



Willie J. Dowdell

June 9, 1938 - April 4, 2025

Willie James Dowdell was the second of two children born to Mr. and Mrs. William & Mary White Dowdell of Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida. He would appear from a very early age to be a ray of “Sunshine”. Happy, free spirited, spoiled, and protected by his brother, eleven years his senior, who he would follow around constantly being ‘busy’. As time passed, family and friends would attribute the high energy he exhibited to the Florida Sunshine, hence the nickname “Sunshine/Shine”. He was predeceased by his parents, son Willie James, Jr; brothers Etheus and Nathaniel, and nephew, Nathaniel Dowdell, II.

During his early years he was converted and joined Big St. Mary’s Primitive Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Fl. He remained a faithful member until he moved from Florida to Las Vegas, Nevada. Upon his arrival he found a church home and became a member of Victory Baptist Church until later joining Second Baptist, where he served dutifully on the Hospitality Committee. He remained an active and supportive member of Second Baptist until his health issues prevented him from being active, yet he remained supportive in every other way.

His academic journey began at Florida A&M University Developmental Research School, culminating in his graduation in 1958. He then matriculated at Florida A&M University until relocating to Las Vegas where he enrolled in the Las Vegas School of Dealing.

Walking in his purpose of hospitality and serving others was a major facet of

his personality that overflowed into his work life. He became a staple at the renowned Hotel Duval in Tallahassee for more than ten years as the head waiter until its closing. He then transitioned to the Head Waiter role at Tallahassee's first Holiday Inn. While he enjoyed his roles in hospitality he still had greater aspirations of being an entrepreneur and was blessed to finally pursue that dream after several years. His restaurant, Best BBQ Ribs, was a staple in the now historic Frenchtown Community. Feeling the need for newer and greater opportunities and seeking a change of environment, he left the "Sunshine" state with his sights set on Las Vegas in 1977. His work experience began at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino as a Porter. He later moved on to the Little Ceasar's Casino as a Craps dealer, followed by the Golden Gate Hotel & Casino in the same capacity. Over several years and professional moves, he moved up to Floor Supervisor and worked as such in his years prior to retirement at his beloved Ceasar's Palace and finally the Golden Nugget. He truly found all that he had been looking for in Vegas. The sunrays would slowly descend, one by one, behind the clouds and suddenly darkness would creep in and "Sunshine" would be no more. Willie quietly transitioned to his heavenly home surrounded by loved ones on April 4, 2025. He leaves to cherish his memory; a loving niece, Patricia Aaron-Hills (Ronald), devoted Grand-niece, Lauren Carter (David), and Great-Grand nephew, Joshua, all of Charlotte, NC and Great-Grand niece, Jada, of Orlando, FL. Also mourning his passing are his dedicated and loving "Grandsons" Darrius (Alexis) Patterson of Jacksonville, FL and Tre Alexander, along with his brothers Chaz and Alexander Price and their mother Alaina (Eddie) Nieves of Las Vegas, NV., a very special "daughter" Ava (Ralph) Williams of Tallahassee, FL, loving cousins Velma Larkins and sons, Brandon and Jason, of Atlanta, GA. as well as Emma Randolph, Norma Jean Mitchell, and Jeslyn White of Houston, TX., as well as a host of other relatives. His loyal and dear friends that supported him and his loved ones until the very end are Minister Eddie Council and Ms. Elaine Spears of Las Vegas, NV.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR **26**. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PT)

Thomas and Jones Funeral Home

2457 N Decatur Blvd

Las Vegas, NV 89108

(702) 384-7600

trintion.holmes@dignitymemorial.com

<https://www.thomasandjonesfuneralhome.com/>

Tribute Wall

NM

“ *Norma (Plupsie) Jefferson Mitchell lit a candle in memory of Willie J. Dowdell*



Norma (Plupsie) Jefferson Mitchell - April 17, 2025 at 04:33 PM

AW

My heart is heavy with sadness. The thought of not being able to call and hear your voice feels unbearable. Las Vegas will never hold the same joy for me without you. I cherish the beautiful memories we created together, and I will hold them close. I take comfort in knowing that you are at peace now, free from pain. Darrius and I will miss you deeply. Sending all our love to you from your family in Florida.

Ava Williams - April 18, 2025 at 07:39 AM