

*The Celebration of Life for*  
**William  
Ashley Davis**

**August 23, 1942 - September 29, 2021**

# OBITUARY

**William Ashley Davis** was born on August 23, 1942, in Harlem, New York. He was the third of five children to Lillie Elizabeth Davis and Ashley Davis. His parents, brother, Daniel, and sister-in-law, René, preceded him in death.

William (Billy) attended New York City Public Schools, including Public School 170, Galvani Junior High School, and the High School of Commerce. Though he never formally continued his education past the twelfth grade, Billy remained passionate about learning and continued to explore his myriad interests—from snakes to watches to coins to current events to faraway cuisines—until his death.

After graduating from Commerce in 1960, Billy worked for the Army and Exchange Commission, where he was a clerk for several years. Then, in November 1964, he was drafted into the Army, serving as a Combat Engineer in South Korea. During his time in the service, Billy guarded and aided civilians, assisted with engineering projects, and participated in combat training. Upon his honorable discharge in November 1966, he was awarded with the Good Conduct, National Defense Service, and Rifle Expert medals.

Billy met and fell in love with his first wife, Odessa, shortly before joining the military, and they married when he returned to the United States. The pair moved to New York, and this union ultimately produced Billy's son, Erik.

Later, in 1975, Billy married his second wife, Theresa, and this relationship created his two children, Duane and Edris.

As a father and a grandfather, Billy stressed the importance of obtaining an education; being kind to others; having resilience; making people laugh with witty remarks, like “a slip of the tongue is no fault of the wise”; dressing well (he always creased his pants' legs straight down the middle and carried a handkerchief); and maintaining one's curiosity about the world. He was a complex man, but he always possessed a loving, caring heart, cherishing his children and grandchildren.

Billy was always good with his hands: Friends and family members would usually turn to him to repair fixtures, such as faulty faucets or running toilets; paint walls; assemble five-foot-tall bookshelves and full-size beds; shine chandeliers outfitted with bulbs, glass decorations, and metal rivets; or tie things with twine. So, his job as a Stationary Engineer at the Parkchester Heating Plant suited him well—he could spend his days adjusting pressure gauges or monitoring heating levels, and his work ensured that thousands of people would receive heat and hot water every day. It was a demanding (and sometimes dangerous) position, but he knew it was an important one, and Billy would even train other team members. (And they, in turn, taught him how to fish, which remained a life-long passion of his.) After 38 years at the Plant, he finally retired from his position in 2008.

As a true Renaissance man, Billy had a wide range of interests, from athletics to the arts. During his teens, he played football with his friends and always maintained a love of sports—especially boxing. He'd follow the Olympics: Throughout the Winter games, he'd watch ice skating, skiing, and bobsledding with rapt interest. When the Summer events aired, he paid close attention to track & field, gymnastics, and swimming. And in the springtime, you'd always find him watching a Yankees game, the French Open, or Wimbledon.

And how could we talk about Billy without mentioning music? The minute you entered his home, you'd hear sounds blaring from a stereo system that took up half of the living room, and you'd see hundreds of CDs scattered across his floors and bookshelves. His record collection ran the gamut and included Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Alice Coltrane, Dexter Gordon, Miles Davis, Gene Ammons, and, of course, Dr. Dre's iconic album, *The Chronic*. Even in his later years, he would still hunt for new music, tuning into his all-time favorite radio station, WBGO 88.3 FM.

Billy is survived by: his children, Erik, Duane (and his fiancée, Diane), Edris (and her fiancé, Kevin) and Ramona; grandchildren, Isis, Da'Lasha, Yakirah, and Dené; his siblings, Betty, Evelyn, Alan, and Bernice; sisters-in-law, Anita and Ami; ex-wives, Odessa and Theresa (and her husband, Raymond); his surviving aunt, Violet; nieces, Indra, Adrienne, Ariane (and husband, Garfield), and Ruacir; nephews, Matthew, Earl, Andrew (and his wife, Kristin), Taiki (and his wife, Michie) and Kazu; great-nephews, Cameron, Odin, Jules, Ryusei, and Minato; great-nieces, Erika and Skye; as well as beloved cousins and friends.

