



## Leon Bridges, Sr.

August 18, 1932 - April 13, 2026

### OBITUARY FOR MARCH FUNERAL HOME

Mr. Leon Bridges was president of TLBC Incorporated, an architectural and planning firm beginning in Seattle, Washington in 1963 and relocating to Baltimore in 1970. In addition to projects in Baltimore, his works are located in Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington and the District of Columbia. He is the recipient of more than 20 national, regional and local awards for design excellence in Seattle, Boston and Baltimore, including the restoration of Baltimore's Penn Station and Baltimore City College (HS), and new projects for the Coppin State University Administration Building, Boston's Green Street Station (MBTA), Charles & Eleanor Smith Residence in Seattle, The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum in Annapolis, MD, and Lexington Market Metro Subway Station in Baltimore. Baltimore provided a wonderful canvas for Leon's creative designs. His many city projects, both individual and in partnerships with others, include the Baltimore Science Center Aquarium, March Funeral Home, Morgan State University Science Complex, renovations at Bethel AME Church and Union Baptist Church, the Cherry Hill Public Housing Project, the Lexington Terrace Townhouses, and his beautiful 3700 square foot, Pacific-Northwest style home, in which his family had a delightful 44 years in the Mt. Washington neighborhood. Leon retired from his full time practice and since 2006 has taught in the Morgan State University School of Architecture + Planning as an

Assistant Professor. Leon was a member of The American Institute of Architects (AIA), for which he served as a national director in 1971 and as a national director and vice president from 1984 - 1987. He was inducted into the AIA College of Fellows in 1986, and in 1998 he received the prestigious AIA Whitney M. Young, Jr. Medal. He was also a founding member of the Council, National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), for which he served in every national office, including as the first president in 1981.

His several community service activities include the National Planned Parenthood Federation Executive Board, Seattle and Baltimore YMCA Boards, Seattle and Baltimore Urban League, Life Member NAACP, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Baltimore ACTSO Program, The Club of Baltimore, and The Swags. In 1974 Leon and his family joined the Douglas Memorial Community Church, of which he served as a member of their Board of Trustees and Chairman of the Board of Governors, Camp Farthest Out.

Leon was an Extra in the movie industry in the early 1950's. He began singing in his Los Angeles Neighborhood Community Church Youth Choir as a teenager and has performed with the Los Angeles Griffith Park Greek Theatre Light Opera Company (1950-1952), US Army XVI Corps Glee Club in Japan (1952-1954), Black Arts West in Seattle (1954-1962) and Douglas Memorial Chancel Choir (1974-1999), Community Concert Choir of Baltimore (2010-2015). Making his debut in 1999 with the Metropolitan Opera Company of Baltimore's (MOCB) performance of Mozart's "The Magic Flute," he has also sung in their productions of Amahl and The Night Visitors and Gianni Schicchi. Formerly a member of the American Guild for Variety Artists and Chorus Equity, Leon was the Narrator for Adolphus Hailstork's "Done Made My Vow" for the 1995 "Live, Gifted and Black" Concert at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, Baltimore, MD. In 2000, he toured South Korea with the Coppin State University Traveling Choir.

## Early Life

Leon Bridges was born in the East Los Angeles, CA, barrio of Boyle Heights. His was a struggling family with father, James Alonzo, Mom, Agnes Zenobia, and her sister, Auntie Ivy, his twin sister, Lynette, and younger sister, Linda Haqqika (all deceased), all living in a two-bedroom bungalow. As a child, he was unaware of the struggle. As a young boy, living in the Barrio, Leon survived by knowing how to fight with “spoon-knives”. His family lived in several houses in East Los Angeles, raised chickens and feasted on fruit which grew in his and their neighbor’s yards. Leon’s Dad’s family (the Fortiers) were one of the founding families of First AME Church (Los Angeles). Leon has been truly blessed. As a child, he survived Scarlet Fever and as a teenager, he survived Poliomyelitis, which left him paralyzed from the neck down for six-months.

## Decision to Become an Architect

In 1942 or 43, as he remembers, the Bridges family moved to the Los Angeles Westside...they were “moving on up”, as they used to say. Leon’s father was afflicted with serious illnesses that took their toll on the family and his parents divorced. His Mom was always trying to move the family upward, and his Uncle Robert wanted him to become an attorney and make loads of money in Chicago. But, having an interest in drawing sketches of houses, Leon’s Mom introduced him to Paul R. Williams, FAIA, Dean of Negro architects on the West Coast and the first Negro elected to The American Institute of Architects’ College of Fellows. Leon became infected with the desire for his career while in the 7th grade at John Adams Junior High School, Los Angeles. It was through sheer perseverance by his Mom that Dorsey High School allowed him to take drafting in anticipation of becoming an architect. As a young adult he was drafted and served in the Army Intelligence Division in Japan during the

Korean Conflict. He later, and graduated with a professional degree in architecture from the University of Washington in 1960, and earned an MBA from Loyola College (now University) of Maryland in 1984.

