

In Loving Memory of



Kenneth F. Benton

Sunrise

June 13, 1939

Sunset

January 20, 2014

Service

Saturday, January 25, 2014 - 1:00 p.m.

WHIGHAM FUNERAL HOME

580 Martin Luther King Blvd.

Newark, New Jersey

Obituary



Kenneth F. Benton was a proud alum of Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) and his life was nothing short of a true reflection of the school's motto, "Enter to Learn. Depart to Serve." Ken was born into a family of limited means in the small town of Edison, Georgia. His mother, Willie Dean Bradwell, was a feisty, God-fearing, hard working woman who wanted nothing but the absolute best for her son. That strong desire forced her to make tough sacrifices such as having to seek employment up North. That meant leaving her son in the care of her parents.

Under his grandparents' care, Ken learned the importance of respect and pride. He later joined his mother in Newark, New Jersey where he successfully completed his education at South Side High School. There, he starred as a running back and linebacker for the football team. After graduation, the legendary coach, Clarence "Big House" Gaines, recruited Ken in 1957 to come to WSSU on a football scholarship. Ken graduated from WSSU with a Bachelor's Degree in 1961.

He tried out for the Buffalo Bills in the American Football League, but went on to play with the Montreal Alouettes. Later, he came home to Newark where he earned his Master's Degree in Education and along with his first wife, Vera Benton, happily raised four wonderful, college-educated children.

From 1976 through 1998 he had a fantastic career as Manager of Corporate Contributions and Social Responsibility with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in New York City where he provided guidance to hundreds of employees in their community volunteer and philanthropic pursuits. Ken even made a point of taking his four young children along to numerous charitable drives and community volunteer events so that they too would personally develop selflessness, gratefulness and a willingness to help those in need. Throughout his career, Ken enjoyed associations with many wonderful organizations like the National Urban League, the NAACP, and 100 Black Men, as well as remaining active in his community.

Ken went on to enjoy life with Audrey Benton, his wife of 20 years. Even in his retirement, he continued to help others, taking on a part-time job in Trenton tutoring youth transitioning out of the juvenile justice system who were eager to learn job and life skills to enjoy new beginnings.

Ken always had good stories to tell – numerous and often humorous, that often brought smiles to the faces of the many who crossed his path throughout his life. Some of Ken's final inspirational words were, "Smile. I love all of you."

Ken touched many lives and hearts, and always gave advice to others for their benefit. He also had an uncanny knowledge of historical facts, sports and jazz music trivia. And even as his heart became weak, he did the utmost to continue to lift others up by touching their hearts—encouraging them to move forward and not to look back.

It is no coincidence that Ken made his transition on a holiday on which the world honored another great man who lived a life of service, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. After a long illness and several health challenges, it was time for Ken to rest, and when he did, he was surrounded by his loving wife, sister, his children, grandson and dear friends who had traveled many miles to be with him. Ken is survived by his wife Audrey Benton of Trenton, sister Clela Bradwell of Newark, maternal aunt Clara Wood of Buffalo, New York, his children (Dr. Lisa Benton of Gahanna, Ohio, Lita, son-in-law Lance and granddaughter Sara Anderson of Alameda, California, Leah, son-in-law Gerald and grandson Joshua Jones of Hercules, California, son Kenneth Benton, Jr. of Oakland, California) and numerous extended family members and friends all over the world.

Order of Service Celebration

Musical Prelude

Processional

Musical Selection

Scriptures

Old Testament - Psalm 23 Minister James Coleman

New Testament - John 14:1-4 Minister Albert Matlock

Special Remarks Dr. Thomas Monteiro

Tribute Mr. Walker Worthy

Family Tribute Ms. Clela Bradwell

Acknowledgements Ms. Sharon Madison

Musical Selection

Obituary (Guests are invited to read silently from their printed programs.)

Eulogy..... Reverend Rufus McClendon, Jr.

Final Musical Selection “The Lord’s Prayer”
Mr. Howard Crossland

IntermentFairmount Cemetery Mausoleums
620 Central Avenue
Newark, New Jersey

Repast

The Appian Way
619 Langdon Avenue
Orange, NJ

Pallbearers

Lance Anderson	Joshua Jones
Kenneth Benton, Jr.	Brandon Lyman
Gerald Jones	Hawthorne Singleton III

Honorary Pallbearers

Alvin A. Attles, Sr.	Marcellus King
Herman Cowan	George Marable
Jimmie Graham	Russ Rogers
Billy King	Bobby Randolph



Smile

Though your smile is gone forever,
and your hand I cannot touch,
I still have many memories
of the one I loved so much.
Your memory is my keepsake,
with which I'll never part.
God has you in His keeping,
I have you in my heart.

"I Love You Always, Kenneth."

-Mrs. Audrey Benton



Acknowledgement

The family wishes to extend sincere gratitude and kindness to everyone who has shown us care during our time of bereavement. We truly appreciate all your prayers and support and thank you kindly.

Professional Services by:
Whigham Funeral Home

580 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Newark, New Jersey 07102
973-622-6872

Carolyn Whigham, Director