



Willie Nolden

March 29, 1969 - December 20, 2008

NOLDEN, Mr. Willie, Jr. "Sokita" - Age 69, passed away Saturday, December 20, 2008 at Hurley Medical Center. Family hour 10AM Saturday, December 27, 2008 at New Jerusalem Full Gospel Baptist Church, 1035 E.

Carpenter Rd., with funeral service commencing at 11AM, Bishop Odis A. Floyd officiating. Interment Great Lakes National Cemetery, G-4200 Belford Rd., Holly, MI. Friends and pallbearers will assemble at the church 10AM Saturday. Mr. Nolden will lie in state in the Chapel of Lawrence E. Moon Funeral Home, 906 W. Flint Park Blvd., and may be viewed from 1PM-8PM Friday. Mr. Willie "Sokita" Nolden, Jr. was born March 29, 1939 in Valley Park, Mississippi, to Willie Nolen and Edna Skinner. Sokita moved to Flint at the age of ten months. He spent his entire life in Flint with the exception of four years in the United State Air Force and two years at Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. Sokita retired from General Motors in 1999 after 26 ½ years of service as a Human Resource Development Coordinator. Every once in awhile the Creator sends us one of those individuals whose purpose it seems is to serve as a shining example to the rest of us. These individuals usually possess certain traits or attributes in much larger quantities than the average guy. Willie "Sokita" Nolden was one of those individuals. The trait he personified was sheer guts, his primary attribute was unbridled intestinal fortitude. Frederick Douglas once said, "nothing happens without a demand." Whether Sokita was a Frederick Douglas scholar or not is anybody's guess. What is certain is that he espoused that philosophy throughout his adult life.

Sokita became a warrior for his people at a very early age. He was outspoken in an era when most of us were afraid to speak out about the conditions and the behaviors that relegated African Americans to second class citizenship. Whenever “Soak” got an opportunity to express his outrage, his indignation, he seized the time. Such was the case when he helped to quell the riots in Flint in 1967 by negotiating the release of over 100 young Black Men who had been arrested as a result of the racial turmoil. Sokita and his fellow Brougham members took to the streets to quiet the storm, inevitably preventing a catastrophe, like that in Detroit, from occurring in Flint. Such was the case when he participated in the Poor People’s Campaign in 1968 and the subsequent Poor People’s march in Washington, D.C. Sokita and eight other Brougham Club members were the only representatives from Flint at the march. The group participated in Resurrection City while in D.C., a makeshift city of shanties symbolizing the plight of poor people in America, by erecting their own shanty. While in the nation’s capital, Sokita spoke with National Urban Coalition officials about the possibility of establishing a branch in Flint. The Urban Coalition of Greater Flint was established in 1968. He was also instrumental in establishing the Heart in the City program, another program established to help inner city youth. Sokita also served as an elected representative to the Model Cities Citizen’s Joint Council. When he wasn’t demanding or advocating, he was inspiring. He continued to encourage and inspire as long as he could breathe. His legacy, however, will live on. Willie “Sokita” Nolden was immortalized in the book “Telling Our Stories: Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement in Flint” published by the Flint Colorline Project, March 2007. Mr. Willie “Sokita” Nolden, Jr. leaves to cherish his memory: wife of 46 years, Judith “Chick” Nolden; 3 sons, Anthony Cobbin, Bryant and Corey Nolden; 5 grandchildren, Anthony (Anitra) Torns, Darnell and Terrell Jones, Tiona Southall and Toni Cobbin; step-granddaughter, Nikkia Thomas; 10 great-grandchildren including special great-grandson, Armonti Bellamy; sister, Earlene DeShazor; 2 aunts, Roxanne Sims and Mary Gray; 2 nephews, Eugene Pharms and Vanthony (Gloria) McMullan; 4 nieces, Darlene

DeShazor, Roxanne Pringle, Shirletta Murray and special niece, Lanita (Melvin) Murray-Marion; numerous great nephews and nieces; 2 sisters-in-law, Lucille McMullan and Shirley Murray; many relatives and friends including the Skinner, Joyce, Jones, Taylor, Cobbin, Pippen families and the Liberty Christian Outreach Ministry (LCOM) of which he was a member for the last seven years, friends, Al Adams, Robert Partee, Elton Denson, Lewis Ford, Mertis Washington, Bill Weiss, Sam Hareskins, Big O, and others too numerous to mention. Mr. Nolden was preceded in death by his parents; several aunts; 3 nephews; 2 brothers-in-law; and good friend, Arnold Smiley. The family would like to express special thanks to Charles Winfrey for all he did, LCOM, and to Dr. Minasian and Dr. Rode for their untiring efforts and the staff of nurses at Hurley Medical Center CCU 4th floor.

Tribute Wall



“ *Willie Nolden*

October 09, 2023 at 07:02 AM

TT

“ *To: Tony and the Nolden Family*

It saddens me to hear of the loss of your love one. I know that there are no words that I can say to ease your heartache and pain, but know that you have my love, support and prayers. My prayers are with you and your family as you attempt to find peace and the strength to help you through these difficult times.

*You can shed tears that he is gone,
Or you can smile because he lived,
You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back,
Or you can open your eyes and see all that he has left.*

*Your heart can be empty because you can't see him,
Or you can be full of the love that you shared,
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.*

*You can remember him and only that he is gone,
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on,
You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back,
Or you can do what he would want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.*

Keep the memories of your love one close to your heart and they will forever remain there. Time doesn't always heal your wounds, but it will help make you stronger.

*Love,
Tanya*

Tanya R. Turner - December 20, 2008 at 12:00 AM

LR

“ *My Prayers and Sympathy are with you at this difficult time.*

Lorene Randall - December 20, 2008 at 12:00 AM

EC

“ Brother Willie Nolden (Sokeia) graced Liberty Christian Outreach Ministries and the Flint Community. For those of us who knew and loved him--he graced our lives.

We will miss you much!!!

*Elder Cowenda Garner &
Pastor Anthony & Rev. Mary Arasnmi
Bishop Billie & Shirley Bamberg
Liberty Christian Outreach Ministries*

Elder Cowenda S. Garner, MA LLPC CAAC - December 20, 2008 at 12:00 AM

JR

“ *I pray for you and your sons in this time of lost and sadness.
I know no words can ease you pain.*

Jerri Robinson-Gardner - December 20, 2008 at 12:00 AM

IT

“ *To the family and loved ones of ?Sokita? I know for certain that we never lose the people we love. They leave an imprint in our memories. Find comfort in knowing that we have been enriched by having Willie in our lives. We won't get over his loss but we will get through it. Willie Nolden gave us so much! We will never forget him. Those we love don't go away. They walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed and very dear.*

Irene McKay and Todd Thomas - December 20, 2008 at 12:00 AM