



## Bishop Leon Smith

April 8, 1944 - May 16, 2023

With profound sorrow and reverence, we commemorate the life and legacy of our esteemed Bishop Leon Smith, whose influence extends far beyond his physical departure. On May 16, 2023, at 79, Bishop Smith peacefully embraced eternal rest in Las Vegas, Nevada, surrounded by his loving family.

Born on April 8, 1944, in Atlanta, Texas, to Lonnie and Elease Lawson, Bishop Leon Smith's journey was marked by profound spiritual growth and a steadfast commitment to education. In 1958, his family relocated to Las Vegas, where he found solace and spiritual nourishment at Enon Baptist Church. Then, during the Annual Holy Convocation in 1960, Bishop Smith experienced a transformative moment of salvation, shaping the purpose and direction of his life.

Education was pivotal in Bishop Smith's personal growth and dedication to serving others. He began his educational journey at Booker T. Washington Elementary School and graduated from Rancho High School in 1962. Fueling his thirst for knowledge, Bishop Smith pursued postgraduate studies at the University of Nevada, Reno, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. In 1974 he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Science, followed by a Master of Education in 1975. His enrollment in a doctoral program further enriched his understanding and expertise in administration.

Bishop Smith's lifelong dedication to uplifting others was evident in his crucial role as a workplace division coordinator on the West Side. He fostered personal and professional growth within the community by guiding and empowering young adults in their academic pursuits. Beyond employment opportunities, Bishop Smith recognized the pressing need to address drug abuse and initiated a recovery program, providing hope and support to those in need. His visionary leadership extended to the Desert Correctional Center, where he collaborated with the warden to establish a groundbreaking high school program in 1982. This program offered incarcerated individuals the chance to complete their education and embark on a transformative journey toward success. Through his tireless efforts and collaboration with the county adult education department and trustee board, Bishop Smith forged a powerful partnership between the Department of Education and the Department of Prisons, impacting the lives of those within the correctional facility.

Bishop Smith's distinguished career encompassed various significant contributions, including being one of the first Head Start teachers in Clark County, a history and government educator at the secondary level, an Employment Counselor with the Department of Employment Security, an accountant with Edgerton, Germeshausen, and Grier Incorporated, and serving as the Associate Warden of Programs for the Nevada State Department of Prisons. His selflessness, compassion, and unwavering dedication to empowering others to reach their fullest potential have left an indelible mark on the lives of countless individuals. In addition, Bishop Leon Smith was a strong advocate of human rights and recently represented the community in the opening of "F" Street, an eight-million-dollar project giving the community a direct path to the downtown area of Las Vegas, Nevada.

Embracing a profound spiritual calling, Bishop Smith dedicated his life to the service of God. Under the guidance of the late Bishop Clyde Carson Cox at

Upper Room Church of God in Christ, he immersed himself in studying the Word. Bishop Smith actively participated in the Young People Willing Workers and furthered his theological education at Cox Theological Seminary. 1964 he accepted his ministry call, receiving ordination as an elder in 1968. Later that year, he assumed the role of National Evangelist. In 1976, Bishop Smith received his pastoral appointment from Bishop E. N. Weht to the New Covenant Church of God in Christ. In January 1994, he assumed leadership of Pentecostal Temple, emphasizing fellowship and fostering a sense of community. With his new role, he was determined to pay the debt of approximately \$100,000 to the widow of Bishop Webb and grant widow survival pay for Mother Mattie Webb and Mother Thelma Cox until their death.

His unwavering commitment to education also drove him to realize his dream—constructing a child development center at Pentecostal Temple in 2001. This dream became a reality through the Pentecostal Temple community's love, encouragement, and financial support. In 2010, a renovation to the childcare included infant care for a total cost of \$515,000.00. The Pentecostal Temple Child Development Center serves the community, providing infant care and preschool for low-income families. The scholarship program was established at Pentecostal Temple and transitioned to Bishop Smith's love for the congregation and his desire to empower future generations led to the establishment of The Bishop Leon Smith scholarship, supporting over 200 students and enabling them to build brighter futures for themselves, their families, and their communities. Bishop Smith pioneered the Pentecostal Temple on multiple occasions and his most recent of the entire sanctuary with the installation of carpet and new theater seats in 2023. The coordinated effort of Bishop Leon Smith as pastor of Pentecostal Temple and the membership resulted in purchasing twelve lots that identify Pentecostal Temple's ownership of an entire block and surrounding properties in the location of the existing church,

including three rental properties.

Bishop Leon Smith was consecrated as Auxiliary Bishop on November 11, 2012, at the International Holy Convocation. Upon the election of Bishop Charles E. Blake Sr. as The Presiding Bishop of the Church of God in Christ, Bishop Charles E. Blake relinquished his position as Interim Jurisdictional Prelate of Nevada First and appointed Bishop Leon Smith on April 10, 2013. During his reign, Bishop Smith created and implemented the Jurisdictional Manual to provide structure and guidance to the Nevada First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction as stated, "I believe, as most leaders do, that the Bible is infallible and contains real resolutions to daily problems. Seeking God from the heart will give the best results for a generation who is weaker and wiser."

While Bishop Smith's accomplishments were numerous, his true essence resided in his unwavering faith and commitment to family. On February 14, 1971, he united in marriage with the late Marilyn Harris of Richmond, California, who wholeheartedly loved and supported Bishop Smith in his ministry. Unfortunately, Marilyn's passing in 1993 preceded Bishop Smith in eternal rest. From their blessed union, they were graced with one son, Leon Smith II. Bishop Smith leaves behind a treasured legacy carried by his son, Leon II, daughter-in-law Jacqueline Smith, and grandchildren Savannah Smith, Sheynia Walker, Leon Smith III, Aliyanna Smith, and Alexis Macias. Furthermore, his profound impact and cherished legacy extend to the Pentecostal Temple family, the Nevada First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, the community he served, and the countless individuals touched by his wisdom, guidance, and love.

As we reflect upon the life of Bishop Leon Smith, we draw inspiration from John 15:2: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Bishop Smith's fruitful existence and unwavering dedication to serving others

exemplify the essence of this verse, reminding us to emulate his spirit of love, compassion, and continuous growth.

May Bishop Leon Smith's memory continue to guide and inspire us all, and may his spirit forever live on in the hearts and actions of those whose lives he touched.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 23. 2:00 AM - 6:00 PM (PT)

Pentacostal Temple COGIC  
1117 N F Street  
Las Vegas, NV 89106

## Funeral Service

MAY 23. 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM (PT)

Pentacostal Temple COGIC  
1117 N F Street  
Las Vegas, NV 89106

## Funeral Service

MAY 24. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

Pentacostal Temple COGIC  
1117 N F Street  
Las Vegas, NV 89106

## Committal Service

MAY 24. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (PT)

Palm Downtown Cemetery  
1325 N Main St.  
Las Vegas, NV 89101

# Tribute Wall



“ *View and Download the Funeral Program* ”

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**Thomas and Jones Funeral Home** - May 23, 2023 at 07:57 PM