



Richard Lee Smart Sr.

July 10, 1928 - November 13, 2022

The Obituary of Richard Smart

“A life well lived is cherished, and nothing loved is ever lost.” –L’Engle

Richard Lee Smart was born on July 10, 1928 to Richard Washington Smart and Willie Maude Smart (Wilder) in Columbus, Ohio. He lived in a home surrounded by four generations of loving family.

He attended Columbus Public Schools at Siebert Elementary, Roosevelt Junior High School, and Columbus South High School, often as one of very few African American children. Throughout his early years, he became a tremendous athlete. He played baseball, basketball, and ran track. One of the most important institutions in his early life was the YMCA, where he played organized sports. He was a member of the famous “Wiz Kids” basketball team at the Y, playing point guard. He was always the fastest man on the court. One of his mentors saw his talent and secured an athletic scholarship for him to attend Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina. In the Spring of 1947, he graduated from South High School and matriculated to Claflin University. This decision to attend college in the South was a seminal moment in his life.

In the Fall of 1947, in the cafeteria of Claflin University, he met the love of his life, Juanita Jackson. He struck up a friendship with her and would often “find” himself going to the library just to see her. He was a good student and a

starter on the varsity basketball team and a sprinter on the track team.

In the Fall of 1949, Richard approached the men of Kappa Alpha Psi and told them he wanted to be a Kappa. He was the only pledge on his line and he crossed on December 10, 1949 into the Gamma Nu Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Richard was a Life Member of his fraternity.

On December 5, 1950, Richard was drafted into the United States Army. He served a 9 month tour of duty on the front lines of the Korean War as a medical technician and ambulance driver. He was promoted to Corporal.

Throughout his entire time serving overseas, he would write a letter to Juanita every day, professing his love. Once he transferred back stateside, Richard was placed in the active Army Reserve from 1952 - 1956, when he received his Honorable Discharge.

While on leave in May of 1952, Richard traveled to Camden, South Carolina to marry his one true love, Juanita. On June 1, 1952, they were married in the home of her parents, Ed and Delphine Jackson. Into this loving union their first child Deborah Yvonne Smart, was born November 24, 1953.

Richard received his undergraduate degree in physical education from Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina in 1956. He began his career in education in 1956 in Camden, South Carolina. He taught in elementary, junior high, and high schools. He also coached girls and boys basketball teams.

On September 28, 1959, Richard and Juanita welcomed their son, Richard, III, into the family.

Richard continued his educational pursuits throughout his life. He received his Masters of Arts Degree from Indiana University in 1962. That same year, Richard moved to Detroit, Michigan to seek out a better life for his family. He taught in the Detroit Public Schools from 1962 - 1971. In 1971, he was promoted to the position of Health Administrator with Head Start. Richard received the Public Service Award from the Michigan Dental Association in 1971. He received his Educational Specialist from Wayne State University in 1981 and was inducted into the WSU Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. Richard

remained in administration with the DPS until he retired in 1987. After his retirement from DPS, he continued his passion for the education of others as a recruiter and instructor for Highland Park Community College.

Richard was a man of faith. He was a loyal member of People's Community Church in Detroit from 1965 until his death. At People's, he served as a scout leader, a member of the Trustee Board, and a member of the Men's Usher Board. One of his greatest joys was attending and taking his friends

and family to the Brotherhood Breakfast every Palm Sunday. He was also a Master Mason with the Prince Hall Lodge.

Richard loved his community and invested in it at every opportunity. He coached little league baseball. He was a founding member of the Board of Trustees of the Northwest Detroit Cougar Athletic Association in 1970, which still exists today. He was a captain of the neighborhood CB patrol in the Green Acres Subdivision in the 1970s. Richard was a member of the Dad's Club at University of Detroit High School from 1973 - 1977. He was the President and Lt. Governor of Kiwanis International of New Detroit. He received the George Hixon Award from Kiwanis International in 1998. He mentored children throughout his entire life.

Richard loved being a Kappa. He was a member of the Detroit Alumni Chapter for many years before joining the Southfield Alumni Chapter in 1992 with his son. Nothing made him happier in the fraternity than attending frat meetings with his son.

Richard had a full social life. He had a passion for music and dancing and held season tickets to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra Jazz Series. He was also an active member of the 2+2 Couples Club, and he loved attending University of Michigan football games every Fall in Ann Arbor with his family from 1977 - 2019 as a season ticket holder. Tailgating on Fall afternoons was a family tradition.

Richard's greatest joy was his family. He adored his wife and loved attending Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and Links Inc. functions with her. He cherished his children and grandchildren and never missed a program, concert, game, recital, or graduation.

Richard lived a full life. He received his wings on November 13, 2022. He was preceded in death by his grandmother, Leola Wilder, and his beloved mother, Willie Maude Smart. He will live on through those who loved him. He leaves to cherish his memory his loving wife of 70 years, Juanita, his children, Dr.

Deborah Smart (Dennis Walker) and Richard L. Smart, III (Miriam Blanks-Smart), his grandchildren, Jillian Brie Walker, Jasmine Marie Walker, Danielle Virginia Smart, and Rachel Juanita Smart. He also leaves to mourn a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and many, many other family and friends.

"Well done my good and faithful servant. Well done."

"You will be greatly missed, never forgotten, and always loved."

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **20**. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services
24585 Evergreen Rd
Southfield, MI 48075
(248) 702-5367
info@kempfh.com
<https://www.kempfuneralhome.com>

Family/Friends Time

NOV **21**. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

People's Community Church
8601
Woodward Ave.,
Detroit, MI 48202

Funeral Service

NOV **21**. 1:00 PM (ET)

People's Community Church
8601
Woodward Ave.,
Detroit, MI 48202

Tribute Wall



“ *Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Webcast Funeral Service in memory of Richard Lee Smart Sr.*



Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services - November 20, 2022 at 03:05 PM



“ *Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Richard Lee Smart Sr..*



November 18, 2022 at 08:01 PM



“ *Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Richard Lee Smart Sr..*



November 18, 2022 at 02:25 PM



“ *LeVan & Tamalon Meeks lit a candle in memory of Richard Lee Smart Sr.*



LeVan & Tamalon Meeks - November 17, 2022 at 09:59 PM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Richard Lee Smart Sr..*



November 17, 2022 at 03:35 PM