



Carroll Robbins Armstrong

October 23, 1944 - December 20, 2009

Carroll (Bookie) Robbins Armstrong was born in Baltimore on October 23, 1944. He was the youngest of three boys born to the late William O. Armstrong II and Margaret DeMan Armstrong. Carroll was baptized and took his first communion at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church. He later attended and was an altar boy at St. Edwards Catholic Church. Carroll attended both Catholic and Baltimore Public Schools and graduated from Forest Park High School in 1962. He attended Peabody Conservatory, studying trumpet and piano, and was subsequently accepted at The Julliard School of Music. After going to New York for school, he found his way to the Village and the jazz he had listened to since his early teenage years, starting with the music of his neighbor Gary Bartz. There in New York, he found company playing trumpet and keyboards among many who went on to become jazz legends, such as Miles Davis, Lee Morgan, Jackie McLean, as well as his neighbor Gary. As jazz in that period was starting to head out west, Carroll made a stop in Baltimore to visit his family before taking the westward trek. That side trip to Baltimore turned into a more permanent stay after teaming up with his brother Rocky and the group that he managed, The Softones, with whom his other brother Billy occasionally played congas. Carroll took on the role of head of the horn section, applying his mastery of the trumpet. Traveling south with the group, they opened for musical acts like the Chi-Lites and the Commodores, as well as Curtis Mayfield. Continuing to put on hold the move out west, Carroll took a position with the Civil Service Commission in Baltimore. In his short

tenure there, he developed a counseling service in conjunction with local unions to increase city employee performance by addressing treatable personal problems and illnesses. Occurring concurrently with his time with the Civil Service Commission was the formation of the Baltimore Convention Bureau. The director of the Commission saw something in Carroll that led her to recommend him for one of the sales and marketing positions. Carroll was successful in his interview and, subsequently, in his new role, effectively lured one of the first conventions to the Baltimore Convention Center. This feat was impressive as there was no actual convention center, only a hole in the ground. Carroll applied the skills he had honed as a musician to his position with the Bureau. He saw himself as orchestrating all the elements that enticed a group to hold its meeting in the city. Carroll went on to have the distinction of being on the opening team of three convention centers: Baltimore, Washington, DC, New Orleans, and the expansion of the San Diego Convention Center. He was most proud of the opportunity to return to Baltimore upon the opening of the expansion of the Baltimore Convention Center. He had gone in a little less than 20 years from the junior man on the team to the head of the newly named Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association. Carroll held progressively more responsible roles as he moved around the country. From his 1978 start in the convention and meetings industry, focusing on convention and visitor bureaus and convention centers, with the original team of the Baltimore Convention Bureau, he went on in 1981 to a national sales position with the Washington, DC, Convention and Visitors Association, and in 1984 to director of sales and marketing for the New Orleans Convention Center. In 1987, he was recruited by the San Diego Convention Center Corporation to lead the marketing department, where he developed its program and increased revenues for the Center. In 1996, he became president and CEO of the Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association, where he envisioned a major hotel connected by a bridge to the Convention Center, and where he worked with a design team to create a visitors center in the Inner Harbor that did not obstruct views of the water.

Carroll formed CRA Enterprises in 2003 and pursued a variety of consulting contracts around the country. In 2005, Carroll retired from the hospitality industry following a stint with ConventionPlanit.com, a meeting planning web portal. Carroll held leadership roles in many meetings industry organizations, including being co-founder and first national president of the Association of Convention Marketing Executives (ACME), chairman of the Awards Committee for the International Association of Exposition Managers (IAEM), USA Ambassador to the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), and a member of committees within the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners, Inc., and the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA). He was the recipient of numerous awards and citations from local, national and international organizations. He has been featured in a number of hospitality industry publications as well as in a hospitality text book. Carroll was an outstanding speaker who was often in demand. His career took him and his wife of 30 years, Barbara, to many cities where they formed many strong personal relationships. As a child growing up in Baltimore, Carroll was known as Bookie. He was still called by that nickname by lifelong friends he made in school activities and sports, vacationing at Arundel on the Bay and through membership in Jack and Jill, the Imperials and other more informal groups where the relationships continue to this day. As a teenager, he composed and played music as a member of the Baltimore Jazz Quintet (BJQ). Over the years, he enjoyed participating in jam sessions wherever he went and developed a following of both professional colleagues and personal friends with his trumpet and jazz piano stylings. Carroll's love of music emanated from his special relationship with his mother, Margaret Armstrong, who is a musical and cultural arts icon in Baltimore city. He also was a Connecting Link and had many enjoyable moments as a member of the Baltimore Mules. Carroll was a devoted family man. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, of almost 30 years, his mother, Margaret, brother Roderick (Gloria)

all of Baltimore, MD, special aunt, Frances Ashby, and Cleo Kendall (Ken) of Chicago, sister-in-law Brenda Saddler (David), brothers-in-law Harry (Connie), Benjamin (Donna), and Michael (Sharon) Blount. His brother Bill predeceased him. He is also survived by a host of nephews, nieces, godchildren, as well as a number of cousins. Carroll died peacefully after a brief illness with his wife at his bedside on December 20, 2009, at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. He leaves to mourn his passing: family members and innumerable friends. Carroll lived a full, exuberant life and was loved by many. He heard the final trumpet call and transitioned home to be with the Lord.

