



John Aron Knowles

May 5, 1917 - December 29, 2018

John Aron Knowles was born May 5, 1917 in Jasper, Alabama. He was the middle of three sons born to the union of Dave Knowles and Ollie Reed. After his mother's death in childbirth, he and his siblings were raised by his amazing grandfather, Henry Knowles and cousin Lucille Knowles. His loving brothers, Jefferson & Cleaters Knowles, preceded him in death.

John's family moved to Mississippi at an early age where he joined Ebenezer Baptist Church. He was drafted into the army in 1942 and served in the European Theater. He returned to the United States in 1946 and graduated from Mississippi Industrial College under the GI bill. He married Myrtle V. Thomas in May of 1948, and to their wedlock, two children were born, Gwendolyn V. Knowles and John T. Knowles.

Unwilling to raise his children in the bondage of Mississippi, John arrived in Detroit in 1951 with twenty dollars. John worked for a period of time at Wixom's Ford Motor Plant. After serving a stint in each of his brothers' Detroit barber shops, he served the community by opening Linwood Barber Shop in 1962. He encouraged his son to join him in business early in life shining shoes, then as a licensed barber. He was later joined by his son, John T., and daughter, Gwendolyn, in opening Brother John's Community Store, which celebrated its opening with the Honorable Coleman A. Young. John A. loved conversing with the young and elderly, gaining wisdom, providing advice, and sharing history, and beating the education drum. Both his son and daughter graduated from institutions of higher learning.

Through his sixties, John loved to bowl in a league, and he was an active VFW member. He also enjoyed riding his bike from home to Palmer Park, or out to Belle Isle, and across into Canada until his mid-eighties. He was keeping pace with the young men in his seventies. Until his health weakened in his late eighties, he also enjoyed walking, driving his Corvette, and hanging out on his 'plantation,' in the rear of his home.

Throughout his life, John has been a great example and leader for his family and his

community. Through his early nineties, John, the “Boss,” in coveralls, worked daily on the maintenance & caretaking of over 100 residential property units that he acquired over the years. He was always happy to share his wisdom with those younger. He was an honest man, with a strong value system, and a sense of humor. He did not give or accept excuses, though he did forgive. He was a visionary, who thought through his decisions carefully, determined the return on his effort and the positive effect on his community, and confidently moved each project to its completion.

John always loved to eat his wife’s home cooking and rarely ate out. His joy in life was his nuclear and extended family. His loving wife of 65 years, preceded him in death in 2013 after her 90th birthday.

John A. was preceded in death by niece, Brenda Knowles. He is survived by two children, Gwendolyn Knowles and John T. Knowles; grandchildren, Sudani Knowles and Adan Knowles (Nikita); great grandchildren, Kameron Knowles, Chase Knowles, and Morgan Dior Knowles; nephews, Cleaters Knowles, Jr. (Barbara), Brian Knowles (Lori), nieces Connie Baldwin Sharma (Vinod), and Myrtle Ruth Baldwin; and a host of family and friends.

Events

JAN **Family Hour** 02:00PM - 03:00PM

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Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services
24585 Evergreen Road, Southfield, MI, US, 48075

JAN **Memorial Service** 03:00PM

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Comments



“ Dear Gwendolyn, John You Both & Your Whole Family have my Heartfelt Sorrow for the Death of Your Beloved Precious Father John. Isaiah 25:8.

James Saunders - February 06, 2019 at 02:55 PM



“ Mr. Knowles was a friend of my father's. They both had their businesses next door to each other on Linwood. My dad who passed away ten years ago owned The Cal Summers' House of Art and did the signage for Mr. Knowles. Another tie to our great Detroit past has left us.

David Summers - January 20, 2019 at 10:06 AM