

In Loving Memory of

A portrait of Ernest Smith, a middle-aged Black man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a striped tie. He is smiling slightly. The background of the portrait is a blue sky with white clouds. The portrait is set against a larger background of a scenic landscape with mountains and a lake.

Ernest Smith

Sunrise
November 24, 1935

Sunset
March 23, 2011

Wednesday, March 30, 2011 - 11:00 a.m.

COTTON FUNERAL SERVICE

1025 Bergen Street
Newark, New Jersey

Obituary

ERNEST SMITH was born on November 24, 1935 in Newark, New Jersey to the late Marilda (aka Myrtle; aka Latifah Salaam) and James Smith.

Ernest was raised in North Newark with his three siblings; George Goodwin (deceased), Roy Thomas Smith and Akbar Salaam (nee Donald Robinson).

Ernest was educated in the Newark Public School system and was noted for his academic and athletic abilities at Barringer High School. He joined the United States Marine Corps in 1953 and served in the Korean War. Ernest received the following accommodations; the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal and the United Nations Service Medal. He was honorably discharged with a rank of "Corporal" in May 1956.

Upon returning home, he joined the Newark Fire Department and graduated from the Newark Fire Academy in June 1959. He later transferred to the Newark Police Department for three years, where he ranked first on the entrance exam. After a stint with the police department he went back to the Fire Department and received several promotions which made him eligible to take the Fire Captain's exam. At this time during the tumultuous Civil Rights era, Ernest was as fighter and advocate for Civil Rights. He passed the Fire Captain's exam and was also ranked number one on the list. However, to deter any African American from making Captain, the powers that be, replaced the list with a new list that changed the promotion order to eliminate the African American examinees from being placed on the list. Ernest didn't stand for this injustice and he along with several others filed a law suit against the City of Newark. After 12 years, Ernest was the only Fire Fighter who continued the law suit and was successful in gaining a settlement with the City of Newark. After the initial verdict, however, it took an additional 3 years before the City issued a payment. Ernest retired in 1981 with the rank of Arson Detective (A first for an African American). Ernest returned to the Fireman Dept for a third time as a Dispatcher and retired for the final time in 1992.

He was joined in holy matrimony to Charlene (Cookie) Mitchell on July 3, 1957. From this union they had two children, Debra Lynn Smith and Ernest David Smith (deceased). He later married Ida Ruffner and had a step-son, Courtney Ruffner.

Ernest was known for being very particular and for his attention to details. He valued his family and friends and was a member of several civic associations; The Safety Officers Assoc., NAACP, NJ Civil Service Assoc., Policemen's Benevolent Assoc., Firemen's Benevolent Assoc., Bronze Shields, Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, Hobson Street Block Assoc., (Founder & President); NJ State Retired Police & Fireman's Association and The Vulcan Pioneers just to name a few.

He leaves to mourn his passing: his daughter, Debra; step-son, Courtney; brothers, Roy Smith (Louise), Akbar Salaam (Mahasin); sister-in-law, Phyllis Goodwin; many loving nieces and nephews; and a host of other family members and friends.

Order of Service

Musical Tribute

Owen Holloway, Nephew

Processional

The Family

Solo Selection

Adrienne Waddy, Family Friend

Acknowledgements

Dignitaries, Family and Friend

Obituary

Amirah Salaam, Niece

Solo Selection

Herb Harris, Cousin

Eulogy

Regina D. Ross, Family Friend

Solo Selection

Anita Wilson, God-Daughter

Recessional

Interment

Rosehill Cemetery

Linden, New Jersey

*Family and Friends are invited to fellowship with the family as we continue to celebrate the life of **Ernest Smith***

Repast

*Worris Associates, Inc. "Cultural Research & Development Center"
62-70 Howard Street, Irvington, New Jersey (973) 373-3333*

Miss Me, But Let Me Go

*When I come to the end of the
road and the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in a gloom filled room,
Why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little-but not too long,
and not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that we once shared,
Miss me-but let me go.
For this is a journey that we all must take,
And each must go alone.
It's all part of the Master's plan,
A step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick at heart,
Go to the friends we know.
Laugh at the things we use to do
Miss me-but let me go.*

-author unknown



"I'm Free"

*Don't grieve for, For now I'm Free
I have followed the path God laid for me.
If my parting has left a void, Fill it up with remembered joys.
Lift up your heart and share with me.
God wanted me "HE SET ME FREE"*

Acknowledgement

*The family of the late **Ernest Smith** would like to sincerely thank our many relatives and friends for the love and sympathy extended to us.*

Professional Services Provided By

COTTON FUNERAL SERVICE
130 Main Street
Orange, NJ
973-675-6400

1025 Bergen Street
Newark, NJ
973-926-6400

COTTON-PARKER FUNERAL HOME
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