spirit, is to transform the lives of students and "restore in man the image of his Maker, ... to promote the development of body, mind, and soul" (Ellen G. White, Education, p. 15). Believing that all children have the right to reach their God-given potential, thought that the best way to accomplish this was by relying on God to lead, building trust and buy-in from educators, developing instructional leaders at the school level, and creating a differentiated system that provides resources and support for educators to grow and flourish. During Arne's tenure at the NAD, he successfully managed several significant departmental initiatives such as:

- Facilitating school accreditation visits for Guam-Micronesia Mission schools
- Providing instrumental leadership in development of NAD's own student information system, AE-Connect
- Guiding the taskforce that updated Journey 2 Excellence, a guide and framework for continuous improvement at all levels of Adventist education
- Supporting the development of standards-based learning initiatives in K-12 education
- Supporting and advocating for the development of a mental health website, mental health training for educators, and NAD Social-Emotional Standards
- Developing the Grade 1-12 Encounter Bible program for NAD schools
- Co-founding the international Encounter Bible committee with the Australian/New Zealand Union to oversee curriculum release and training for the global Adventist community.

Arne's impact spread beyond the NAD to the global Adventist Church. His legacy and contributions will continue to have lasting ripple effects throughout the Church for decades to come.

Arne is survived by his wife Teen, his partner in life for over 40 years, their three sons: Josh, Jake, and Jesse (Noora), his elder brother, Jan, older sister, Anita, and his younger brother, Frank.

Together with his family, we await the joyous reunion with him in the heavens and on the earth made new.

*"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you the ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."* **Matthew 25:21**





*Arne and his siblings (From left to right: Jan, Anita, Arne, and Frank)*

# CELEBRATION OF LIFE



Officiating Minister  
**Ivan L. Williams, Sr. | Vice President, NAD**

Musical Prelude

Sarah Kelly  
*HR Generalist, NAD*

Welcome

Ivan L. Williams, Sr.  
*Vice President, NAD*

Invocation

Calvin Watkins  
*Vice President, NAD*

Scripture

*I Thessalonians 4:13-18*

Rick Remmers  
*Assistant to the President, NAD*

Congregational Hymn  
*"Blessed Assurance"*

Jorge Ramirez  
*Associate Secretary, NAD*

Words of Assurance

Ted N. C. Wilson  
*President, General Conference of SDA*

Musical Selection  
*"In the Presence of Jehovah"*

Monica Johnson  
*Retirement Benefits Assistant, NAD*

Tributes

Kyoshin Ahn  
*Executive Secretary, NAD*

Julian Melgosa  
*Associate Director, Education Department, GC*

Berit von Pohle  
*Director, Education Department, PUC*

NAD Office of Education Team

Musical Selection  
*"And Can It Be"*

Zoe Yoash Cepeda / Heim Amariz Cepeda  
*Atholton Adventist Academy / Griggs International Academy*

Tributes

Larry Blackmer  
*Former Vice President, NAD*

LaRonda Forsey  
*Griggs International Academy*

Acknowledgments

Wendy Eberhardt  
*Vice President, NAD*

Special Presentations

Award of Excellence, *GC Education*  
NAD Special Award, *NAD Education*

Musical Selection

*"In His Presence"*

Zoe Yoash Cepeda

Life Sketch

Yvonne Tait  
*Education Department, NAD*

Video Tribute

Music Meditation

*"Trust His Heart"*

Desiree Bryant  
*Associate Ministerial Director, NAD*

Words of Comfort

G. Alexander Bryant  
*President, NAD*

Words of Appreciation  
from the Family

Teen Nielsen  
Read by Cathy Payne  
*Education Department, NAD*

Hymn of Hope

*"When We All Get to Heaven"*

Chad Grundy  
*Associate Treasurer, NAD*

Benediction

Minner Labrador  
*Vice President, NAD*

Musical Postlude

Sarah Kelly

## **THANK YOU**

The family wishes to express their deepest appreciation for the outpouring of love, prayers, and support expressed through cards, phone calls, and other means during their time of loss.

In lieu of flowers, please consider supporting Josh's fight against cancer (Josh is the oldest of Arne and Teen's three sons).



**GoFundMe Link**  
[gofund.me/b1a1cfe3](https://gofund.me/b1a1cfe3)

### **Reception**

Please join us for a reception in the auditorium immediately after the service.





Seventh-day  
Adventist Church

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



**ADVENTIST EDUCATION**  
Journey to Excellence 2.0