

*Homegoing Service
Celebrating The Life of*

A close-up portrait of an elderly man with a white cap, looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred autumn landscape with trees in shades of orange, yellow, and blue.

Willie Swinson

September 5, 1920 - April 10, 2015

Service

Saturday, April 18, 2015 - 10:00 a.m.

UNITY FUNERAL CHAPELS, INC.
2352 8th Avenue • New York, NY 10027

His Journey In Life

Willie Lee Swinson has departed from this life, to be one with God and the realm of the ancestors. His transition followed a long life as, he reached the age of 94, before succumbing to a short illness on Friday, April 10, 2015. He was born in Goldsboro, North Carolina on September 5, 1920, to the late Samuel and Eva Swinson. He was the oldest brother of three siblings, two brothers: Samuel Swinson, Jr. of Chester, PA, James Henry Swinson of Goldsboro, NC, and one sister, Suzie Herring of Washington, DC.

Willie met Blanche E. Ruffin in Goldsboro, NC whom he would later marry on October 30, 1948 in Baltimore, Maryland. From this marriage came a family which was dearly provided and cared for. The Swinson family included three boys: Gerry P. Swinson, Arthur P. M. Swinson and later Joslin Cantave.

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I'm Free

*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 Him call
I turned my back and left it all.*

I could not stay another day.

*To laugh, to love, to work or play.
Tasks left undone must stay that way,
I found that peace at the close of day.*

*If my parting has left a void,
Then fill it up with remembered joy.
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,
Oh, yes these things I too 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!*

-author unknown



Organ Prelude

Latasha Jordan

Processional

Ministers•Officers•Family

Libations

Atiba Kwabena

Selection

Latasha Jordan

Scripture Readings

Father Lawrence Lucas

Prayer

Father Lawrence Lucas

Lamban Drums

Atiba Kwabena

Acknowledgements

Joslin Cantave

Reflections

Obituary

Father Lawrence Lucas

Musical Selection

“Every Good Ain’t Gone” by Atiba Kwabena

Eulogy

Father Lawrence Lucas

Benediction

Recessional

Ministers•Officers•Family

Entombment

Trinity Mausoleum • New York, New York

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Reflections from Gerry P. Swinson

I am Willie Swinson's oldest son Gerry. My father was a good Dad who always gave us what we needed and sometimes what we wanted, too! He was a tall man but he was as gentle as a lamb. Willie Swinson loved talking about politics, baseball and his wife and kids. He always gave it to you straight, so don't ask him if you can't handle the truth. He might put in a little joke to soften the blow. He would help you if you really needed it but he believed that you should help yourself the best you could.

I'll surely, miss him. I love you and I know that you loved me too.

Expressions of Deep Gratitude from Arthur P. M. Swinson

Father we thank you for your love, knowledge and gentle heart. We thank you mostly, for always being you. You've always told us to be ourselves. We thank the Almighty God for blessing us with a strong and caring father. We know you are at peace, now. You will live in our hearts...never to die in memory, for you are part of us as, we are you. You reared us to be strong for each other and that we will. He was loved by all, and we all will miss him, dearly. "Rest in Peace, now Father. Your job is done on this earth". Loving You, Always and Forever!

Testimony and Admiration from Joslin Cantave

Self-Sufficient and Disciplined, Wise and Humble, Strong Willed and Respectable, Stern yet Compassionate, Strong Moral Fiber and Racial Pride, Very Loyal and Supportive, Political Awareness and a Sense of Duty, Good Manners, Style & Class, Good Diet and Exercise, Thoughtful and Humorous, and Parental Devotion – These days, it seems hard to imagine any one person aspiring to gain all of these qualities, let alone being fortunate to meet one who actually possessed them all – that is, until you've had the privilege of meeting and getting to know Mr. Willie Lee Swinson, my dad. To him it seemed to come easy. Early on, as a young boy, these qualities amazed me and I truly admired him for that - I assumed all fathers were this way. As an adult, I tried to emulate him and slowly, realized how rare it is to even come close - needless to say, I'm still falling short and even as he crept toward his final hours, I was just as much in awe then as I ever was. Feeling this way, was not at all uncommon to all those who knew and would take care for my dad and this made me very proud. We had a very strong bond which we both enjoyed, a bond, despite death's sting, could never be broken. Dad, words can never express how much I love you and the gratitude we all have for the love you've given to us, not to mention, how much we've gained from each and every endearing moment spent with you. You will be missed, greatly!!!

Honor and Love Acknowledged from Brianna Swinson

My beloved grandfather, Mr. Willie Swinson, was an honorable and well respected man. He took care of his family no matter what the circumstance was. He also was an independent man who didn't rely on anybody. He lived a long and happy life.

I am grateful that he is my grandfather. I love him and he will always be missed.

Words on Nobility from Jelani Richards-Cantave

I love my grandfather. To this day I haven't met another man with a sharper sense of wit and wisdom. I told him that more than once, and he replied with "Well then you haven't met too many people, have you?" This, of course, only led me to admire his wisdom even more. When you shook his hand, you could feel how strong he was...the strength of his will...the will of a noble and independent Black man who shall inspire me to stay on the righteous path. Grandpa, you will be dearly missed, although, I will hold you forever in my heart.



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Asleep

*I've closed my eyes and fallen asleep,
So there's no reason for you to weep;
This is a debt we all must pay,
You will see me again someday.
I've endured pain and sometimes sorrow,
Now I don't have to worry about tomorrow.
But life for you must go on,
You must not worry because I'm gone.
You stood beside me all the way,
When I was down, you knew what to say ...
You always told me, "get some rest,"
Let me sleep now, I've done my best.
So please let me rest in peace,
The tears you're shedding soon will cease.
You'll soon realize this was meant to be,
I thank God because He came for me.*

-Author unknown

Acknowledgements

The Swinson family wishes to express their utmost and sincere appreciation for participation in all of today's ceremonial proceedings and for every act of kindness, including cards, prayers, floral arrangements, all words of comfort, care, support and generosity that has been expressed in any way. We have been humbled and feel deep gratitude toward you. You have strengthened us with your love and unselfish devotion during our time of bereavement. May the ancestors guide you and God bless each and every one of you.

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