



## Clyde J. Smith

December 5, 1932 - May 7, 2017

As the world around him began to fade into history, illuminating his life, CLYDE JOHNSON SMITH consented to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on May 7, 2017, at Gilchrist Hospice, Baltimore, Maryland, surrounded by family and friends.

Clyde was a man of strong convictions of his position in life. He knew adjustment, evaluation and reflection on specific accomplishments worked well in his stead.

Clyde's life began in the winter of December 5, 1932 to Clyde and Ruby Dalton in segregated Greenwood, South Carolina. He was the oldest of three boys. Seeking a better life for their child, at a young age and he was brought to live with his aunt Myrtle in Cherry Hill section of Baltimore City, Maryland where his education began.

Clyde was baptized at St. Katherine Catholic Church in March 1967.

Attending Junior High at Frederick Douglass High School strengthened his resolve to achieve and be an agent of change within his community.

While in high school he believed in both physical and mental fitness. To achieve this he studied hard and participated in track and played football.

The army beckoned him upon leaving high school. He served as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. Clyde was honorably discharged in 1955.

Following his service in the Army, Clyde entered Morgan State College, but interrupted his schooling to join the Baltimore City Fire Department in 1959. This was his chosen profession that he mentally prepared himself to be the best firefighter he could be through learning the latest in the firefighting techniques. He faced many obstacles due to racial prejudice, however he endured and obtained many first.

Clyde married his wife of more than fifty years, Barbara R. White. This association has been blessed throughout the years with a son Clyde William Smith and lots of family members.

Family and friends called Clyde “Cherry Bill” or just “Billy”.

After serving in the Baltimore City Fire Department for a few years he began receiving recognition. Testing in a segregated system was hard, but he prevailed scoring high enough to be promoted.

Clyde was an inspiration to many young men with the desire to be firefighters during a period in which blacks were not welcome alongside their white counterparts in firefighting.

Clyde’s commitment to making a difference has resulted in many achievements. He became the first black academy instructor, first black Battalion Chief and the first black Assistant Chief. The honors and recognition did not stop there. Clyde was community oriented and believed you have to do something not just talk about doing something. He was involved in City

Sports for Youth, Sandtown-Winchester improvement project for youth and youth sponsor for the YMCA.

Clyde and Barbara adopted African youth to live and experience American life with an American family (these youth, now men have their own families and remain a part of the Smith family with their children).

He was also heavily involved in the community. He was a member of the NAACP, YMCA, Vulcan Blazers, National Firefighters Association and the President of the Grove Park Improvement Association.

Clyde not only kept his body fit and healthy but he also did things to keep his mind stimulated. In 1974, he completed an Associates in Arts Degree from Community College of Baltimore. He believed no task was unattainable and spent hours studying. He took courses in writing and produced a memoir of the lynching in Greenwood, South Carolina entitled "Reluctantly Imposed Punishments". This memoir is now preserved in the Library of Congress, April 2007.

Life has been good to Clyde even though his last year or two cancer had become his body. He fought it the best he could, always with pride and dignity.

Clyde J. Smith leaves his legacy: his beloved wife, Barbara R. Smith; son, Clyde William Smith; daughter, Lori Slade; brother, Ronald (Hattie) Smith; in-laws, William (Vera) White, Gerald (Wanda) White, Angela (Linwood) Tyler, twelve nieces and nephews, ten great-nieces and -nephews.

Our family asks that you cherish the memory of Clyde Johnson Smith, a man of many first, who cherished life and wanted the best for his fellow men. He would always say "You have to do it, not just talk about it!!"



