



## Mr. Raphael Renfroe Eaton

September 10, 1947 - March 11, 2023

\*\*\*\*A FUNERAL SERVICE IN LOVING MEMORY FOR MR. RAPHAEL RENFROE EATON WILL BE HELD THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2023, AT OUR FUNERAL HOME.

\*\*\*\*NOTE: PLEASE SEE VISITATION & SERVICE TIMES LISTED BELOW\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THE FAMILY IS REQUESTING THAT MASKS ARE WORN AND WE WILL PROVIDE HAND SANITIZER WHEN ENTERING OUR BUILDING.

If you have any questions, please contact us at: (269) 342-1000

---

Raphael Renfroe Eaton entered this world on September 10, 1947, at Hale Infirmary in Montgomery, Alabama. He was the only son born to Dorris Brown Eaton and Attorney Thomas Renfroe Eaton. Raphael joined five sisters - Renet, Sylvia, Judith and twins Gretchen and Greta. Having a boy in the family of five girls elated his parents and was a novel experience for the Eaton children. Raphael [usually called "Ray"] was a happy little boy who made friends easily. People often commented on how cute he was. His sisters helped to take care of him and played with him to keep him busy.

The family moved back to Chicago in September 1951 after their lives had been threatened because of the civil rights activities of Ray's father. Ray was almost 4 years old. He attended nursery school and the Ray, Herzel, and Carver grammar schools and Shilo Academy. He also attended Carver High School.

Ray's father died of kidney disease in December 1958. Ray was 11 years old. When Ray was 15 years old, his mother moved with him to Kalamazoo Michigan to pursue more gainful civil service employment.

In Michigan, Ray's mental health challenges became more apparent. He did not complete high school; he joined the army at the age of 17, but was discharged approximately a year later. Following his discharge from the army, Ray had difficulty functioning independently. He was hospitalized for his mental illness in Chicago, Maryland, and Kalamazoo Regional State Hospital during periods when his illness demanded in-patient care. His diagnosis was schizophrenia.

Ray resided in Michigan for most of his adult life as a ward of the state of Michigan's mental health system. His mother was his contact person until her death in August 1991. Following her death, his sister, Greta Pringle, became his representative payee for his financial benefits and his contact person for matters relative to his care.

Ray received care and treatment mainly in group homes with intermittent hospitalizations when his mental status made inpatient treatment appropriate. Ray became a resident of Beacon Specialized Living Services in 2005. While there, he was hospitalized for treatment and adjustment of his medications on several occasions.

During a hospitalization in 2013, it became apparent that Ray needed an

advocate with legal standing to ensure that he received appropriate care and treatment from the Michigan mental health system. Greta was appointed his legal guardian by the Kalamazoo Probate court on February 12, 2013. She remained his legal guardian until his death, making decisions about his care and treatment, approving hospital care, managing his financial matters, filing required reports with the Probate Court, ensuring that he had adequate and appropriate clothing, and consistently visiting him to see how he was doing and to assure him that he was loved and not forgotten. She always took him his McDonald's burger, fries, ice cream and a large coke!

Ray resided with Beacon Specialized Living Services in Bangor, Michigan (Beacon) at the time of his death on March 11, 2023. Ray died at Beacon around people who knew him, cared about him, and definitely seemed to understand his ways. He would act out at other Beacon homes just to be sent back to Beacon in Bangor. He died in a caring environment. His family is eternally grateful to Ben Israel and the Beacon staff who worked with Ray's mental health challenges and made him feel like a Beacon family member.

May Raphael rest in eternal peace!

# Cemetery Details

## Mount Ever-Rest Memorial Park

3941 S. Westnedge Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

# Previous Events

## Viewing

MAR 23. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Harper Funeral Home - Chapel  
521 Douglas Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI

## A Service in Loving Memory

MAR 23. 12:00 PM (ET)

Harper Funeral Home - Chapel  
521 Douglas Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI

# Tribute Wall



“ Harper Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mr. Raphael Renfroe Eaton



---

**Harper Funeral Home** - March 22, 2023 at 09:43 AM



“ *Mr. Raphael Renfroe Eaton*

---

October 23, 2023 at 06:06 AM



“ *Mr. Raphael Renfroe Eaton*

---

October 06, 2023 at 10:42 AM