

*Home Going Service for*

A portrait of Willie J. Durr, an African American man with short dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, white shirt, and light-colored tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a gentle expression. The background is a soft-focus image of a blue sky with white clouds.

*Willie J. Durr*

Sunrise  
January 27, 1935

Sunset  
September 8, 2014

*Service*

Monday, September 15, 2014  
11:00 A.M.

**UNION CHAPEL AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

209 Wainwright Street  
Newark, NJ 07107

*Rev. Anthony Mitchell, Sr. - Pastor*

## Obituary

**Willie J. Durr** was born to the late John and Alberta Wiggins Durr on January 27, 1935 in Edwin, Alabama. He was the third of four siblings: the late Johnnie Richard, the late Joann and Martha Rose. He departed this life on Monday, September 8, 2014.

Willie was educated at the Henry County Training School. He accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior at an early age. Willie was a member of St. Michael A.M.E. Church in Edwin, Alabama and later joined Union Chapel A.M.E Church in Newark, New Jersey.

What started off while he was a young man, Willie was extremely personable and enjoyed talking to people, both familiar and unfamiliar. Early on, in his home state of Alabama, those around him affectionately knew Willie, as “preacher”. No one was a stranger to him because at some point he had shared a story or a kind word. Through his stories you could learn what he was the most passionate about: family, sports and his favorite television shows. One of his favorite pastimes’ included going to the catfish pond with his dad, “Poppa John”.

Willie married his lifelong sweetheart, Betty Joyce Johnson on January 16, 1954. In 1956, they left Alabama and journeyed to Newark, New Jersey, which they would eventually call home. Through this union of love they bore three children: Bobby Joe, Bettie Ann and Douglas Earl. If there was one thing Willie loved it was his family. He adored his kids and maintained a special bond with his grandchildren. One of their many conversations included talking about sports and ended with a conversation on the next time everyone was going to have “crabs with Papa”. He often could be found in his chair near the window listening to his “special radio”.

Willie was employed by the International Longshoreman Association (ILA) Local 1233. He retired January 1999 after tirelessly dedicating thirty years of service with rarely ever taking a day off. He was the surviving member of the Old Pros Social Club and played baseball for Negro Baseball League Team – Newark Braves.

Willie leaves to cherish his memory: his wife of sixty years, Betty Joyce Durr of Newark, New Jersey; son, Bobby Joe Durr (Judy) of Roselle, NJ; one daughter Bettie Ann Durr of Newark, NJ; and son, Douglas Earl Durr (Carolyn) of Newark, NJ; five grandchildren, Cerissa Lenora Durr, Kia Nicole Durr, Jasmine Taylor Durr, Briana Alexis Durr and Tehron Donyea Durr; one sister, Martha Rose Coleman (Jesse) of Newark, New Jersey; brothers-in-law, George F. Hill of Newark, New Jersey, Robert J. Johnson of Newark, New Jersey and Lemon L. Johnson of Edwin, Alabama; sisters-in-law, Curlie Freeman of Edwin, Alabama and Christine Johnson of Newark, New Jersey; godchildren, Christine Williams of Conway, South Carolina; Darius Williams of Newark, New Jersey and Clarence Lee, Jr. of Jonesboro, Georgia; and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives, friends, neighbors and church family.

A special thank you to the staff of Forest Hills Healthcare Center.

# *Order of Service*

**Processional**

Clergy

**Doxology**

“Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”

**Hymn**

#450 “Blessed Assurance”

**Prayer of Comfort**

**Scripture Lessons**

Old Testament – Psalm 23

New Testament – John 14:1-8

**Music Ministry**

**Reflections**

**Music Ministry**

**Acknowledgements/Resolutions**

**Obituary**

**Solo**

Min. Steven F. Hill

**Eulogy**

Rev. Anthony Mitchell, Sr.

**Recessional**

**Interment**

Fairmount Cemetery

620 Central Avenue

Newark, New Jersey 07017

***Repast immediately following Interment***

We little knew that morning  
God was going to call your name  
In life we loved you dearly,  
In death we do the same.  
It broke our hearts to lose you,  
You did not go alone;  
For part of us went with you,  
The day God called you home.  
You left us beautiful memories  
Your love is still our guide;  
And though we cannot see you,  
You are always by our side.  
Our family chain is broken,  
And nothing seems the same;  
But as God calls us one by one,  
The chain will link again.

**Honorary Pallbearers**

Melvin Goldsmith	Clarence Lee
Darius Williams	Barry Hill
David Hunter	James Malone

**Acknowledgement**

The family wishes to express their sincere thanks to the many expressions of sympathy extended during this period of bereavement. May God bless and keep each of you. Your support, acts of kindness, prayers and messages of love are comforting to us and will be personally acknowledged at a later time.

Respectfully Submitted,  
The Family

Professional Services by:  
**Whigham Funeral Home**

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

***Carolyn Whigham, Director***

