In Loving Memory of



Willie James Ellis

December 15, 1937 - November 9, 2026

Service

Friday, November 20, 2026

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Emmanuel Baptist Church

1880 Pelham Street, Elmont, NY 11003

Pastor Timothy Mitchell, Officiating

Order of Service

Musical Prelude and Processional

Invocation ..... Pastor Ralph P. Taylor

Hymn of Praise ..... "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior"

Scripture Readings ..... Old Testament – Isaiah 41:10

Deaconess Claudia King

Antioch Baptist Church

New Testament – John 14:27 ..... Deaconess Billie Moye

Antioch Baptist Church

Prayer of Comfort ..... Rev. Larry Palmer

Musical Selection ..... "God Is"

Emanuel Praise Team

Reflections ..... Please limit reflections to two minutes each

On Behalf of the Family (NY) ..... Mr. Johnny Oliver

On Behalf of the Ellis Family ..... Sister Evon Simmons

On Behalf of the Community ..... Mr. Larry Gilmore

On Behalf of Antioch Baptist Church ..... Sister Joann Graham

On Behalf of Antioch's Youth ..... Mr. Jordan Nichols

On Behalf of the Ellis Family ..... Mr. Everard Lopez

Acknowledgements and Reading of the Obituary ..... Mrs. Lorraine Biggs

Musical Selection ..... "I Won't Complain"

Praise Team

Eulogy ..... Reverend Timothy Mitchell

Committal ..... Reverend Timothy Mitchell

Interment

Maple Grove Cemetery

Repast

The repast will be immediately after service

Emanuel Baptist Church's Fellowship Hall

Obituary

Willie James Ellis was a man of kindness and faith, devoted to the LORD, his family, and his community. He was born on December 15, 1937, in Birmingham, Alabama, to the late John and Bertha Ellis, and was the fourth of eight children.

Known affectionately as “Mr. Smooth,” Uncle Boggie, Uncle Bo, Cousin Bo-Legs, and Will-Will, Willie James moved from the South during the Great Migration of the 1950s. Following his graduation from high school in Birmingham, he settled in Harlem with his Aunt Carrie. During this time, he met Malcolm X, Sarah Vaugh, and Duke Ellington and enjoyed visiting the Cotton Club and Savoy Ballroom.

In 1958, Willie James met his beloved Josephine Palmer in the Savoy Ballroom. Distinguished by his impeccable attire, he would visit her home in Queens, New York, wearing a white shirt, dark suit, and black Stetson hat, with a Bible under his arm. They were married two years later. In April 2026, they celebrated 66 years of marriage with family and close friends. Willie delighted in singing “Look at Me” by Arthur Prysock and “Good Night My Love” by Jessie Belvin to Josephine. Their life together was enriched by dancing, singing, and welcoming others into their home.

Willie was a devoted father to his daughters, Robin and Sandy, often assuring them, “I love you more than the stars in the sky.” A firm advocate of education, he insisted that both daughters’ complete college. He counseled them, “No one can control your mind when you are educated,” and encouraged them always to seek the Lord’s guidance throughout their lives.

Recognizing education as a foundation for success, Willie pursued data processing classes at Colombia University. He became the first African American to manage the Data Processing Department at Polychrome Corporation and its Sun Chemical branch in Yonkers, New York, serving for more than 40 years. In recognition of his outstanding accomplishments, the company’s Management Committee presented him with numerous certificates of achievement.

As a devoted grandfather to Everard, Keri, and Kayla, Willie took great pride in their accomplishments and cherished their companionship. They affectionately knew him as “Papa.” Their shared travels to the Poconos, the Southern states, the Caribbean, and Costa Rica held special meaning for him. He also held his sons-in-law, Orlando (Rick) and Albert, in deep affection, regarding them not merely as in-laws, but as his sons.

Willie became a member of Antioch Baptist Church in Jamaica, New York, in 1962. Ever grateful to the LORD for his life, family, and friends, he served as Chairman of the Deacon Board for eight years, sang in the church’s male chorus, and taught the Circle of Wisdom Bible study. His contributions to fundraising efforts for the renovation of the church’s men’s and women’s bathrooms and kitchen were recognized with certificates of appreciation.

Willie’s commitment to community service extended throughout Jamaica, Queens. Through the Jamaica Father’s Project, he mentored young Black men, encouraging them to fulfill their responsibilities as fathers with dedication. His passion for baseball also led him to work with St Albans Little League President Larry Gilmore in 2001 as manager of the Senior Division Giants.

Earlier this year, Willie and other senior members were honored by the St Albans Senior Citizens Garden Club, under the leadership of President Larry Gilmore, and the Southern Queens Park Association for 30 years of dedicated service to the gardens at Roy Wilkins Park.

A humble man of steadfast faith, Willie James served the LORD with his heart, mind, and soul. Throughout his life, he exemplified the devotion of a disciple of Christ.

Colossians 3:17

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Willie peacefully transitioned from time to eternity on November 9, 2026.

His memory will be cherished by his beloved wife, Josephine Ellis; his daughter, Robin Ellis-Lopez; his sister, Mary Evon Simmons; his sons-in-law, Orlando Ricardo Lopez and Albert Munro; his grandchildren, Everard Lopez, Keri Munro, and Kayla Munro; his sister in law, Brenda Ellis; Brother and sister in law Leon and Juanita Howard; Brother in law Joseph Blaylock and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends, and all whom will miss him dearly.



Let Me Go

When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom filled room
Why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little, but not for long
And not with your head bowed low
Remember the love that once we shared
Miss me but let me go.
For this is a journey we all must take
And each must go alone.
It's all part of the master plan
A step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick at heart
Go to the friends we know.
Laugh at all the things we used to do
Miss me but let me go.

Acknowledgements

The family wishes to acknowledge with deep appreciation the many expressions of love, concern and kindness shown to their family during this hour of bereavement.

May God Bless and Keep You!

Professional Services Provided By:

Roy L. Gilmore's Funeral Home, Inc.

Angela Gilmore-Manning, *President*
Ph (718) 529-3030 • (718) 528-7765
Fax (718) 712-2108 • (718) 528-2575
Email: royl.gilmorefuneralhome@verizon.net
191-02 Linden Blvd. • St. Albans, NY 11412

www.honoryou.com