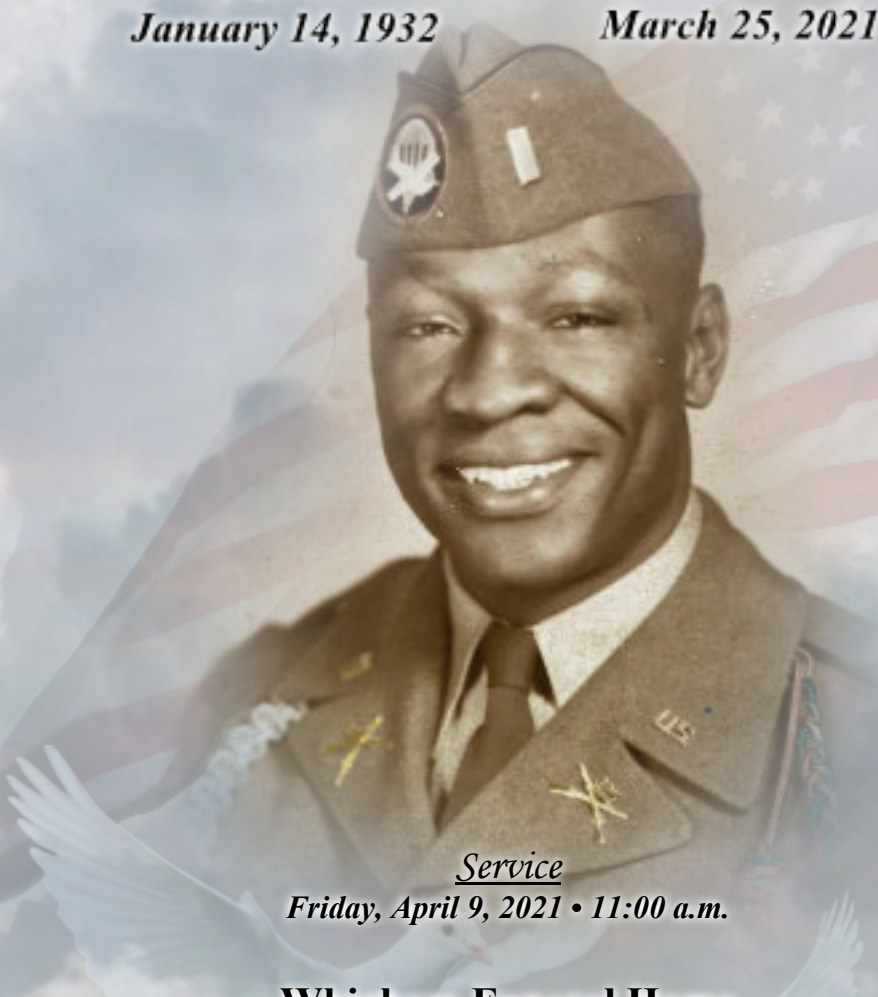


*In Loving Memory of*  
*Richard V. Avant, Sr.*

*Sunrise*  
*January 14, 1932*

*Sunset*  
*March 25, 2021*



*Service*  
*Friday, April 9, 2021 • 11:00 a.m.*

**Whigham Funeral Home**  
580 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. • Newark, New Jersey  
***Dennison D. Harrield, Officiating***

## *Reflection of Life*

Richard V. Avant, Sr., was born on January 14, 1932, at Overlook Hospital in Summit, New Jersey. He spent many of his early years living with his extended family in Climax/Greensboro, North Carolina. He graduated from the “Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth”, fondly called “Old Ironsides” by students. Known to the outside world as, the “Tuskegee of the North,” the school was a self-sustaining, co-educational, vocational school; and Richard counted his years there among his best. The lifelong friendships that were fostered while he was a student were an essential element to who he was as a person.