Tribute Wall



“ *Carroll Robbins Armstrong*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *Please accept my deepest sympathy. May you find comfort in knowing what Jesus himself said, ' all those in the graves will hear my voice and come out(John 5:28-30)'.##imported-begin##A. Jackson##imported-end##*

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ *May you know God shall sustain you now and in days to come##imported-begin##jerome and paula stephens##imported-end##*

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ *God will bless and keep you during this time of sorrow. Your family has my families prayers.##imported-begin##Dr. Warren O. Garrison##imported-end##*

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ Please accept my deepest sympathies for I too know the pain of losing someone you love. May you take comfort in knowing that our Heavenly Father Jehovah, promises us that soon, all those in the "memorial tombs" will hear the voice of his son Jesus Christ and "come out" by means of a resurrection (John 5: 28, 29).##imported-begin##S.Brown##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ We are sorry to hear the loss of your devoted brother Carroll, and precious loved one to the family. This is part of life that is difficult for us to cope with, so we won't say we know just how you are feeling now. No one else can fully understand what you're going through. But we do know, that you're feeling the kind of sadness known by those who deeply love. God never told us life would be easy but he did promise to take care of us, no matter what. He's with you now as you go through this sad time, and we pray that his presence will be comforting to you. We want you to know if you need us we are here for you, and we will continue to keep you in our thoughts and prayers.##imported-begin##Aubrey , Jeanette and family##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ May all of our memories of him remain fresh in our hearts and minds.##imported-begin##Doroli (Murdock) Sewell##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ We would like to extend our sincere sympathy to the family of our dear friend "Bookie". Our memories will never be forgotten and will forever remain in our hearts. May God continue to bless the family and friends of our dear friend "Bookie".##imported-begin##Tora, Gary and entire Bartz Family##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ It is my wish to express my deepest sympathy to Barbara, as well as to Carroll's friends and family at this time of grief and sorrow. Carroll was a treasured friend and while we had lost touch in the last few years, I never stopped counting him as a friend and remained thankful to have known him. Carroll's zest for life and his positive attitude changed me for the better, as I suspect it did for everyone who knew him. I will miss him and remember him always. God bless Carroll Armstrong now and forever...##imported-begin##Terry Epton##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ Barbara, It is my prayer that you find yourself wrapped in blanket of comfort that only the Holy Spirit can provide at this difficult time. Know that the thoughts and prayers of us at Robeta's House are with you and your family.##imported-begin##Dedra Layne##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ I want to give my sympathy for Mr. Armstrong. He was a wonderful man and has a wonderful family. His family will be in my prayers.##imported-begin##Brittany Nadeau##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ R.I.P. Bookie! Gone too soon.##imported-begin##Cathy Dorsey##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ Carroll was a wonderful person! He spent much of his adult life helping the tourism industry for that I am grateful! R.I.P.##imported-begin##Annette Lord Burress##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ Dear Barbara, Condolences to you and the Armstrong family. We enjoyed our times with you and Bookie, my homeboy, during your stay in New Orleans. The local newspaper featured him today and New Orleans will be forever grateful for his contributions to our tourist industry. What memories you must have. Edith Gee Jones (Marion Gee Wainwright's sister)##imported-begin##Edith Gee Jones##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ Dear Barbara, Please accept my condolences on the loss of your dear and beloved Carroll. I have the fondest memories of him and our days at the San Diego Convention Center! He was a great mentor who I learned so much from. He will forever be "Unforgettable"!##imported-begin##Jane Krause##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ To the Family of Mr. Armstrong. Life cannot prepare us for the loss of a loved. But we can find comfort in knowing that God is near to those who mourn. Please find that comfort recorded at Psalms 34:18. Also the promised of possibly seeing your loved one at John 5:28, 29##imported-begin##Marilynn##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ Offering prayers for your comfort and gradual healing from your loss. I was inspired by the uplifting Homegoing celebration of Carroll's extraordinary life, as presented by testimonies from many of the lives he touched - both as Carroll and as "Bookie." May he live on in the hearts of all who love him.##imported-begin##Peggy Beecham##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM



“ Barbara, my heartfelt condolences. I enjoyed reading about your husband's amazing life. My prayers are with you for peace and wisdom.##imported-begin##Heidi Unruh##imported-end##

July 02, 2010 at 02:21 PM