

In Loving Memory
Melvin (Mel) L. Gary, Ph.D.

April 12, 1938 – March 4, 2015



Service

Saturday, March 14, 2015 ~ 11:00 a.m.

Student Center, Livingston Campus of Rutgers University

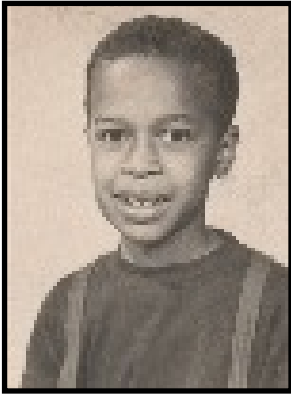
84 Joyce Kilmer Avenue
Piscataway, New Jersey

Obituary

Melvin (Mel) L. Gary, Ph.D.

April 12, 1938
Brownsville, PA

March 4, 2015
Bayville, NJ



How does a coal miner's son, who grew up on Dunlap's Creek (pronounced locally as "crick") in Brownsville, PA, eventually live comfortably in a home on Barnegat Bay in New Jersey? How does his journey traverse these distances in one lifetime? Because Mel's parents and eight siblings lacked the resources to travel extensively and television was not widely available until he was attending high school, their knowledge of the world, beyond Appalachia, was limited. But Mel did not let these factors limit his path to success.

Mel was a naturally bright student, earning straight A's. When he entered high school, the administration wanted to place him in the Commercial track and not the College Prep track, which he requested. The Commercial track would prepare him for a job, not a career. This was a common racist practice at the time. His grandmother, with whom he lived, said, "Mel wants the College Prep track!" Her decision changed Mel's life forever and a world beyond Brownsville emerged. He enjoyed the intellectual discourse with his teachers and peers in the College Prep track, while his family and neighbors perceived him as having "weird ideas."

Mel was recruited by Haverford College (Haverford, PA). He earned a baccalaureate in 1961. Once again, he thrived in the intellectually stimulating Haverford environment. He also acquired a new name, transitioning from "Melvin" to "Mel," although some relatives never successfully made the transition with him! He took a one-year sabbatical prior to graduation and returned to Pittsburgh and found employment in the laboratory of Dr. Jonas Salk, during the post-polio vaccine era. In 1967 he earned his doctorate, under the mentorship of Dr. Harold Pepinsky, at The Ohio State University (Columbus, OH) in the Dept. of Counseling Psychology.

Mel taught Psychology at Temple University (Philadelphia, PA) for one year and then at Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey for 33 years, until he retired with the status of Emeritus in 2002. He was an essential player in the founding of Rutgers' Livingston College in 1969. He held faculty and administrative positions at Rutgers, rising to the position of Associate Dean of Livingston College. Academic year 1974-1975 was a rewarding one. He was selected as a Fellow of the American Council on Education (ACE) and moved the family to Los Angeles, CA to work in the Chancellor's Office at UCLA.

Throughout his career, Mel gave of his time generously and mentored a countless number of students (graduate and undergraduate), junior faculty members, and young professionals. He was also active in the NJ Association of Black Psychologists and was its President for two years. He mentored young professionals here as well.

In 1965, Mel married Lanetta J. (“Jeanne”) Scott in Columbus, OH. They had one son, Joseph Tyler (J.T.) Gary and resided in the greater New Brunswick, NJ area.

In 1982, Mel married Dr. Juneau Mahan (also a psychologist) in Jersey City, NJ. They enjoyed 32 years together. They complemented each other; he the intellectual and she the implementer. They resided in Somerset, NJ for 20 year and moved to Bayville, NJ, on the Barnegat Bay, as Mel was retiring. They were known for their international travel, mostly to exotic destinations. They experienced the seven continents together!

Two of Mel’s hobbies and passions were computing and jazz. His love of technology was fostered in the early 1980s with the purchase of his first home computer, a Texas Instrument (or TI). He would literally be on the computer all night and glance up, noticing it was sunrise. This passion was complemented by his enjoyment of free form and traditional jazz artists from the 1960s through 1980s.

On March 4, 2015, Mel, 76, passed on peacefully, following a lengthy illness. He was born to Joseph and Marie (Hood) Gary. Left to cherish his memory and honor his legacy are his wife, Juneau; son, J.T.; two sisters, Phyllis Boss of Westland, MI and Deborah Gary of Columbus, OH; two stepbrothers, Harry (Sandra) Pugh and James "Doc" (Patricia) Pugh, of Warren, OH; father-in-law, Dr. Kenneth Mahan, Sr. of Loch Arbour, NJ; aunts, Julia (Henry) Reynolds and Eunice (A.B.) Carl of Pittsburgh, PA; two sisters-in laws, Barbara Green of Richmond VA and Dr. Janet (Michael) Mahan Williams of Eatontown, NJ; two brothers-in laws, Kenneth (Bridgette) Mahan, Jr. of Chicago, IL and Joel Mahan of Jersey City, NJ; and a host of nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends.

