



William Leon Prentiss, Jr.

November 5, 1964 - January 27, 2023

Obituary

The Magnum Opus of William L. Prentiss, Jr.

Our Joy- May 5, 1964 His Victory- January 27, 2023

William L. Prentiss, Jr., affectionately known to all as BB, departed this- earthly life Friday, January 27, 2023.

A native of Richmond, Virginia, William was born November 5, 1964, to Mr: William L. Prentiss, Sr. of Richmond. Virginia and Ms. Rosa B. Prentiss of New Kent Virginia. William was quick witted: with a great sense of humor often keeping others in stitches. He was a selfless man who led with love, was kind to all, and most importantly humble - our gentle giant. His love of music began in the fifth grade where he was introduced to the flute. After strong encouragement from his mother about the commitment to playing, he received his 1st Bundy flute and the rest is history. Throughout the years, William also played the tuba, piano, and saxophone. In middle school, William met his lifelong friend Anthony "Tony" Anderson. Tony recruited William to play in his band The Brass Connection, where he dazzled the audiences playing the. flute solo to Ffun by Con Funk Shun.

Formally educated in the Richmond Public Schools System, William

graduated from Jefferson Huguenot-Wythe High School in 1983. During his high school years, William excelled as a member of the Junior Varsity football team and drum major of the marching band. Upon graduating, William earned his Bachelor of Arts in Music Media as well as his endorsement and Masters in, Music Education from Norfolk State University. He furthered his studies at Shenandoah University and later received an Endorsement in Administration and Supervision from Longwood University.

In 1983, William attended Norfolk State University, where he was a member of the mighty Marching Spartan Legion, Pep Band, Saxophone Quartet, and the Symphonic Wind Ensemble.

It was also at this time where he met the love of his life, Diana "Dee Dee" Witcher. In 1985, William became a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Pi Gamma Chapter. He served as Basileus (Chapter President), Dean of Pledges., and Step Master to name a few.

A consummate professional, William's career spanned an impressive 27 years across a plethora of school districts throughout Virginia and the Washington O.C. area to include: Potomac Middle School (Prince William County), Smithfield (Smithfield, VA), Norcom (Portsmouth, VA), Cardoza (Washington, D.C.), Huguenot (Richmond), and Booker T Washington (Norfolk) High Schools. In addition to his band director duties, William also served as the Assistant Band Director and Adjunct Professor at Virginia Union University. His last assignment was serving proudly as the Band and Orchestra Director at Meadowbrook High School in Chesterfield, VA. At his last concert performance on January 21, 2023, while serving as guest conductor for the Henrico All-County Band, he stated to the audience in his closing remarks, "We just have to be kinder and gentler these days... less stressful. So from me to you, don't let the things that don't matter too much, matter too much".

One of the- most influential forces in Virginia's music education history,

William was an elite adjudicator, conductor, and clinician throughout the state of Virginia. Under his baton, his marching, concert, and jazz bands received over twenty-three (23) superior assessment ratings at the district and state levels. His marching band was the city of Richmond's first and only public school band to be named Virginia Honor Band. He worked tirelessly to help many of his students audition and receive college scholarships to various colleges and universities. His professional affiliations include: National Association for Music Educators (NAFME), Virginia Music Educators Association, Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA), Commonwealth Winds Community Band, and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College Musil: Advisory Board.

William was an active member of his beloved Omega Psi Phi Fraternity for over 36 years. where he served as Basileus of the Gamma Xi (Virginia Beach) and Phi Phi (Richmond) chapters. He was, the international Talent Hunt Chairman for 10 years and was currently president of the P&G Foundation. He received awards for Basileus of the Year, The Founder's Lifetime Achievement Award, and several Omega Man of the Year Awards. He also served as chapter president of the Richmond Alumni Chapter and Parliamentarian of the Norfolk State University Alumni Association. Additionally, he held memberships in Kappa Kappa Psi Honorary Band and Phi Beta Mu International BandMasters Fraternities. William also co-founded two professional bands, Opium Jazz (Tidewater) and Quintessential Jazz (Richmond).

Of all of the roles William played, none was more precious than being husband and father. William fiercely loved his family. He enjoyed traveling and vacationing and most importantly; making sure his family was happy and taken care of, a trait received from his mother. William is preceded in death by his father, William Sr. He leaves to cherish his memory, his devoted wife of 31

years. Diana and their three daughters Maya Vinice, Dara Symone, and Jana Nicole. He also leaves to mourn; his beloved mother Rosa, his loving sister Dr. Janice Prentiss Bennett (Paul), siblings Norman E. Washington, Sr. (Emma), and Rosalind Hill-Bey. Also left to cherish his memory his sister-in-love Vickie Webb (Ernie) and their children EJ, Jabari, Kanaya, and Gabbie; special beloved nephew Mahldn Washington and great niece Jasmine Washington, his eternal brothers of Pi Gamma Spring 85, and a host of beloved family, friends, students, colleagues, and band parents.