### Current Interests

Leon Bridges' primary extra-curricular activity has mostly involved mentoring young African American high school students who might be interested in the field of architecture. This was primarily through the NAACP ACT-SO Program. ACT-SO (Academic-Cultural-Technological & Scientific Olympics). It is a national program wherein volunteers take self-motivated students and help them strive toward excellence. Secondly, as a co-founder, in 1972, of the National American Institute of Architects "Disadvantaged and Minority Scholarship Fund," Leon continued to strive to find scholarship aid for worthy and needy students interested in the field. His treasured activities were bonding with grandsons and family, reading, singing, dancing, swimming and traveling. Leon and Eloise have traveled and visited family, friends and folks in the Caribbean, Spain, Mexico, Japan, Canada, Korea, France, England, Canada, Latin America, and South Africa and across the United States, they regularly visit family in Worcester, MA, Martha's Vineyard, MA, and Southern California.

Leon is survived by his wife of 65 years, Dr. Eloise Avonne Jones Bridges, daughters - Vanessa Joy and Elise Gay (Robert Hicks), sons - Leon Jr. (Ariadne) and Elliott Reynolds, two grandsons - Jamison Andrew (Laura) Hicks and Bradley Drakeford Bridges, two first cousins - Robert Smith of Los Angeles, CA and Firmin "Tito" Thomas of Oakland, CA, several beloved nephews and nieces, and many extended relatives and close treasured friends.

# Cemetery Details

## Druid Ridge Cemetery

7900 Park Heights Avenue

# Previous Events

## Public Viewing

APR 26. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

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

## Wake

APR 27. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Douglas Memorial Community Church  
1325 Madison Ave  
Baltimore, MD

## Funeral Service

APR 27. 11:00 AM (ET)

Douglass Memorial Community Church  
1325 Madison Avenue  
Baltimore, MD



# Tribute Wall



“ *Our heartfelt condolences to the Bridges' family. In the late 70's I worked in Mr. Bridges' office in downtown Baltimore. He was a great man to work him, very encouraging words. He will be greatly missed. God's blessings, strength and peace to each of you.*

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**Robin Gilliam** - May 07 at 04:39 PM



“ *Full Heart was purchased for the family of Leon Bridges, Sr..*



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April 30 at 01:24 PM

MO

“ How Uncle Leon's life has impressed me:

1. Caution before fun (I almost landed on him doing a cannonball plunge in the pool)
2. Don't go for the money. If you already have, make the best of circumstances to redeem deeply cherished rewards. (His advice to me when expressing regrets for relocating to Baltimore, at same time determination to redeem quality time with family and to seek to encourage other people)
3. Respect and show an interest in others (Something he modeled & rebuked me for)
4. Aim high, plan wisely, then diligently commit to fulfill goals (Anyone who knew him could tell that that was his modus operandi)
5. Stay connected (Something he admirably always did)
6. Explore, conscientiously but courageously, to enhance life. (Not many people I know have ventured into so many directions and had so many interesting experiences).

*Revelation 14:13*

*His nephew,*

*Michael Olivier*

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**Michael Olivier** - April 28 at 09:55 AM

KC

*Beautiful story of life! God bless the family and I pray God's comfort for you all.*

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**Kyra Calhoun** - May 02 at 07:18 AM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Leon Bridges, Sr..*



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April 26 at 04:10 PM



“ *Leon’ s dedicated service to Baltimore’s architectural community and particularly to African American youth interested in the profession is unparalleled.... whether through NAACP’s Actso program, NOMA, AIA, Morgan’s Architecture program or through providing internships in his own practice. He gave of his generous heart in so many ways!*

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**Gary A. Bowden FAIA** - April 26 at 01:47 PM



“ *Our sincere condolences from Kennesaw, Ga. Patricia and Howard Jessamy*

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**howard jessamy** - April 25 at 01:01 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Leon Bridges, Sr..*

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April 25 at 10:47 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Leon Bridges, Sr..



April 25 at 10:47 AM



“ I loved listening to Leon's musings about things, particularly Baltimore City and anything design related. He was really a treasure of information and strong opinions. Thanks to the family for sharing him with us.

Daniel Henson - April 24 at 01:23 PM



“ From the Ned J. Elliott Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leon Bridges, Sr..

From the Ned J. Elliott Family - April 23 at 10:13 AM



“ From the Ned J. Elliott Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Leon Bridges, Sr..



From the Ned J. Elliott Family - April 23 at 10:13 AM

RT

“ *Rebecca Tucker purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Leon Bridges, Sr..*



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**Rebecca Tucker** - April 23 at 09:48 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.*

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**March Funeral Homes** - April 20 at 10:11 AM