Richard earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from Morgan State College (now Morgan State University), and a Master of Arts degree in Education from Kean College (now Kean University). Richard, a proud member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity, served honorably in active duty in the U.S. Army as a First Lieutenant during the Korean Conflict. He was a Paratrooper and frequently recounted the story of his first, qualifying jump from an airplane to family and friends with humor and his characteristic humility.

While a student at Morgan State, Richard met and then married Janice Howard in December 1954. Their marriage lasted nearly 66 years until she passed away in November 2020. They lived together at Fort Bragg, North Carolina before moving to Chicago, Illinois, where they welcomed the birth of their two oldest children. They returned to the East Coast and welcomed their third child in Summit, NJ, where they resided until 1983 when they moved to and settled in Newark, NJ.

During his career Richard was the Director of the Neighborhood House in Plainfield. He was the Director of Youth Services for the United Neighborhood Centers of America. He worked in the New Jersey court system as a Probation Officer in Union County and also as Assistant Court Administrator and the Director of Pre-Sentence Intervention Services for the City of Newark. He worked for the Division of Youth

and Family Services and retired from the Newark Housing Authority.

Richard was always an active and committed citizen. As a non-partisan, he ran for the New Jersey State Senate and, many years later, the Newark City Council. He was an active participant in the effort which resulted in Kenneth Gibson being elected Newark's first African-American Mayor. Richard was a past president of Tri-City NAACP. In that position, he fought against racism in Summit and neighboring communities. Richard was instrumental in establishing the Crispus Attucks parade in Newark. He was the lone picketer when Sen. Strom Thurmond came to Summit to speak at an event. He walked against racism with Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. Richard also found time to teach African-American history classes in the Summit community. In everything he did, Richard endeavored to emulate the example set by his mentor, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., of using nonviolent civil disobedience to protest racial inequalities.

Richard also lived a full spiritual life. He counseled and mentored youths in Summit and Plainfield. He gave money, food, and money for food to anyone in need. Richard was a member of Wallace Chapel AME Zion Church for 56 years and while he was healthy, he sang in the both the Senior and Men's Choir, was a member of the Newsletter staff, the president of the Lay Council, and Chairperson of Men's Day.

He graciously entertained family and friends at his legendary cookouts, where he cooked slabs of his famous barbecued ribs and served delicious, chopped barbecue. Richard loved Janice, history, politics, current events, writing, inciteful conversation, the twenty-dollar word, and debate.

Richard leaves to mourn his passing his children: Patricia Jackson (Clarence), Richard Jr., and Marjory Cocco (Carlos). His grandchildren: Jocelyn, Matthew, and Clarence Vincent. His great-grandchildren: Jahni, Melody, Jeidin, and Johann. His sister-in-law, Linda Bannerman-Martin; a special cousin, Clarence Avant; two nieces, two nephews, his Goddaughter, and a host of relatives and friends.











## *Order of Service*

Organ Prelude

Invocation ..... Rev. Dr. Denison D. Harrield, Jr., Pastor

Hymn of Praise ..... “Marching To Zion”

Scripture Readings

Old Testament: Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 ..... Matthew Jackson

New Testament: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 .... Clarence V. Jackson

Prayer of Comfort ..... Patricia A. Jackson

Selection..... “May The Work I’ve Done Speak For Me”  
George Hines

Acknowledgments & Reflections ..... Dawn P. Halley  
Margo Williams  
Marjory Avant Cocco

Obituary (Read Silently)

Selection..... Clara Ross

Eulogy ..... Rev. Dr. Denison D. Harrield, Jr., Pastor

Recessional ..... “We’ll Understand It Better By and By”  
(*Congregation is standing*)

***Interment***  
*Fairview Cemetery*  
*Westfield, New Jersey*



# *I Dream A World*

*I dream a world where man  
No other man will scorn,  
Where love will bless the earth  
And peace its paths adorn  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white,  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attends the needs of all mankind-  
Of such I dream, my world!*

*~ Langston Hughes ~*

## *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 by:  
**Whigham Funeral Home**

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

*Carolyn Whigham, Director*



  
[www.honoryou.com](http://www.honoryou.com)