William "88" Prentiss, Jr. - believer, husband, father, son, brother, musician, teacher, leader, counselor, confidant, and mentor. His shoes will remain unfilled, while his legacy lives on.

Cemetery Details

Private

Previous Events

Public Viewing

FEB 10. 9:30 AM - 8:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes
2110 E. Laburnum Ave
Richmond, VA 23222

Fraternity Ceremony

FEB 10. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home-Laburnum Ave.
2110 E. Laburnum Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Celebration of Life

FEB 11. 11:00 AM (ET)

Second Baptist Church-Southside
3300 Broad Rock Blvd
Richmond, VA

Tribute Wall



“ *March Funeral Homes created a To View the Webcast of the Wake for William Leon Prentiss, Jr., Please Click the Link below. in memory of William Leon Prentiss, Jr.*



March Funeral Homes - January 31, 2023 at 12:41 PM

VG

Bee Bee-- RIH my dear friend. You were such a wonderful person and kind always to anyone you met. Your beautiful spirit will continue to permeate and you will be sorely missed. Venus & Family

Venus Green - February 02, 2023 at 12:25 AM

LH

“ *Thank You so much Mr. Prentiss for all you did for our son Tyrone Henderson Jr. all through high school at Huguenot High School You were the best band teacher. We really appreciated you so much our whole family. Rest in peace. To his family God is always with all of you. Sincerely Tyrone Henderson Sr. and Family*



Lorraine Henderson - February 11, 2023 at 12:20 PM

DS

“ Sleep in heavenly peace Brother BB. I remember your visiting with your sister, Janice, at SCBC and participating in the SCBC's parade of stars, show casing your musical talent....sending prayers of comfort to the family.

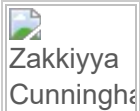
Deaconess Kimberly R. Davis, SCBC - February 10, 2023 at 01:47 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of William Leon Prentiss, Jr..



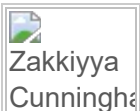
February 10, 2023 at 01:14 PM



“ Uncle BeBe at the 87th NSU Founder's Day Breakfast



Zakkiyya Cunningham - February 10, 2023 at 10:18 AM



“ Uncle Be Be lighting it up playing the baddest rendition of O Happy Day you've ever heard at NSU Founder's Day Breakfast 2023. Rest in Power.



Zakkiyya Cunningham - February 10, 2023 at 09:14 AM

BF

“ *Brother Dr. Andre P. Davis Jr. & Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of William Leon Prentiss, Jr..*



Brother Dr. Andre P. Davis Jr. & Family - February 09, 2023 at 02:35 PM

RB

“ *Poppa and Mamma Brown send their sincere condolences to the Prentiss family. We especially keep his Mother and his sister Janice in our prayers for God's comfort, love, and peace to overshadow them during this difficult time.*

Rev. Calvin D. & Mrs Jacqueline J Brown - February 09, 2023 at 11:14 AM

MD

“ What do you say to someone who had the most significant impact on this journey called life? William L Prentiss was my high school band director (1999-2001). He had a way of making you work for everything. There were no shortcuts with him. I remember the year our drumline decided they had enough of Mr. Prentiss not letting them have their way. They decided to go on strike during one of the football games before a major competition. To make a long story short, it backfired. He put them on probation, and we went to the competition the next day with one snare drum, one tenor drum, one bass drum, one cymbal player, and still one first-place band in every category. The lesson was one monkey stop no-show. Aside from that, he was a mentor and friend and continued to pour into us as students in college and adulthood. When I decided to attend NSU for grad school, he was elated and had his village wrap its arms around me while I lived in Tidewater. Due to scheduling, I won't be able to attend the service since I reside in Atlanta, GA, but I will be there in spirit and virtually to pay my respects to a GREAT MAN. - Marvin DeWitt C/O 2001 Huguenot High School) Drum Major 1999-2001



Marvin DeWitt - February 09, 2023 at 10:07 AM

YF

“ Your Harper Park Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of William Leon Prentiss, Jr..



Your Harper Park Family - February 07, 2023 at 12:37 PM

MG

“ To the Prentiss Family, I was sorry to hear about the passing of William. He always had a warm smile and pleasant personality. Please know that I am keeping you and your family in my thoughts and prayers. Praying that God will grant each of you the peace that surpasses all understanding and comfort you in the days to come. Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal. May God Bless and keep you!



~Melissa Gregory

Melissa Gregory - February 06, 2023 at 11:12 PM

JM

“ Joy Morgan purchased the Simply Elegant Spathi phyllum for the family of William Leon Prentiss, Jr..



Joy Morgan - February 06, 2023 at 11:00 PM

TC

“ The Sorors of the Tokyo Alumnae Chapter purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of William Leon Prentiss, Jr..



