



David Leon "Sonny" Kennedy SR

April 20, 1940 - August 24, 2022

David Leon "Sonny" Kennedy Sr. Obituary

This is the story of David Leon 'Sonny' Kennedy Sr. Sonny was a wonderful man that was loved and will always be cherished.

At an early age, David was affectionately known to family and friends as "Sonny." He was born on April 20, 1940, in Chester S.C. to David Jenkins Kennedy and Janie Belle Myles. Sonny was raised alongside his siblings, brother Eric D. Kennedy and sister Mattie Reece in Durham, NC.

Sonny was educated in the Durham Public School System. He later graduated from high school and began his working career. Here is where Sonny developed his strong business mindset and work ethic. He was a representation of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. saying, "If you can't fly then run, if you cant run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward." This was Sonny and this was his teaching.

In the 1950s, Sonny moved to New Haven Connecticut, where he would later meet his wife, Susan Maye. The two met at a social gathering. Susan was with her sister Dolores Walker and Sonny was with his first cousin Robert Walker. This encounter spurred two love stories between sisters and first cousins. Sonny and Susan married and raised their two sons Rodney Maye and David

Leon Kennedy Jr. They were married for 51 years until his transition on August 24, 2022.

At birth, Sonny's name was placed on the membership roll of the United House of Prayer for All People, in Durham N.C. Sonny achieved high honors in the House of Prayer for his financial contributions from the honorable Bishop W. McCollough in the year of 1987. He played a vital role to the church. His duties required that he travel from town to town, city to city protecting the Bishop. This was a job that he loved and consistently demonstrated a deep commitment too. Sonny was proud and lived purposely.

Sonny worked at the Winchester Gun Maker Factory and the New Haven Country Club, where he later retired. Sonny was also one of the first Afro American Men, in New Haven to own a business on Dixwell Ave. "Kennedy's Market." This was the place that he would meet many wonderful people and friends. This was a meeting place for everyone who knew him. The market also referred to as the "sweet shop" was where Sonny was most social and engaging. His friends would stop by daily just to see him and tell him their big fish stories. He reveled in his role as a black owned business in a community where they were far and in between. Sonny took his role seriously and used this opportunity to also teach his children, nieces and nephews about the value of money and running a business. This included sitting them at the counter to man the register and greet customers even before they knew how to count. However, he never said anything when his overabundance of quarters would go missing.

For Sonny, "tough times never last, tough people do."When it came to family, Sonny strived to be a provider and a protector. His strong family values were rooted in his loyalty, support, selflessness and always thinking of the needs of others before his own. He would give you the shirt off his back or the last few dollars in his wallet if you needed it. He would also offer you a ride if it meant

taking a run (drive)as he would say. This is because going for a drive was his therapy. It brought him peace as he was one with the road and the wind.

Sonny truly lived his life the way he wanted. He was just himself right or wrong or indifferent. He was honest, fearless and dealt with whatever the consequence came his way. Sonny loved all people and people loved him. He wasn't a man of many words but when he spoke, we listened. This was especially so when we did not know when the next time, he would say something. But after "he said what he said," he smoked his cigarettes, grabbed his red cup of ice-cold Pepsi and walked away. This was Sonny and we respected him.

Sonny leaves to celebrate his life; Wife, Susan E. Kennedy; Children, Artwin Gunn of Durham, NC, Eric Kennedy (Carol) of New Haven, CT, Lilian Wilder of Durham, NC, Darryl Kennedy of Durham, NC, Rodney Maye of New Haven, CT, Tyler David Grier of Augusta, GA; Grandchildren, Rodney Maye Jr, Darryl Maye and Rodneisha Maye, Christy Gardner and Traquillia Kennedy of New Haven, CT; Great Grandchildren, Raymond Maye, Ryan Maye, Torres Rogers and Sinclear Walter of New Haven, CT; Special cousins T. Lee of New Haven, CT, Bob and Debbie Smith of New Haven, CT and a host of other relatives and friends that loved him dearly.

Sonny is preceded in death by his parents David and Janie Belle, sister Mattie Reece, sons Kevin Mack of Durham, NC and David Leon Kennedy Jr of New Haven, CT and daughter by heart, Sharon Walker Williams of Woodland Park, NJ.

"Those we love don't go away; they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near, so loved, so missed, so very dear." This will forever resonate when we think of Sonny and the role he played in all of our lives.

Previous Events

Calling Hours

SEP 2. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

The New Trinity Temple Church of God in Christ
285 Dixwell Ave
New Haven, CT

Funeral Service

SEP 2. 11:00 AM (ET)

The New Trinity Temple Church of God in Christ
285 Dixwell Ave
New Haven, CT

Tribute Wall



“ *David Leon "Sonny" Kennedy SR*

October 09, 2023 at 06:14 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of David Leon "Sonny" Kennedy SR.*



September 02, 2022 at 08:28 AM



“ *Prayers of Comfort and Sympathy for the Family & Friends! I'll always have great memories of Sonny! Beverly Y. A. White and Family!*

Beverly White - September 01, 2022 at 05:03 PM



“ *I was a member of New Haven Country Club for 30 years. Sonny was a class act and he was loved by anyone he interacted with. I did not know him well but it was obvious to me he had a huge heart and that there was a lot under his hood. I'm sorry for your loss.*
George Platt

George Platt - September 01, 2022 at 08:24 AM

VB

“ To Sue, Rodney and Family,

Our sincere condolences to you at this time. So sorry for your loss. Our families go back a long way. Sonny would always look out for his neighbors in the courts where we lived, and always gave a helping hand when ever one needed it. May God comfort you and strenghten you during this time and to give you Peace, that surpasses all understanding. God bless you!

Love,

*Verna and Alicia
Charlotte, NC*

Verna Bishop - August 31, 2022 at 11:41 AM

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“ To Kennedy Family: Sending my prayers and condolences 🌸 on your beloved love one. Remembering those days in high school catching bus 🚌 to Cross Sonny, in store with late St Pete, Sullyaka Red would get glazed donuts 🍩 and orange juice. Always had smile 😊 on his face looking out for us ,then got older started calling Sonny “Pepsi “ loved his soda now going home with his family and friends may his soul SIP and will truly be missed especially Blue and fellas at corner store 😊



Helen C Powell (Stop&shop)neighbor - August 30, 2022 at 04:06 PM

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To: Sue and family

Our sincere condolences and prayers. We know that his legacy and memories will live on in many hearts. May God comfort each of you in the days ahead with his love and peace.

Wilton (Bill) & Fannie Hardy - September 03, 2022 at 07:10 AM