

A black and white portrait of a young man, Henry E. Alston, wearing a suit and tie. The background of the entire poster features a sunset over a field of tall grass.

*In Loving Memory  
Of*

*Sunrise  
June 22, 1928*

*Sunset  
September 17, 2012*

*Henry E. Alston*

*Tuesday, September 25, 2012  
12:00 Noon*

**Universal Temple Church Of God**

1403 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11233

*Reverend A.C. Alston, Officiating*

# Obituary



**Henry Elijah Alston**, affectionately known as “Hank” was born on June 22, 1928 to Robert Alston and Mary Debman. Both parents departed this life and he lived in New Jersey up to the age of nine months wherein his sister, Vallie Mae, brother, Charlie Robert and himself relocated to Warrenton, North Carolina and resided with Uncle Mode and Aunt Ida as parents.

He attended a one room school house in Liberia, North Carolina where the grades range from one to six grade. The old school house is now a historical landmark. Hank attended school until departing North Carolina and told the story of how the weather determined school days, for when it rained he would have to stay home and chop wood. He had uncle Elijah an FBI agent (Henry’s middle name). Who would come to town and the local sheriff and others gave him the greatest respect. He would proudly walk down the street with uncle Elijah as people looked in awe. Henry was baptized at the St. Matthew Church, Warrenton, NC and was in charge as caretaker of the church.

## **That was a memorable moment!**

At an early age he left NC to go to Portsmouth, Virginia. There he worked at a Naval Base. He loved to work on the airplane equipment. He invented for the aircraft a piston system. One day the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt came to the base and he spoke with her. Franklin D. Roosevelt was giving out certificate bonds. His name was called and another man went up to received it, FDR asked “are you Henry”, the man said no and he told him to go sit down and he asked “Henry” to come up and speak for himself. He proudly walked up to FDR and received his certificate for outstanding work and shook his hand.

## **That was a memorable moment!**

Upon leaving Virginia he moved to New York City, where he worked and experienced Harlem, New York. He loved to wear his zoot suit “with a chain”, dressed in his finest and danced at the famous clubs, the Savoy and the Audobom Ballroom. He was so cool with his hair that he was nicknamed “Sabu”. On occasion, he would stop on the corner and listen to the speeches and chants of the crowd for Malcolm X. He would personally speak with him and invite him to the local mosque often. He would engage in conversation and hear him speak about what was important to the Black man’s state of living. One time when Malcolm X asked him to come to the mosque, he chose to go to the Savoy and that was the night Malcolm X was shot.

## **That was a memorable moment!**

Upon leaving Harlem he moved to Brooklyn, NY near Stuyvesant Avenue and through mutual friends met his wife, Katherine. Their union together was for forty- eight years, until she departed this life. Through this union they had three children, a son, Andre C. Alston and two daughters, Tonya F. Sutton and Devena E. Johnson.

## **That was a memorable moment!**

They raised their children in Williamsburg and Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn, NY. His children all became professionals in their careers; an engineer, teachers, educational administrator and a physician. He was extremely generous and helped his children with their educational goals. Education was important to him and the key of life. He worked hard for his family and was employed in the furniture industry for over twenty-five years. He was also an entrepreneur (owning a laundromat) and later worked in the New York City Public School system.

## **That was a memorable moment!**

He loved his grandchildren dearly and was affectionately called “granddaddy and grandpa”. He would talk with them, advise them, encourage, compliment and congratulate them and was so proud of them.

## **That was a memorable moment!**

He was respected by his family, friends, co-workers, neighbors and the neighborhood kids. The kids would see him coming down the street and they would say “here comes Mr. Alston” and straighten up. He had a whistle that the whole neighborhood knew. When it started to get dark, when we played outside and the street lights were about to come on, you would hear that “whistle” and we would start running home.

## **That was a memorable moment!**

He loved his hair, shoes and cars, especially the 1950 Chrysler DeSoto. He was smooth and dapper. It would take hours, but he would always shine when he finished. His hair was shiny and slick. He was known for his shined shoes and had a shoebox that he used weekly and kept it to this day, nearly fifty years later. It was filled with wax, shine, brushes and cloths. Today we still remember those Saturday nights of shining shoes to get ready for church on Sundays. He could tell you how to shine some shoes! He was a faithful member of Cornerstone Baptist Church and also attended Christ Fellowship Baptist Church.

## **That was a memorable moment!**

He love jazz and was a connoisseur of the music genre. He knew all the Big Bands and would tell you the name of the songs and the history of that time. He love to tell stories about life, politics and money. He loved to go fishing and was a chef on the grill, which is what he loved to do. He loved sports, especially the Mets. He would have games on the radio and the television all at the same time with different games. He strongly believed in the struggle of his people, of where they came from and how far they have come. It was a proud moment for him to see President Obama, elected to the White House.

## **That was a memorable moment!**

Henry was preceded in death by his father, mother and brother. He leaves to cherish his memorable life: a son, Rev. Andre C. Alston, Hillsborough, New Jersey; two daughters, Tonya Alston-Sutton, M.S. Central Islip NY. and Dr. Devena Alston-Johnson, Simpsonville, SC.; seven grandchildren, Neema Coker, Omari, Towana Alston-Watkins, Charbonnett, Chante, Issa and Jamila; two great-grandchild, Anthony Jr. (A.J), and Justin who he loved dearly; one loving sister, Vallie Embry, Delaware; two sons-in-law, Tyrone Sutton and Robert Johnson; grandsons-in-law, Anthony Coker and Jermaine Watkins; aunts, uncles and a host of brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, cousins, friends and now he is reunited with his wife, Katherine, as he transcended life on her birthday, September 17, 2012. He lived a rich life beyond money, but full of family, love, travel and spirit.

## **He lived a life full of memorable moments!**

## **Love lives on...**

Those we love remain with us for love itself lives on and cherished memories, never fade because a loved one’s gone. Those we love can never be more than a thought apart, for as long as there is memory, they’ll live on in the heart.

# *Order of Service*

Prelude

Processional

Selection ..... Sister Carol Burton

Scripture:

Old Testament-Psalm 27: 1-9 ..... Rev. Sharee Abrams

New Testament-John 14: 1-6

Prayer of Comfort

Selection

Acknowledgements ..... Sister Monique Braxton-Fordham

Church Resolution ..... Sister Monique Braxton-Fordham

Expressions

Selection

Memorable Moments/Obituary ..... Sister Monique Braxton-Fordham

Selection ..... Brother Andre Darling

Eulogy ..... Reverend A. C. Alston

Benediction

## **Interment**

Evergreen Cemetery  
Brooklyn, New York



## *The Final Flight*

*Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,  
I'm following the path God laid for me.  
I took His hand when I heard His call,  
I turned my back and left it all.*

*I could not stay another day,  
To laugh, to love, to work, to play.  
Tasks left undone must stay that way,  
I've found that peace at the end of the day.*

*If my parting has left a void,  
Then fill it with remembered joy.*

*A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,  
Ah, yes, these things too I will miss.*

*Be not burdened with times of sorrow,  
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.  
My Life's been full, I savored much,  
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.*



*Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,  
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.  
Lift up your heart and share with me,  
God wanted me now, He set me free.*

## *Acknowledgement*

*The family acknowledges with deep appreciation all acts of  
kindness extended to them during this bereavement hour.  
God bless you for all your thoughtfulness and concern.*

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