

*A Celebration Service of Love
for
John Wilson Edwards*



February 17, 1942

October 14, 2006

Thursday, October 19, 2006

11:00 a. m.

*Union Baptist Church
904 North Roxboro Street
Durham, North Carolina*

The Reverend Kenneth R. Hammond, Officiating

The Order of Service

THE PROCESSIONAL

THE HYMN OF COMFORT.....The Choir
"Onward, Christian Soldiers"

THE READING OF GOD'S WORD

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.....Minister Robin Key-Banks
Associate Minister, Union Baptist Church, Durham, NC

THE PRAYER OF COMFORTReverend Charles Barnes
Pastor, Morehead Avenue Baptist Church, Durham, NC

SELECTION.....The Choir
"Rough Side of the Mountain"

THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTSSis. Anita S. Torian

THE OBITUARY*Please Read Silently*

SELECTION.....The Choir
"May The Work I've Done"

REMARKSMr. Joseph Green
Mr. Vernon Jordan
Mr. Benjamin Ruffin
Ms. Robyn E. Edwards

SELECTION.....The Choir
"Wind Beneath My Wings"

THE EULOGY.....Pastor Kenneth Ray Hammond,
Pastor, Union Baptist Church, Durham, NC

THE RECESSIONAL.....Musical Interlude
"Battle Hymn of the Republic"

POSTLUDE

Interment

Markham Memorial Gardens
Farrington Road
Durham, North Carolina

The Obituary

Mr. John Wilson Edwards, son of the late William Preston and Elizabeth Ford Edwards, was born February 17, 1942. He departed this earthly life on October 14, 2006.

He received his secondary education in the Durham Public School System, graduating from Hillside High School in 1959. He furthered his education at Durham Business College.

In 1965, he was married to Eloise Freeman Edwards and during this union two children were born: Brian Maurice Edwards and Robyn Elizabeth Edwards.

John joined Union Baptist Church at an early age and served faithfully until his death. He served on the Deacon Board and the Senior Usher Board. He was active in the Samaritan Men's Ministry. He served as chair of the Church Anniversary/Homecoming Committee for many years. In the early 60's, he served as chair of the Union Baptist Church Political Action Committee. Whatever John was asked to do to benefit UBC, he did so willingly. He loved Union Baptist Church.

At an early age, John became a champion for civil right. His participation in the sit-in demonstrations in Durham resulted in his Mother being fired from the Baldwin's Department Store, where she worked as an elevator operator. She refused to ask John to stop picketing Baldwin's.

He was an organizer and leader of the sit-in demonstrations in Durham; NAACP Youth Organizer in North Carolina and the South; NAACP Voter Registration Worker in North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Virginia and Arkansas. He was an Anti-Poverty worker in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; a boycott leader for jobs in Richmond, Virginia; an organizer and staff worker of Neighborhood Council in Durham for better housing, streets, schools and recreation; a leader of boycotts in Durham for jobs; instrumental in the increase of over 5000% of the number of Black Elected Officials in North Carolina between 1967 and 1974.

He was Director of the North Carolina Voter Education Project; past Chairman of the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People; and was Chairman of the Lincoln Community Health Center Board of Directors. He served as a Commissioner for the Housing Authority of the City of Durham.

John was named Citizen of the Year by the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. in 1983 and was honored by the Durham Branch of the NAACP at its 16th Annual Freedom Dinner in 1990. He served as Director of the North Carolina Equal Opportunity Commission under former Governor James B. Hunt; and was also Director of Health Tech in Soul City, NC under Floyd McKissick, Sr. John was part owner of Jo-Ed Enterprises and the owner of J.E. Enterprises.

Left to cherish his memory, in addition to his family are one grandson, Brian Thomas Edwards and his mother, Tina Lewis; three sisters, Ernestine Edwards Butler of Lanham, MD, Mildred Edwards Witherspoon (Clark) of Durham, NC, and Helen Featherson also of Durham, NC; one brother, William Preston Edwards, Jr. (Nina) of Atlanta, GA; a special cousin-brother, Freddie Edwards; special cousin, Brenda Moore; a special niece-sister, Marsha Edwards; one aunt, Ida Ford Thomas of Washington, DC; adopted brother, Earl Taylor and adopted sisters, Marianne Taylor and Hattie Shivers; sisters-in-law, Louise F. Brothers, Helen B. Edwards, Trudy Collins, Marie G. Freeman, and Veronica Freeman; brothers-in-law, William "Sonny Boy" Freeman, and Nathaniel "Bobby" Freeman; two special friends, Joseph Green and Benjamin Ruffin; nieces, nephews, cousins and other friends.

Active Pallbearers

Deacons, Union Baptist Church

Honorary Pallbearers

Men of the Durham Civil Rights Workers' Reunion
Trustees, Union Baptist Church

Active Floral Bearers

Deaconess, Union Baptist Church

Honorary Floral Bearers

Women of the Durham Civil Rights Workers' Reunion
Anniversary/Homecoming Committee, Union Baptist Church
Trustees, Union Baptist Church

Acknowledgements

The family of John Wilson Edwards offers its sincere thanks and gratitude for the kindness shown during his sudden passing. For every prayer, call, visit, cards, and any other support given to us, we thank you. Your support will serve as a source of comfort in the days to come. A special thanks to Ben Ruffin, Anita Torian, and Tania Green for their untiring assistance. God Bless You.

