



Rev. Dr. Welford Robinson Wilson, II

January 8, 1915 - May 11, 2010

An elephant has fallen in the forest and a warrior for justice, equality and human dignity is now at rest. Welford Robinson Wilson II (Pop-pop) passed peacefully in his sleep during the early hours of May 11, 2010. Born on January 8, 1915 to the late Welford Robinson Wilson, Sr. and Blanche Thomas Wilson in Buffalo, Welford grew up in Harlem, a community that he loved during his youth and idealized throughout his life. As a young boy Welford manifested talents as a writer, orator and athlete. In 1929, he captured the gold medal in the prestigious National Oratory Contest on the Constitution sponsored by the New York Times with a speech entitled, "The Constitution, a Guarantee of Liberty of the Individual." During his teen years he met Langston Hughes, who served as a mentor. At that time, Wellie hoped to become a writer. He attended Mount Morris Junior High School, Townsend Harris High School and the City College of New York, where he obtained a BA in English and established a record as a star runner, representing the school in the Penn Relays. No stranger to racial discrimination that was rampant at the time, Welford was denied lodging with his white team mates during the Penn Relays in Philadelphia. In 1937, he married the late Juanita Sharpe and from this union three children were born: Carol, Eileen and the late Welford III. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather who showered all he encountered with love. This devotion was so powerful that many adopted Welford as their father. After serving as a Staff Sergeant in the Army Air Corps during World War II, Welford moved to Los Angeles California, the community

in which he served as a pastor, attorney, and activist for over fifty years. Welford became one of the principal leaders of the Victory Committee, a highly effective group that fought discrimination against African-Americans and opened up scores of jobs for Blacks in the defense, shipbuilding and aircraft industries. In 1947 he was ordained at Peoples' Independent Church of Christ and later served as pastor of Peoples' United Church of Christ and Faith Community Church. In 1951 he earned his JD from Loyola University School of Law and passed the California State Bar exam. Welford devoted himself to ministering to the spiritual and legal needs of the African American community in Los Angeles. Welford was active in the both Urban League and the Compton NAACP and placed both his legal acumen and his organizational skills in service to the community. Through his efforts the city was prevented from imposing a dump in a residential African-American community, street lights were erected in the Bel-Vue community in South Central Los Angeles, and many indigent individuals received legal counsel, including Danny Adams whose freedom he secured by gubernatorial pardon. In 1963 Welford suffered a brain aneurism that left him paralyzed on his right side and completely aphasic. With a determination that astounded his physicians and everyone else, he fully recovered his speech and mobility and resumed work as deputy district attorney for the County of Los Angeles. In 1985 after retiring, Rev. Wilson moved to North Carolina, living in Durham, Rocky Mount and in Winston-Salem. Again, he became involved in the community; working to save Durham's historic African American library from closure. In Winston-Salem he found a spiritual home at Grace Presbyterian Church and treasured the fellowship he found there. A strong proponent for racial justice and reconciliation, Welford was an active member of Crossing 52, an interracial group committed to this issue. Always a teacher, Welford served as a prime mover behind the American Dilemma workshop, an examination of race in America. Welford was a mentor to many in both the legal and pastoral fields. Among those who called him mentor and friend were Rev. Ralph Williams of southern California and the late Johnny Cochran, who began his career in