The Sorors of the Tokyo Alumnae Chapter - February 06, 2023 at 08:11 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of William Leon Prentiss, Jr..*



February 06, 2023 at 02:39 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of William Leon Prentiss, Jr..*



February 06, 2023 at 02:09 PM



“ *Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of William Leon Prentiss, Jr..*



February 04, 2023 at 02:35 AM



“ *Dear Pettis Family,
We offer our sincere sympathy on the passing of Wiliam. Both my husband & I had the pleasure of performing with him on several gigs. William was a fantastic musician & a wonderful gentleman. May God give you & all who loved him peace, comfort & understanding during this most difficult period.
Respectfully,
Thomas & Shelia Shaw*

Shelia Spurlock - Shaw - February 03, 2023 at 07:45 PM

JS

“ *Mrs. Prentiss and family,*

What do you say about a man who meant so much to so many people? He had a heart of gold, and it showed through his passion of music, while teaching his students.

I will miss our conversations on life and family. I'm sure I'm not alone. His big personality, and it's impact, will be missed. May you rest in peace, Prentiss!

*Blessing to the Prentiss family,
J. Scott (Meadowbrook high)*

jscott - February 03, 2023 at 02:17 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of William Leon Prentiss, Jr..*



February 02, 2023 at 06:47 PM

YJ

“ *To my loving Prentiss family, I am completely loss for words at this time. A King has earned his crown. I know there are hundreds of heart broken friends calling so I will wait a while but know that my deepest love and prayers are with all of you at this time and the days to come. I am here for you if you need me I am only a phone call or text away. Love all of you!*
Yvonne Jones



Yvonne Jones - February 02, 2023 at 02:11 PM

DB

“ This is such a loss. BB you were always so kind and giving. Even though it's been about 5 years since I saw you at Daddy T's (Alvoston Taylor Jr) homegoing- you made it a point to come and say Hi! To the Prentiss family my sincere condolences to you all. BB touched so many lives and he will surely be missed.

Donna Bower

Donna Bower - February 02, 2023 at 12:25 PM

VG

“ Bee Bee-- you were a beautiful spirit; kind to anyone you met. May you RIH. Sympathy/ Condolences to Dee Dee & girls and the entire Prentiss Family. You will be sorely missed!!!! 🙏❤️🙏❤️

Venus Green - February 02, 2023 at 12:34 AM

EG

“ William this came as a shock as I just saw your face not too long ago. A good man. My heartfelt condolences go out to your family. RIH my friend God has another Angel,

Eric Greene - February 01, 2023 at 11:24 AM

OS

To BBs family and loved ones, we will miss him greatly, and I view him like a son of mine who i lost back in September 21, 2021. We will miss him but remember, God is in control and wanted him more.

O'Neill "Doc" Sanford - February 02, 2023 at 11:11 AM

CB

Dear Mrs. Prentiss, words can't express how sad I feel for your loss. We at our corner of MBK are already missing to seem him and speaking with him. I hope the Good Lord help you find healing to your heart, Big Hugs
Claudia Baird MBK WL.

Claudia Baird - February 03, 2023 at 06:16 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.

March Funeral Homes - January 31, 2023 at 10:26 AM

KJ

We love you Mr. Prentiss!!!!!! The Broad Rock Taylor's Kenneth, Jr., Brenton, Kenton, Kendra, Kenneth, Sr., and Brenda W. Taylor

Kenneth W. Taylor, Jr. - January 31, 2023 at 06:39 PM



Bee Bee, a true friend, spirit and brother that endured all the ups and downs life threw at us. Childhood friend, musical master, Brass Connection Jr. High School 🏫, Life long friend! RIP 🙏 God has a new wonderful Angel.

Herman Anderson - February 02, 2023 at 09:06 AM

YF

What can I say about such a wonderful man. I met both Mr. Prentiss and Mrs. Prentiss when my daughter (Kavere Logan) joined the Huguenot Marching Band. He was hard working and dedicated to bringing out the best in the students he taught. I really got to interact with him and his family more once my son (Kevin Logan) also joined the band – so many practices, so many trips, so many competitions. His love of music was infectious, but his love of family was what made him such an awesome person. It was always evident that he truly adored his wife and his children. He was so very proud of his family. In fact, the mere mention of his wife's name would bring a big smile to his face. Thank you, Mrs. Prentiss, for sharing your husband with all of the students whose lives he touched and enriched with music. I know how hard it is for you right now, Mrs. Prentiss and girls. Continue to hold on to God's unchanging hands. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. May you find comfort in the precious memories of the times you've shared – the joy, the laughter, the love. Rest in sweet peace Mr. Prentiss. May your legacy of love and music live on forever!

--Yvonne Franklin (Logan)

Yvonne Franklin - February 03, 2023 at 12:19 PM

RH

To The Family, So sorry and sad for your loss. Mr. Prentiss was servant of love to all. I Beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ... that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Romans 12:1-2 Our Love, Thoughts, and Prayers, Bro. Robert, Sis. Valerie, Bria, and Deion Henderson

Robert Henderson - February 04, 2023 at 03:45 PM

PC

*We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Brother William Leon Prentiss, Jr.
"BB" and his family was a great inspiration to us during his early years with Union Baptist Church.
He will be greatly Missed by all.
May God keep each of you during this time of Grief.*

Pastor Rodney F. Christian - February 11, 2023 at 12:50 AM