



James E. Parrish

November 29, 1926 - October 15, 2019

James Edward Parrish was born in Baltimore City on November 29, 1926 to the late George and Jannette (nee Robinson) Parrish. He was the seventh child of ten born to the couple. His nine siblings; (Leroy, William, Russell, Sarah, Lottie, Geore, Dilly, Mary, and Johnny) preceded him in death. The family lived in East Baltimore on Dallas Street near Johns Hopkins Hospital. At the age of seven, his mother passed away, leaving him to receive instruction and guidance during his formative years from his stepmother and older siblings.

James attended public School #102 for his elementary education. During those years, his father purchased a piano and he began cultivating a lifelong love of music by taking piano lessons. Like many of his brothers and sisters, he was blessed with special gifts and talents. While he could read music, one of his special gifts was the ability to play piano by ear.

In 1942, James entered one of two high schools available to African American children in the City-Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School and graduated in February 1947. At Dunbar, he continued his music studies and was one of the first black students to receive instruction from faculty at the prestigious Peabody Institute. The faculty provided classes at Dunbar since black people were not allowed to receive on site instruction at Peabody. His instructors raved about his excellent skills and encouraged him to pursue further studies

in music. While he could play the classics, he acquired the nickname "Boogie" because people loved to hear him play the "Boogie Woogie," a popular form of 40's and 50's music. With his love of music, he formed the Parrish Trio and the Parrish Sextet.

While at Dunbar, James met Dr. W.E.B. DuBois' daughter, Yolande DuBois Williams, a history teacher at the school. She introduced James to her father. On numerous occasions, when Dr. DuBois visited his Morgan Park home in the City, he was invited to play the piano for Dr. DuBois and his guests.

In 1950, James joined the U.S. army, served stateside, and was honorably discharged in 1952. He enrolled in Morgan State College for a semester but left to pursue full-time employment. In 1954, he helped to integrate the Baltimore City Fire Department by being a member of the second class that included black trainees.

Throughout his life, he always maintained a strong work ethic and often worked part-time jobs using his carpentry skills to support the family. He was a self-taught man who had an uncanny ability to build and fix things.

James always loved to celebrate life and was often the "life of the party." They say that opposites attract. He and his wife, Alma "Babe" Thaniel grew up near each other on East Chase Street, attended Dunbar together, dated for several years, and were married on December 26, 1951. From this union, five children were born. They remained lifelong East Baltimore residents.

James had opportunities to tour with several musical groups but opted to remain local to be close to his family. James' legacy is to be remembered for his love and support to his family.

Following retirement, James continued to enjoy playing the piano and organ,

practicing daily. He was an amateur gardener and enjoyed trips to the pool at the League for the Handicapped. The flower he most loved was the rose. James was a sentimental mix of steel and velvet because this beautiful flower also produces thorns.

He was a lifelong learner and started each day with a full reading of the local newspaper.

James and Anita traveled frequently with the Golden Nuggets of Knox Presbyterian Church.

He leaves to cherish his memory his wife of 67 years; Alma Elizabeth Thaniel Parrish; one daughter, Yvette McEachern (Jay); four sons, Steven (Sandra), Carroll (Esther), James and Timothy; two sisters-in-law, Catherine Ammons and Gladys Parrish; two daughters-in-law, Loretta and Aleta; ten grandchildren, Jeremy (Danyelle), Gregory, Ariana, Nichole, Maya, Brea, Zackery, Timothy, Isaac, and Noah; two great grandchildren, Jaden and London; and a host of nieces, nephews and friends.

Cemetery Details

Garrison Forest Veterans

11501 Garrison Forest Road
Owings Mills, MD

Previous Events

viewing

OCT **25**. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - East Baltimore
1101 East North Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 727-3300
info@marchfh.com

Family Hour

OCT **25**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - East Baltimore
1101 East North Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 727-3300
info@marchfh.com

Wake

OCT **26**. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Knox Presbyterian Church
1300 N. Eden Street
Baltimore, MD

Service

OCT **26**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Knox Presbyterian Church
1300 N. Eden Street
Baltimore, MD

Tribute Wall



“ *James E. Parrish*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *Mrs. Alma Parrish,*
Our prayers go out to you and your family in the loss of your
husband Mr. James E. Parrish. May God comfort you in your time of
sorrow.

Eddie & Angela Hargrove
Greensboro, NC

Angela Hargrove - October 22, 2019 at 10:48 AM



“ *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.

March Funeral Homes - October 18, 2019 at 04:14 PM