



Jesse James Davis Jr.

January 4, 1940 - September 25, 2024

Jesse J. Davis Jr. of Bernalillo, NM was called home to the Lord on Wednesday, September 25, 2024. Jesse was born in Gadsden, South Carolina on January 4, 1940. He was the son of the late Jesse J. Davis Sr. and Sallie (Bel Moore) Davis.

He was raised in Portland, CT, graduated from Portland High School in 1958, and received his Bachelor's in Education & Art from Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio in 1962. He later obtained his Masters in Education from Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, CT and his 6th year degree

from The University of Bridgeport in Bridgeport, CT.

Jesse began his career in education as an art teacher in the New Britain Public School System. Later, he began teaching at The Connecticut School for Boys in Meriden, CT. He became a professor of Psychology and Philosophy at South Central Community College, now Gateway Community College, in New Haven, CT until his retirement in 2011.

Jesse J. Davis Jr. is survived by his son Jesse J. Davis III of Staten Island, NY, his daughter Terri Lynn Davis of Middletown, CT, his granddaughter Jessica Marie Williams of Brooklyn, NY, his former wife Marie Davis of Marlborough, CT and his partner Theresa Jeffries of Bernalillo, NM. He was preceded in death by his daughter Kim Marie Davis and Godson Dayton Hopkins.

Cemetery Details

Indian Hill Cemetery

383 Washington St.
Middletown , CT 06457

Previous Events

Calling Hours

OCT **14**. 10:00 AM (ET)

McClam Funeral Home North
125 Coe avenue
Middletown, CT 06457

Funeral Service

OCT **14**. 10:30 AM (ET)

McClam Funeral Home North
125 Coe avenue
Middletown, CT 06457

Tribute Wall

AR

“ I am still trying to process the fact that I just learned of the passing of my dear friend, mentor, and giant in my life, Jesse James Davis Jr., who left us on September 25, 2024.

I met Jesse in 2003 at a time when I was still learning how to survive and grow as a young Black man working in higher education. From the very beginning, he took me under his wing, not just as a colleague, but as a teacher in the truest sense of the word. Jesse did not just teach in classrooms. He taught in conversations, in stories, in quiet moments, and in honest truths that only someone who had walked the road could share.

He taught me the good, the bad, and the ugly about what it really means to be Black in higher education. He taught me how to navigate systems that were not built for us, how to protect my integrity, how to advocate for students who needed someone to see them, and how to keep my soul intact while doing work that can sometimes be heavy and thankless. He taught me that our work was not just a job, but a responsibility to those coming behind us.

Jesse's life was one of purpose and service. Born in Gadsden, South Carolina, raised in Portland, Connecticut, and educated at Central State University, Central Connecticut State University, and the University of Bridgeport, he dedicated his entire career to education. From teaching art in New Britain, to working at the Connecticut School for Boys, to serving for decades as a professor of Psychology and Philosophy at South Central Community College, now Gateway Community College, he changed lives until his retirement in 2011. And even then, he never stopped being a teacher.

What I will always cherish most is his honesty. He never sugarcoated the struggle. He never pretended the road was easy. But he always reminded me why the work mattered. He believed deeply in Black students. He believed deeply in our responsibility to guide, protect, and prepare them for a world that would not always

be kind.

I am heartbroken that I did not know sooner, but I am forever grateful that I knew him at all.

My deepest condolences go to his family, especially to his partner Theresa Jeffries, who I know loved him deeply and walked with him in life, and to his children Jesse J. Davis III and Terri Lynn Davis, his granddaughter Jessica Marie Williams, and all who loved him. I also honor the memory of his daughter Kim Marie Davis and his godson Dayton Hopkins who went before him.

Jesse James Davis Jr. was more than an educator. He was a builder of people. He was a guardian of truth. He was a mentor to me and to so many others.

Rest well, my teacher. Your lessons live on in me and in every student whose life you touched. And I promise you, the work continues.

Alfy Roby

Alfy L Roby - January 06 at 10:49 AM

CV

“*My deepest condolences to Mr. Davis' family and loved ones. I worked for Mr. Davis and Dr. Jefferies in the Human Services Department at Gateway Community College. He had incredible pieces of art in his office that he made himself. Mr. Davis had a heart of gold and on occasion would help students pay their tuition. His love for his granddaughter was enormous, he spoke of her daily. I will forever cherish my memories of Mr. Davis and of his beautiful smile. May you rest in paradise.*”

Carisa Del Vasto - August 06, 2025 at 11:43 PM

RJ

“ Goodbye Professor GCC Colleague: my dearest friend, philosopher, artist, scholar, and defender of the value of Integrity. You were among my highest of guests to contribute to the Creative Voice adventure: RIP — RJG

RJG - April 09, 2025 at 07:03 AM

DE

“ I worked with Jesse for many years at Gateway. He was a good friend as well as a fellow faculty member. Lots of good memories.

Donald N. Mei , Professor Emeritus - October 16, 2024 at 05:28 PM

DG

“ I worked as a student in the Student and Activities Department with Mr. Davis during my years at South Central Community College back in 1981-1983. He was a father figure to me, a mentor to many. I found my voice at SCCC thanks to Mr. Davis I joined the student government and became an outspoken person for social change. I will miss him and my thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Dr. Jacqueline Grant - October 13, 2024 at 09:57 AM

MB

“ Jesse Davis was a very popular professor at Gateway Community College. He was well respected by his students and his peers. Margaret Bauer, Dean Emerita.

Margaret Bauer - October 12, 2024 at 12:57 PM

LT

“ *Mr Davis was my instructor for Introduction to Psychology back in 2001. I remember his classes filling up quickly because he was so popular!! I enjoyed being his student. RIP Mr Davis and my sincerest condolences to the family.*



L Tedder - October 11, 2024 at 07:13 PM

DP

“ *I was President at Gateway Community College where Jessie was a professor. He was a beloved teacher at Gateway. He was Advisor to students and a dedicated and committed member of the faculty. He was an extraordinary artist. A picture drawn by him hangs in my home today. He will be missed. My prayers and thoughts go out to his family and his partner Theresa. He was a great and caring person loved and respected by so many.*

Dorsey Kendrick PhD - October 11, 2024 at 02:14 PM

CT

“ *He helped me get to college and graduate. He was my mentor and supported me in my run for Governor of Connecticut. I will always cherish my relationship with him.*



Clifford Thornton - October 11, 2024 at 12:45 PM