# Cemetery Details

**Druid Ridge**

## Previous Events

### Public Viewing

MAY 15. 8:30 AM - 8:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - West Baltimore  
4300 Wabash Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
(410) 542-2400  
info@marchfh.com

### Family Hour

MAY 15. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - West Baltimore  
4300 Wabash Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
(410) 542-2400  
info@marchfh.com

### Wake

MAY 16. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

St. Bernadine Roman Catholic Church  
3812 Edmondson Ave  
Baltimore, MD 21215

## Service

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MAY 16. 10:30 AM (ET)

St. Bernadine Roman Catholic Church  
3812 Edmondson Ave  
Baltimore, MD 21215

# Tribute Wall



“ Clyde J. Smith

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ Moving to Baltimore from Florida over 2 decades ago, my son, Marvin and I were richly blessed by the love and support of our church family, Mt. Pisgah, the Baltimore City Head Start family, and the wonderful healing hands of the staff of the Children's Hospital at Johns Hopkins. But it's the people who made the difference, The Davis family at my church and the Clyde Smith family and my Baltimore sister Barbara, were anchors in our lives. Any outreach ministry that we attempted, the Deputy Chief was a sounding board. Need a Community Helper speaker- he was the man? Need a donation to send a bus load of children on a history an college tour? We knew where to turn. So it with a deep sense of personal loss that I, along with my entire Florida family, and my son, Marvin, who is now pastoring in Mobile, AL, say to my Baltimore Smith family, THANK YOU for sharing your gift with us, and THANK YOU for loving us and making us one of you.  
Sincerely, Martha S Lue Stewart (Oviedo, FL), Rev. Marvin C. Lue (Mobile, AL).

Martha S Lue Stewart - June 06, 2017 at 08:26 AM



“ I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to the Smith family.  
Rosalind Hicks-Walters And Family.

Rosalind Walters - May 16, 2017 at 08:18 PM

SS

“ *I would like to extend my condolences to the Smith Family. My love and prayers are with you all.*

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**Sean Stinnett** - May 15, 2017 at 08:51 AM

CF

“ *Cousin Mildred Bailey Franze purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Clyde J. Smith.*



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**Cousin Mildred Bailey Franze** - May 13, 2017 at 12:32 PM

MF

“ I just wanted to reflect on how loving and caring my Cousin Clyde was to me and my family and the community.

*When I received the news of my Cousin Clyde's passing it evoked feelings of deep appreciation for all he had done for me. Even though I expressed it to him at the time of his wonderful generosity.*

*My earliest recollections of my Cousin Clyde was when I was around six years old and he brought me back from Greenwood, South Carolina. That was a long ride for a six year old who couldn't wait to return home after a year of not seeing her family. I can see him now, with that big wide smile, reassuring me and telling me that it won't be long now! He was patient and funny. And he fed me all kinds of goodies! He was the absolute best cousin!*

*Even though I had not spoken to Cousin Clyde for many years, he came to my rescue when Stan and I were getting married and the reception venue had not been secured as planned. One week prior to the wedding, I called Cousin Clyde, panic stricken, and asked if the event could be held at the Firemen's Hall? In his cool, calm manner he assured me that everything would be ok. And indeed it was. While this may not seem like something major, to a young bride it averted a major catastrophe.*

*Towards the end of my professional career, I worked at Grove Park Elementary Middle School and looked up one day and there was Cousin Clyde. He looked the same with that big broad smile and gave the best hug! I learned that he was an activist and leader in the community, where he was widely respected and appreciated because as the Assistant Principal said "He got things done."*

*And Finally, when I lost my brother Melvin, I looked up and there was my Cousin Clyde, so supportive when I really needed him and this time he brought my Cousin Ronald filling a void as only he could do!*

*I love you Cousin Clyde and I will cherish your memories for the rest of my life.*

*Cousin Mildred Bailey Franze*

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**Mildred Franze** - May 13, 2017 at 11:02 AM

HF

“ *Henry and Dionne Fowlkes purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Clyde J. Smith.*



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**Henry and Dionne Fowlkes** - May 10, 2017 at 08:21 PM

AW

“ *I would like to extend my condolences to the Smith Family Lieutenant Abdul-Rahmaan Waajid BCFD EMS Division*

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**Abdul-Rahmaan Waajid** - May 10, 2017 at 08:17 PM



“ *We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

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**March Funeral Homes** - May 09, 2017 at 09:48 AM



*We would like to extend our condolences to Barbra and the rest of the smith family. Leroy & Constance Freeman Family and Stanton Taylor & Family*

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**LeRoy T Freeman** - May 15, 2017 at 03:48 PM