



Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins

March 9, 1967 - October 11, 2024

COLLINS, Mr. Sylvester Gaffney, - Age 57, passed away Friday, October 11, 2024, in Huntersville, North Carolina. Family hour 10:00 AM Tuesday, October 29, 2024, at Vernon Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 5802 Dupont St., with funeral service commencing at 11:00 AM, Pastor Douglas Banks, Host Pastor. Interment Flint Memorial Park Cemetery, G-9506 N. Dort Hwy., Mt. Morris, MI. Friends and pallbearers will assemble at the Church 10:00 AM Tuesday. Mr. Collins will lie in state in the Chapel of Lawrence E. Moon Funeral Home, 906 W. Flint Park Blvd., and may be viewed from Monday, October 28, 2024, from 12:00 PM-6:00 PM, with family present from 4:00 PM-6:00 PM to receive friends.

Sylvester Gaffney Collins was born to Sylvester F. Collins, Jr. and Derenda Taylor Collins on March 9, 1967, Flint, Michigan. He died October 11, 2024, in Huntersville, North Carolina at age 57.

Sylvester attended Flint Christian School (K-9) graduating from Flint Northwestern Community School and enrolling in C.S. Mott Junior College. At Delta College he completed an Associate Degree in Automotive Mechanics and later from Willow Run Airport, he received an Aero Mechanic Technician Certificate. Sylvester ended his work life as a commercial truck driver, but Gaffney, Sly, G-man, was more than statistics of motors and miles. Please indulge us as we share some personal observations.

Sylvester Gaffney Collins was christened and baptized by his Godfather, Rev. Reuben E. Russell at Vernon

Chapel A.M.E. church when it was located at North and Addison. He participated in Vernon's youth activities such as Sunday School, YPD, etc. but when he could accompany Grandmother Selma, he was at Vacation Bible School, picnics, some Bible study etc. of St. James Church of God in Christ on Selby St. and he welcomed the Jehovah's Witness' knock on the door anticipating a spirited discussion.

Before he was 21, he had saved 3 lives when he worked as a lifeguard for Flint Community Schools. He played skillful soccer at school and AAU. He was one of Flint's early soccer officials of color. He also certified in GM's Minority Apprentices Program. He had to legally fight for the soccer officials position and for the certification.

While he studied at Mott, his beloved grandmother, Selma, transitioned, his car burned to a crisp including his exam essays and books, he found himself on foot and forlorn. Abruptly he left for Wisconsin and a premier trucking company, Sneider, to earn a DCL, specializing in ice driving techniques. He later drove for Werner, Mayflower and he spent more than 20 years with JB Hunt Transport, Corsicana Division. He earned in 2017 Trucker of the Month which put him in contention for Trucker of the Year and the Million Mile Driver Designation, Southeastern Region. Between trucking situations, he worked as a forklift driver and reorganized a newspaper carrier dispatch system. He literally worked his jeans into threads as a garbage collector. Gaffney also volunteered as a patron safety man making sure the last canoe was off the lake at sunset. Also, he was a church van driver at Vernon Chapel. At all times he had books on his phone and in his pocket for his many moments of waiting.

For leisure, he regularly watched the semi pro TOBACCO ROAD soccer team practice and compete. This team is coached and partly owned by a cousin. He

did bow hunting and salmon fishing with “Pops” Collins, bass catch and release fishing, film and digital photography with a cousin, and he considered movie critique discussions a sport.

His family love was expressed through the Leali genealogy study, through backing his sister, Sylvia, in a football season when Brown Chapel AME had a hotdog concession at the “Big House” (many cases, many steps, many people) and through the 6:30 pm nightly calls to his dad on the upstairs landline phone and with his mom in the kitchen occasionally joining the conversation with her cell.

