



Curtis Nathaniel "Skidbolt" Newton

October 30, 1941 - May 24, 2026

Obituary

Celebration of Life

Curtis Nathaniel "Skidbolt" Newton

October 30, 1941 – May 24, 2026

Curtis Nathaniel "Skidbolt" Newton was born on October 30, 1941, in Florence, Alabama, to the late James and Suzie Newton, who preceded him in death. He was the youngest of six siblings: Willie, Jimmy, Dorothy, Jean, and Marcella (Pluke). At an early age, Curtis accepted Christ as his Savior and carried his faith, convictions, and sense of justice throughout his life.

Curtis attended public schools in the Detroit metropolitan area, primarily in Royal Oak Township, Michigan. He met and married his childhood sweetheart, Joan Marie Davis-Newton, and they remained married for 26 years until her untimely death. From this union, two daughters were born: Tammy Newton and Sherry Newton-Dillard. His beloved wife, Joan; daughter, Tammy; and son-in-law, Larry Dillard, preceded him in death. Curtis later married Rhonda Hawkins (Antwain Hawkins) from 2009 to 2017.

A proud Detroiter, Curtis embodied the grit, determination, and resilience that

defined both the city he loved and the generation that helped build it. He was known throughout the community as “Skidbolt,” a nickname earned in his early years on the Rouge Dearborn assembly line at Ford Motor Company. Never one to stand silently in the face of injustice or unsafe conditions, he would not hesitate to stop the line when operations failed to protect workers. For him, people always came before production.

His courage, integrity, and unwavering commitment to his fellow workers made him a respected voice within UAW Local 600. A passionate advocate for workers’ rights, he served as a committee man and became the plant’s first Health and Safety Representative. He tirelessly championed safer working conditions, fair treatment, and dignity on the job. He also encouraged and mentored countless others to become active in the labor and civil rights movements, teaching by word and example that every voice matters.

Curtis’s work was more than a career. It was a calling. Long after many would have retired, he continued working until the age of 80, driven by a strong work ethic, a sense of responsibility, and the camaraderie he shared with his coworkers. The plant was more than a workplace. It was a village where lifelong friendships were forged, and where Curtis found purpose in serving, protecting, and uplifting those around him.

His commitment to helping others extended far beyond the factory gates. Over the years, Skidbolt transformed the lives of many families by helping them secure jobs and opportunities at the plant. In his younger years, he helped found the Tuller Street Block Club, whose mission was to support families in need, provide summer camp opportunities for neighborhood children, and mobilize residents to participate in the political process and support community leadership.

Never at a loss for words, a story, or a good laugh, Curtis had a larger-than-

life presence that drew people to him. He was fiercely loyal, deeply compassionate, and always seeking the next person he could help. Whether offering guidance, opening doors of opportunity, standing up for what was right, or simply sharing a smile, he left a lasting impact on everyone fortunate enough to know him.

Curtis “Skidbolt” Newton leaves a rich legacy of faith, service, courage, and love for his fellow man. With his fist proudly raised in the Black Power salute and his familiar declarations of “Power to the People,” “Seize the Time,” and “Straight Ahead,” he inspired generations to stand firm in their convictions and work toward a better future.

Though he will be dearly missed, his spirit, wisdom, and example will continue to live on in the lives he touched.

He leaves behind his loving and devoted daughter, Sherry Newton-Dillard; his bonus grandson, Brandon Dillard; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family, and dear friends to cherish his memory.

The family extends a special thank-you to his brother-in-law, Frederick Davis, and sister-in-law, Anna Davis, as well as the caretakers, for their love, support, and devoted care throughout his brief illness.

“Curtis lived 84 years, worked until age 80, fought for others to the end, and never stopped believing in the power of ordinary people to create extraordinary change.”

Order of Service

Presiding

Pastor Robert Bolden

Musical Prelude

Family and Clergy Processional

Old Testament Reading Ken Newton

New Testament Reading Pastor Keith Newton

Prayer of Comfort Pastor Marvin Owens

Musical Selection

Central Baptist Church

Acknowledgments, Condolences, and Cards Raynard Newton

Reading of the Obituary Raynard Newton

Musical Selection

Central Baptist Church

Remarks: Tribute from Family & Friends

Tony Richards President – UAW Local 600

Sherry Van-Pool Benefits Rep-Dearborn Truck Plant

Kevin Doss Quality Rep- Dearborn Truck Plant

Melissa Wallace Dayshift District Rep- Dearborn Engine

Gary Walkowitz Retired Bargaining Rep

Antwain Hawkins Bonus Son

The Lord's Prayer Frederick Davis

Musical Selection

Central Baptist Church

Eulogy Pastor Robert Bolden
Recessional

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 12. 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM (est)

Central Baptist Church South Campus
9620 Sorrento Ave
Detroit, MI 48227

Memorial Service

JUN 12. 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM (est)

Central Baptist Church South Campus
9620 Sorrento Ave
Detroit, MI 48227