

Celebration of Life For



Charles E. Cole, Sr.

Sunrise
June 6, 1930

Sunset
December 3, 2013

Service

Monday, December 9, 2013 - 10:00 a.m.

Greater Zion Hill Baptist Church

2365 8th Avenue • New York, NY 10027

Pastor James E. Booker, Jr., Officiating

Obituary

Mr. Charles Ernest Cole, Sr., was born in Memphis, Tennessee on June 6, 1930 to the late Mr. Edward and Mrs. Rebecca Cole. Out of that union, twelve children were born: Beatrice, Bernice, Edward, Evelyn, Bennie, Carol, Charles, Sr., Frank, Melvin, Nathan and Jason (twins), and Donald. Beatrice and Frank are his two surviving siblings.

The Cole family moved to New York in the 1940's, and after living in Brooklyn for a few months, they moved to Harlem. Mr. Cole attended Public School 24 on 128th Street and Madison Avenue, and later, Cooper Junior High School on 120th Street and Madison. He then attended a vocational high school on 138th Street. Mr. Cole continued his education at Columbia University, receiving a certificate in real estate. He later studied management at New York University. Mr. Cole served in the United States Marine Corp for two years. During his time as a Marine, he met and married Bloomie Marie Smith, from Harlem, N.Y. (who had a son Michael, deceased,) who Charles, Sr. cared for as a son and out of this loving union, came two sons, Charles, Jr., and Allen. Shortly after giving birth, Bloomie became ill and passed away. Some years later Mr. Cole met and married Minerva Coggins, deceased. He adopted her two children, Verlene and George. The Cole Family continued to blossom with the birth of Wanda and Ernest. He spent the last thirty years with his loving companion and common law wife, Connie McFarlane, who passed away in 2012.

Mr. Cole had a deep appreciation for the arts and culture, which he instilled in his children. He loved art shows, as well as jazz, classical, and easy listening music. Mr. Cole loved to read and passed the importance of reading as much as possible down to his children. Mr. Cole held many jobs throughout his life, but he was most widely known as the Residence Manager for Madison Avenue Associates from 1977-2009. Before retiring in 2009, Mr. Cole enhanced the lives of many people in his community. He provided countless job opportunities in construction, maintenance, and office management for anyone who came to him for help. Mr. Cole made many friends throughout the city and state government, he partnered with them to help his community flourish.

Mr. Cole was truly gentle man, who always looked for ways to bring his community together. One of his most enduring legacies was assisting those who needed his help to succeed in their everyday lives. He didn't believe in giving handouts, but rather, he gave sound advice and networked people with the organizations that could best address their needs. Mr. Cole always sought to build people's character and help them learn the value of hard work. He also connected people who were starting over with social services such as furniture donations and other items donated by small business owners. When he witnessed friends or neighbors struggling to get back on their feet, he would help by taking them to shop for necessities at local stores in the neighborhood.

Mr. Cole loved sports. On weekends, he would get up early, round up the boys and take them out to play basketball, football, and baseball at the local parks. Soon, when other neighborhood kids joined in, Mr. Cole welcomed them with open arms and never complained. His dedication to the neighborhood's children led him to start informal football and basketball leagues, and he organized instruction in baseball and karate. He even developed and operated an extended summer lunch program for children in the 1970's. He had great love for his community, especially the children. In turn, the community's children, teenagers and adults always showed him respect. Mr. Cole's main concern was to make sure the children he worked with were focused on the future, rather than getting into trouble. He always opened his home to the children in the community and provided them with wisdom and fatherly guidance.

Mr. Cole's other legacy was his nationally-recognized community garden on 131st Street. The garden was profiled by several news media outlets and celebrated for its incredible value to the community. It provided food, fun and fellowship for area residents, as well as educational opportunities for local school children. Students could pick fruits and vegetables, study birds, insects, and flowers, and even help care for rescued cats and dogs. Perhaps most importantly, the garden brought people together from different races, ethnicities, and backgrounds -- everyone was always welcome. The garden was cherished as a quiet and peaceful haven for people to take a break from the heavy traffic and distractions of the outside world. Commuters would stop and marvel, often getting out of their cars to explore this oasis in the middle of the busy city. Sadly, the community garden closed due to the sale and development of the lot, but Harlemites will always remember the special way in which Mr. Cole made their neighborhood beautiful.

Mr. Cole became very ill over the last couple of months and on December 2, 2013 was called home to be with the Lord. He leaves to mourn: his children, Charles Cole Jr., Allen Cole, Wanda Cole, Ernest Cole, George and Verlene; his brother, Frank Cole and his sister, Beatrice Tharpe; his grandchildren, Charles Cole, III, Alonna Cole, Lamont Cole, Brittany Cole, Allen Cole, Jr., Kerry Cheeseboro and Noel Cheeseboro; his nieces, Fontessa, Diane, and his nephew: Herb Wright, Thomas, and Dwight Tharpe; daughters-in-law, Thayer Cole and Donna Cole; a host of other nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends.

Homegoing Service

PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

Open Solo.....Sister Ashley Booker

Prayer of Consolation.....Pastor West

Scripture Readings.....Pastor Darryl Footman

Old Testament: Psalm 90:10

New Testament: Isaiah 40:28-31

REFLECTIONS BY FAMILY

Deacon and Charles, Sr. brother-in-lawPeyton Smith

Grandson.....Charles E. Cole, III

Cousin.....Arnold Riley, Jr.

Son.....Allen Cole

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....Niece Linda Penceal

OBITUARY.....Joyce Smith

Song Of Comfort

EULOGY.....Pastor James E. Booker Jr.

RECESSIONAL

Interment

White Plains Rural Cemetery
White Plains, New York

Lonely Is The Home Without You

*Lonely is the home without you,
Life to us is not the same;
All the world would be like Heaven,
If we could have you back again.
A light from our household gone,
A voice we loved is still,
A place is vacant in our home
That never can be filled.
May the God of Love and Mercy,
Care our loved one who is gone,
And bless with consolation,
Those left to carry on.
The happy hours we once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still
But death has left a vacant place,
This world can never fill.
How dearly we loved you,
And prayed you might live,
But Jesus just beckoned,
And we had to give.
God gave us strength to bear it,
And courage to fight the blow,
What it has meant to lose you,
God alone will ever know.*

-Author unknown

Acknowledgement

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

2352 8th Avenue • Manhattan, NY • (212) 666-8300
1406 Pitkin Avenue • Brooklyn, NY • (718) 774-1023
1018 Prospect Avenue • Bronx, NY • (718) 542-3833

Clifford V. James, President & CEO

www.unityfuneralchapels.com

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