Mel was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph Gary and Maria Hood Gary Pugh; stepfather, Fred Pugh, Sr.; stepmother, Laura Gary; mother-in-law, Costello Mahan; brothers, Joseph, James, Ernest, and David Gary; sisters, Dolores and Theresa “Che Che” Gary; stepbrothers, Fred, Jr., Robert, and Charles Pugh; and stepsisters, Gladys Fant and Frances Santiago.

Deborah Gary, Mel’s sister, wrote in her children’s book, Info Ivan Discovers Black Inventions, “We can all be whatever we want to be in this world if we study hard, work hard, and live a good, clean life!” This is how Mel’s journey brought him from Brownsville to Bayville. A gentle soul with a mild mannered demeanor, Mel will always be fondly remembered as a family man, a gentleman, and a scholar.



Precious





A decorative banner with a light blue and green marbled background. The word "Memories" is written in a large, elegant black cursive script. On either side of the word are two white doves in flight, facing outwards.



A Life Remembered

Order of Service

Musical Prelude

Emcee Ms. Barbara Green

Prayer of Comfort Ms. Sandra Pugh

Reading of Obituary Mr. Joel Mahan

Musical Interlude

Remembrances in Celebration of Mel's Life

Dr. Kenneth Nakayama, Haverford College

Dr. Ernest Dunn, Livingston College of Rutgers University as read by Joel Mahan

Dr. Daniel Ogilvie, Department of Psychology, Rutgers University

Mr. Brian L'Oiseau, Former Student, Department of Psychology

Dr. Daniel Williams, NJ Association of Black Psychologists

Ms. Janet Owen, Enduring Friendship

Dr. Ernest Washington, Enduring Friendship

Ms. Marie Matyas, Enduring Friendship

Musical Interlude

Family Reflections in Celebration of Mel's Life

Mr. Kenneth Mahan, Jr., The Mahan Family

Ms. Deana Taylor-Battle, The Gary Family

Ms. Patricia (Ann) Pugh, The Pugh Family

Musical Interlude

Personal Reflections..... Mr. Joseph Tyler Gary, Son

Prayer of Comfort and Blessing of the RepastMr. Marlan J. Gary

Repast

Cremation

Rosedale Crematory

Orange, New Jersey



Dear Mel,

My phone rang.... You were the program chairperson for the NJ Association of Black Psychologists and asked if I could make a presentation. This business call between strangers should have taken three minutes but it turned into a comfortable 20 minute call, typically enjoyed by good friends. I've always cherished our friendship.

Over time, I grew to love you. I loved ... the soft tone of your voice ... your intellect ... your English Leather after shave ... your judgment and good advice... your soft touch ... your concern for humanity ... your generosity with family, friends, students, and strangers ... your treatment of and respect for women ... your generosity with computer advice and computer lessons ... and our friendship.

We enjoyed a good life during our 32 years of marriage. We lived in two homes filled with love and harmony. In our travels, we experienced so many wonders, cultures, and lifestyles that we each read about in school ... the seven continents ... the African Diaspora ... some of the Seven Wonders of the World ... and some UNESCO World Heritage sites. We spent anniversaries in exotic locales, celebrating our 10th in Zambia, 25th in Tahiti, and 30th in Antarctica.

Antarctica was our final trip together. We didn't know it then. It was a tough trip for you. You were sick and we didn't realize it until our return. Medical challenges progressed. But you were strong. You survived a spinal cord injury that initially rendered you completely paralyzed in both arms and legs. You fought back and re-gained mobility in your extremities and used a walker. You fought three bouts of colon cancer but you couldn't win this last one.

You asked me to sprinkle your ashes in locations of significance to you. As requested, they will be sprinkled in Brownsville, your boyhood home; Haverford College, the campus that opened your eyes to intellectual discourse and the world; Livingston College, your commitment to a campus designed to promote social justice; Kauai, HI, your favorite vacation site; and Barnegat Bay in Bayville, your final home.

Mel, I will always love you and smile when I think of you. "Farewell ... until we meet again."



Love,

Juneau



Aloha 'Oe / Farewell to Thee

A farewell poem written by Queen Lili'uokalani, last Hawaiian Monarch, 1878

... Farewell to thee, farewell to thee
The charming one who dwells in the shaded bowers
One fond embrace,
"Ere I depart
Until we meet again.

Sweet memories come back to me
Bringing fresh remembrances
of the past
Dearest one, yes, you are mine own
From you, true love shall never depart....

... Aloha 'oe, aloha 'oe
E ke onaona noho i ka lipo
One fond embrace,
A ho'i a'e au
Until we meet again

'O ka hali'a aloha i hiki mai
Ke hone a'e nei i
Ku'u manawa
'O 'oe nô ka'u ipo aloha
A loko e hana nei....

Farewell Mel/Dad. We will always love you. Until we meet again....

Juneau and J. T.

In Appreciation

The family acknowledges with sincere appreciation the many kind deeds and comforting expressions of sympathy extended to them in their time of sorrow.

Special thanks are extended to Mel's family of morticians, the late David (Geraldine) Gary of **Gary Memorial Chapel**, 867 So. James Rd., Columbus, OH and Marlan Gary of **Chapel of Peace**, 2500 Cleveland Rd., Columbus, OH, for their services, love, and support.

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
37 Clinton Avenue
Jersey City, NJ
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