HLF, His Laboring Few, was close to Sylvester’s heart. In this organization of Christian bikers, which is dedicated to supporting activities for distressed veterans, Gaffney held Badge-Rider status, evangelizing and riding through a cluster of Southeastern states. He was excited and fulfilled when he blocked for a ride to a children’s hospital to deliver toys; over 200 riders annually got waved to and applauded for miles. He led small group rides to mountain top scenic view stations. Imagine the vistas he’s seen.

Gaffney’s last big ride was private, from his home for the past 24 years in Greensboro to the 2024 Leali Reunion hosted by Denver/Aurora, Colorado. He enjoyed the 100 plus family members, did his duty with carrying food and pop, life guarded the kids, presented his report but wouldn’t read it aloud, and he rode back home passing through Kansas. He was delayed a day by the horizon filling thunderstorms with exceptional amounts of lighting. Prairie states specialize in awesome summer aerial displays. We did not know Sylvester Gaffney’s transition would be as sudden and dramatic as a prairie summer storm, but our family has no doubt God’s will

dictated all his life's circumstances. Gaffney knew, walked, swam and rode with God –to God. His was a complete life that we shall forever lovingly and thankfully remember.

Sylvester Gaffney Collins leaves to cherish his memory: Parents: Sylvester F. Collins, Jr. and Derenda Taylor Collins of Flint, MI. Sister: Sylvia Lisante Collins of Ypsilanti, MI. Aunts: Selma Joyce Collins of Flint, MI, Sandra Kale Collins of Flint, MI, Kay Alice (Thomas Earl) Alford of Pasadena, CA. Uncles: James M. (Betty Wilder) Collins - Flint, MI., Alfonzo D Collins - Flint, MI.

Preceded in Death by Maternal Grandparents: Gaffney and Derenda Taylor. Paternal Grandparents: Sylvester and Selma Collins. Aunt: Lillian Spears Collins. Uncle: Lawrence Dean Collins. Godfather: Rev. Reuben E. Russell.

The family would like to express special thanks to Rev. Douglas Banks and the entire Vernon Chapel AME family; Rev. Donald and Rev. Dr. Teleah Phillips and the entire Brown Chapel AME Family; Rev. Jerry Hatter Pastor Emeritus Brown Chapel AME Church; Rev. Dr. Clarence and Syvil Burke and the entire Beacon Light MBC in Durham, NC; Tyler Stanfield; JB Hunt; Stacy Melton and staff of A.E. Grier and Son Funeral Home, Charlotte, NC; Rev. Helen Williams and staff of Lawrence E Moon Funeral Home, Flint, MI; Friends: Marcia Muldrew Thomas, Tara Miller, Drs. Ronald and Tershia Grover.

His home going service of celebration will be live streamed on Facebook live at: vernonchapelchurch.com

Cemetery Details

Flint Memorial Park Cemetery

G-9506 N. Dort Hwy.
Mt. Morris, MI 48458

Previous Events

Public Viewing

OCT **28**. 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Lawrence E. Moon Funeral Home, Inc., Flint
906 W. Flint Park Blvd.
Flint, MI 48505
(810) 789-6666
lemoonfhflint@gmail.com
<https://lawrenceemoonfuneralhome.com>

Family Present

OCT **28**. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Lawrence E. Moon Funeral Home, Inc., Flint
906 W. Flint Park Blvd.
Flint, MI 48505
(810) 789-6666
lemoonfhflint@gmail.com
<https://lawrenceemoonfuneralhome.com>

Family hour

OCT **29**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Vernon Chapel AME Church
5802 Dupont St.
Flint, MI

Funeral Service

OCT **29**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Vernon Chapel AME Church
5802 Dupont St.
Flint, MI

Tribute Wall

LB

“ *Deepest Condolences to my family the Collins Family.*

LeSondra Barnett - November 07, 2024 at 04:17 PM

SL

“ *Sabrina Lang-Brown lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Sabrina Lang-Brown - October 30, 2024 at 10:13 PM

PH

“ *Sincere condolences to Sylvia Collins and family.*



Pat Harris - October 29, 2024 at 04:13 PM

LR

“ *Sincere Love And Sympathy To The Collins Family*



Lorene Randall - October 29, 2024 at 06:59 AM

RE

“ Rhonda Etherly sent a virtual gift in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins



Rhonda Etherly - October 29, 2024 at 06:21 AM

DB

“ David & Dana Bush lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins



David & Dana Bush - October 27, 2024 at 04:04 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins.