— The Family of John Wilson Edwards

Services Entrusted to and Provided by



Funeral Directors

"Four Generations of Our Family Serving Your Family"

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**CELEBRATION OF LOVE
VISITATION SERVICE
JOHN WILSON EDWARDS**

**UNION BAPTIST CHURCH
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2006
6:30-8:00 P.M.**

BENJAMIN S. RUFFIN, WORSHIP LEADER

THE PROCESSIONAL

VISITATION WITH FAMILY

6:30 - 7:00 P.M.

WORDS OF COMFORT

7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

**RESOLUTION FROM CITY OF DURHAM
MAYOR WILLIAM V. BELL**

**MR. R. KELLY BRYANT
DEACON CLARENCE JONES
MR. ERVIN L. HESTER
MRS. FLORINE ROBERSON
MS. VIVIAN MCCOY
MR. WARREN ROBINSON
MS. LOTTIE HAYES
MR. BILL TOWE
OTHER SPEAKERS**

CLOSING PRAYER

**DR. DAPHNE C. WIGGINS
ASSOCIATE PASTOR
UNION BAPTIST CHURCH**

THE RECESSIONAL

JOHN WILSON EDWARDS

Most of us can think of many contributions that John Wilson Edwards has made to the Durham Community during his lifetime. The Durham Community and state has lost an important person in the passing of John. He came from a family of civil rights workers. His father, Pratt Edwards and his mother and siblings, were active civil rights workers. He participated as a youth and was still active.

John Edwards was one of the organizers of the Durham Civil Rights Workers Reunion that has met for the past 17 years on Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday at St. Joseph's AME Church to honor those who marched, picketed, sat-in, intergrated schools, braved the tide of segregation years ago. He helped encourage those brave souls and their families to meet, break bread together, tell their stories and experiences and be recognized for their participation when we faced the tides of those against us.

John will live on as we:

- Talk about the reunions of the civil rights workers
Howard Johnson
- Look at him on the picture of Dr. Martin Luther King's walk down Main Street, Durham near Woolworth's with Rev. Douglas E. Moore
Royal Lee Crowan
- When we talk about the March on Washington
Waldgreen & Wadsworth
- When we talk about his family's efforts in the desegregation of the Boy Scouts of America (Region Six).
- And many other civil rights events.

We thank God for ~~these~~ ^{those great} and his family having participated, contributed to and being a part of the efforts to change things in Durham. When we talk about the long list of those who stepped forward, John Wilson Edwards will be remembered.

We all extend our sympathy to the family.

R. Kelly Bryant, Jr.

Passed: Saturday, October 14, 2006

Wake: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 6:30pm

Funeral: Thursday, October 19, 11:00am

In Memoriam

Daddy,

To say I am shocked by your sudden passing would not begin to underscore the feelings of sadness that has enveloped me like a cloud of smoke. To say I miss you would not begin to express the hole in my heart that stalks me like a thief in the night. I feel as if I have been robbed of the opportunity to say all the things I feel for you and have always felt but never said because that is "not the way we do things". I now completely understand the meaning of life is short and never put off for tomorrow what you can do today.

If I had the chance now, I would tell you how I admire you. I admire you for the way you risked your life so that your children and future generations of African-Americans would not have to live a life of humiliation and degradation. If I had the chance now, I would tell you how I wanted to be like you. I would tell you of how there were times when I didn't want to go that extra mile for

someone because I was tired or feeling shy because I didn't know the person that well. Yet I would do it because you asked. You always went that one extra step for someone else just because. If I had the chance now, I would tell you how I envied your ability to charm an individual or even a crowd with your smile or your relentless sense of humor. You always knew how to invoke a smile or draw the laugh in spite of your introverted personality. If I had the chance now, I would tell you how I respected your ability to organize and plan. You agonized over every last detail and made sure that everyone involved or even not involved did also. The results of which was usually a highly successful program or organization.

If I had the chance I would tell you how much I enjoyed our conversations about the nature of politics in Washington and even here at home. Every time we talked I learned something new. If I had the chance now, I would tell you how I will miss your amazing ability to always wait until the very last minute to do everything. You told me I would.

If I had the chance now, I would tell you how I would love to hear you say "hey baby" one more time. If I had the chance now I would tell you to call me one more time and ask me a hundred and fifty million questions about any and everything until I said "daddy pleeeeeeeeeeease". If I had the chance now, I would tell you how I'm going to miss the opportunity to frown at you for having fried chicken crumbs on your shirt. If I had the chance now, I would tell you how Christmas will never ever be the same because even though we teased you we always looked forward to seeing what gifts you bore for us in the plastic bags. If I had the chance now, I would tell you how much I respected you and how very proud I was to be your daughter.

I can't tell you these things now daddy. I hope you knew. I know your spirit will always be here in our minds and hearts. You can't physically hear me nevertheless I know you hear my heart.

**I LOVE YOU ALWAYS
DADDY!!!**

—Robyn