Welford's law office. His co-conspirators in making change included: William Smith, Rev. Clayton Russell, Walter Williams (all late), and the Rev. St. Paul Epps. He was preceded in death by his wife of fifty-five years, the late Juanita Wilson and by his youngest child, Welford, III. The legacy of faith, struggle and action he leaves behind will be cherished by his daughters: Dr. Carol Wilson Spigner and husband Dr. Donald Spigner of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Dr. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran and husband Dr. Olasope Oyelaran of Kalamazoo, Michigan; his devoted grandchildren: Holman Williams, Thomas Williams, Omosalewa Oyelaran, Oyeyinka Oyelaran, Oyindasola Oyelaran and Adedoyin Oyelaran (Joanne); his sister Helen Morris; his nephews Alan Dillette and Gregory Morris; his nieces Gretchen Morris and Stephanie Sharpe; his grand nephew Timothy Ellis; daughter in law Pamela Diamond Wilson, and his extended family of love including Dwight Bernard Mullen, Carol Beane, Phillipa Johnson, Carmen Coustaut, Sheliah Clarke Ekong, and Beatrice Davis, as well as countless friends and colleagues. Included in this extended family are his caregivers at Morning Glory House, particularly Michele, Lucy, and Pam, who filled his last years with unconditional love. We are deeply grateful for their care and kindness.

Previous Events

Service

MAY **20**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Grace Presbyterian Church
3901 Carver School Road
Winston-Salem, NC

Tribute Wall



“ Harper Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Rev. Dr. Welford Robinson Wilson, II



Harper Funeral Home - May 11, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Rev. Dr. Welford Robinson Wilson, II

October 23, 2023 at 06:06 AM



“ Rev. Dr. Welford Robinson Wilson, II

October 06, 2023 at 10:42 AM



“ Dear Eileen:
We read of your father's death in the Winston-Salem Journal. What a beautiful obituary and a loving tribute to an exceptional man. We want to express our sympathy to you and all your family on your loss.
Sincerely,
Lillian and Fred Nordenholz##imported-begin##Fred and Lillian Nordenholz##imported-end##

May 20, 2010 at 08:38 PM



“ To The Family of Rev. Dr. Welford Wilson, II:

Each passing life leaves something beautiful behind. The photo album on Harper Funeral Home's website and the obituary printed in the Sunday, May 16, 2010 edition of the Winston-Salem Journal are certainly testaments to the rich and full life that Rev. Wilson lived. However, I have other special memories of Dr. Wilson, including the many times he encouraged and supported me during my coordinations of the National Annual February African American Read-In Chain at Grace Church. Before ill health prevented his attendance at Grace's Read-In Chains, I could always depend on his being present to cheer our readers on. May God shed His richest blessings upon the beneficiaries of Dr. Wilson's memories and legacies.

Sincerely,

*Bertha T. Roundtree
Coordinator, 1994-2008
African American Read-In Chain
Grace Presbyterian Church
Winston-Salem, NC 27105##imported-begin##Bertha
Roundtree##imported-end##*

May 18, 2010 at 01:41 PM



“ I didn't know Dr. Wilson, but after r eading his obituary, I was very impressed with the legacy he has left back here. To God be the glory! My thoughts and prayers are with the family. May the sweet memories remain in your hearts forever.

Love in Christ

Carrie Robinson

Winston-Salem,NC###imported-begin##carrie robinson###imported-end##

May 16, 2010 at 09:19 PM



“ To The Family of Rev./Dr. Welford Wilson

For the short time that we knew Rev. Wilson, we quickly discovered that his knowledge, experiences and wisdom inspired all in his presence. He was a deep thinker, with extraordinary insight in a variety of subjects. He always questioned what can be done to improve or solve a particular problem. He was able to encourage people to see the problem/s and work to bring about some positive solution/s. Our times with him were mostly in the Sunday Church School classroom setting. He added much to every discussion! We are better listeners and thinkers because of his example. His contributions to Grace Presbyterian Church will be felt for years to come. We will certainly miss Rev. Wilson, but will cherish his legacy by the way we worship and serve God's people. Thank God for the family for sharing him with us. We will continue to pray for each of you and your journey, with God as your guide. Winston-Salem, NC###imported-begin##Rudolph V. Sr. and Sarah J. Boone###imported-end##

May 16, 2010 at 08:27 PM



“*“May the soul of the departed rest in peace, and may God's perpetual light shine upon him.##imported-begin##Pat and Romeo Phillips##imported-end##*

May 16, 2010 at 06:45 PM