# THE SERVICE OF CELEBRATION

**Organ Prelude**

**Processional**

**Opening Sentences and Invocation**

**Musical Selection**

“His Eye is on the Sparrow”

**Scripture Readings:**

Old Testament - Psalm 121

Old Testament - Psalm 139:1-18

New Testament - John 14:12

**Prayer of Comfort**

**Reflections (Please Limit to 1.5 Minutes)**

**Obituary**

**Musical Selection**

“Here’s to Life” by Shirley Horn

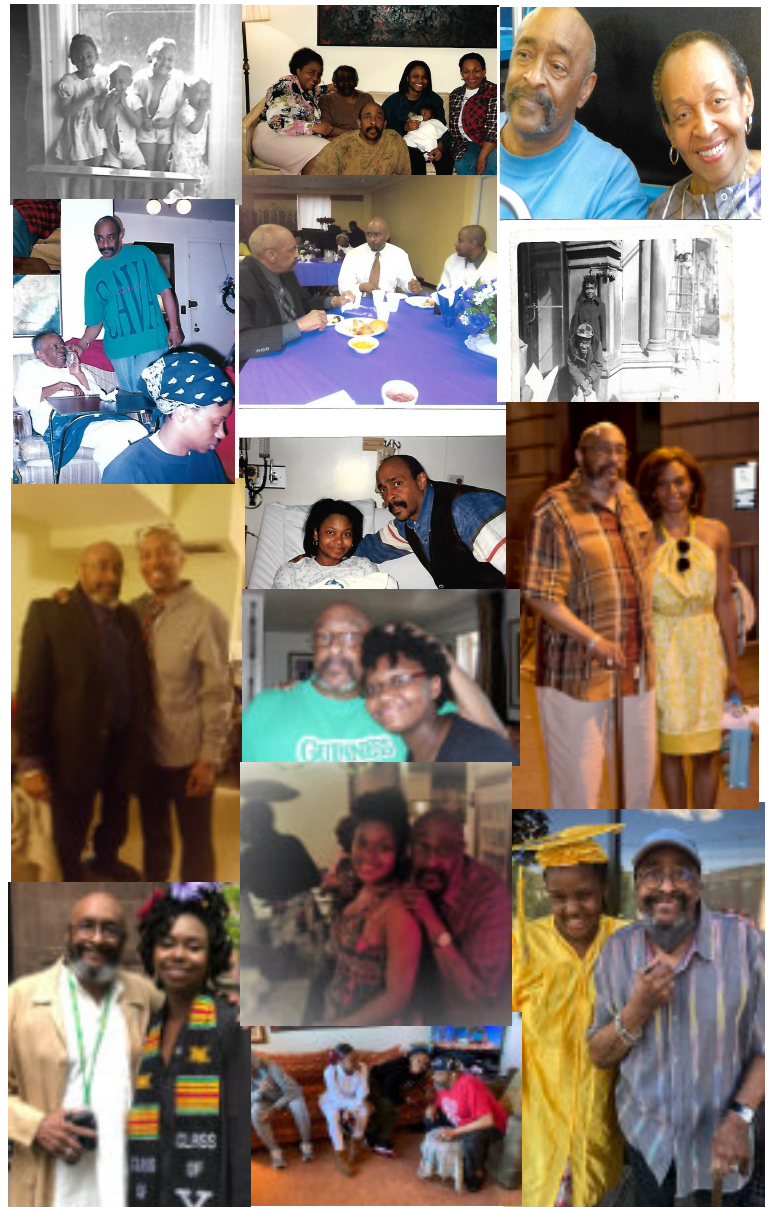
**Eulogy**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Old Testament - Psalm 23**

**Benediction**

**Recessional**



**INTERMENT:**

Calverton National Cemetery

Calverton, New York

Tuesday, October 12, 2021 - 11AM

**The Riverside Church**

490 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027



# *There Is Another Sky*

by Emily Dickinson

There is another sky,  
 Ever serene and fair,  
 And there is another sunshine,  
 Though it be darkness there;  
 Never mind faded forests,  
 [William] Never mind silent fields -  
 Here is a little forest,  
 Whose leaf is ever green;  
 Here is a brighter garden,  
 Where not a frost has been;  
 In its unfading flowers  
 I hear the bright bee hum:  
 Prithree, my brother,  
 Into my garden come!

James Baldwin quotes:

*"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."*

*"To be sensual, I think, is to respect and rejoice in the force of life, of life itself, and to be present in all that one does, from the effort of loving to the making of bread."*

## **EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS**

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



2352 8th Avenue • Manhattan, NY • (212) 666-8300  
 1406 Pitkin Avenue • Brooklyn, NY • (718) 774-1023  
 1018 Prospect Avenue • Bronx, NY • (718) 542-3833



Clifford V. James, President & CEO

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

email: [unityfc@aol.com](mailto:unityfc@aol.com)

*"Your Loved Ones Deserve The Best - Unity"*