October 26, 2024 at 09:29 PM

PG

“ Patricia Gaither lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins



Patricia Gaither - October 26, 2024 at 01:59 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins.*



October 26, 2024 at 01:55 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins.

October 26, 2024 at 01:55 PM



“ *So sorry for the lost of your son our prayers go out to the family. Jerry and Rosalee Minor*



Rosalee Minor - October 25, 2024 at 08:23 PM



“ *Mr. & Mrs. Deotis & Sarah Hunter-Tucker lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Mr. & Mrs. Deotis & Sarah Hunter-Tucker - October 25, 2024 at 07:13 PM

EP

“ *EARNEST/NANCY POUNCY lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



EARNEST/NANCY POUNCY - October 25, 2024 at 12:50 PM

SF

“ *Sincere condolences to the Collins family
Praying for strength during this time 🙏*



Summers/Shumpert Family - October 25, 2024 at 06:29 AM

RB

“ *Rob & Apryl Boyler*



Rob Boyler - October 23, 2024 at 07:30 PM

DA

“ *Doris Allen lit a candle in memory of Mr.
Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Doris Allen - October 22, 2024 at 03:38 PM

TT

“ *Tika logan tyson lit a candle in memory of Sylvester Collins*



Tika logan tyson - October 21, 2024 at 05:20 PM

JK

“ *Condolences and prayers for the Collins family.*



Julie Koger - October 21, 2024 at 01:52 PM

DF

“ *Driskell Family lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Driskell Family - October 20, 2024 at 11:38 PM

ES

“ *Edwina Sanders lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Edwina Sanders - October 20, 2024 at 10:03 PM

DM

“ Douglas May lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins



Douglas May - October 20, 2024 at 04:29 PM

DS

“ My deepest condolences to the family, Praying for comfort and peace during this difficult time. 🙏🙏



Dorothy Simmons - October 20, 2024 at 09:20 AM

CG

“ My sincere condolences to the Collins Family, especially to his parents. Praying for your strength. May wonderful memories of your son comfort your hearts.



Carol Gardner - October 18, 2024 at 12:57 PM

GJ

“ Gloria Jackson lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins



Gloria Jackson - October 18, 2024 at 11:55 AM

AN

“ *Amekia Newman lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Amekia Newman - October 17, 2024 at 09:45 PM



“ *Gaffney you were such a light. May God surround your family with His grace and love.*

Valerie Marshall - October 17, 2024 at 05:18 PM

PK

“ *Pat Kersey lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Pat Kersey - October 17, 2024 at 03:04 PM

AD

“ *My sincerest thoughts and condolences are with the entire Collins family during their time of bereavement!*



AC Dumas - October 17, 2024 at 06:19 AM

BB

“ *Belinda Brown lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Belinda Brown - October 17, 2024 at 02:43 AM

CJ

“ *Mr. and Mrs. Collins, I'm so sorry for the loss of your Son, I was in your fourth grade class when he was born, and you came to school with a fresh haircut, beaming with pride!!! I'll keep you in my prayers.*

Charles Crouther Jr. - October 16, 2024 at 07:47 PM

LG

“ *Linda Gulley lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Linda Gulley - October 16, 2024 at 06:32 AM

CP

“ *COREY PIERCE lit a candle in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



COREY PIERCE - October 15, 2024 at 10:24 PM



“ *Veronica Nickens sent a virtual gift in memory of Mr. Sylvester Gaffney Collins*



Veronica Nickens - October 14, 2024 at 01:34 PM