

A portrait of Bruce Lee Burford, a middle-aged man with short dark hair, wearing a white collared shirt and a grey patterned blazer. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a gentle expression. The background is a dramatic sunset over a beach, with waves crashing onto the shore and a sky filled with orange, yellow, and grey clouds.

*In Loving Memory of*

*Bruce Lee Burford*

*Sunrise*  
December 4, 1940

*Sunset*  
March 10, 2012

Service  
Friday, March 16, 2012 - 7:00 p.m.

**ST. PAUL'S METHODIST CHURCH**

1400 Bronx River Avenue • Bronx, NY 10472

## *Obituary*

**Bruce Lee Burford** was born on December 4, 1940 in Joliet, IL. He was the eldest boy of six children born to the late “Sonny” (John) and Flora Lee Burford. While attending Joliet Township High School, he met his soon to be wife, Laura Smith. The two were married on August 26, 1959 and later moved to Brooklyn, New York. In 1969, after several years of renting apartments, the couple bought a house on Boynton Ave in the Bronx, NY where they resided to this day, raising their four sons.

Chosen from amongst thousands of applicants, Bruce was accepted by the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY, in 1959, becoming the first African-American cadet to win entrance to the exclusive institution. He also attended Brooklyn College, earning a BS. Trained as a chemical engineer, he found work at Argus Chemical Corp in Brooklyn. Bruce spent 12 years with Argus during which time he developed a formulation that was awarded an United States Patent in June of 1968.

Following Argus, Bruce continued his career at Lowe Paper Company in NJ. It was here that he became friends with Charles Samon, who would later become his business partner in Aquatec Water Treatment, a company the two started in 1986.

Bruce loved his family and always set aside time for them. First-time visitors from out of town were often treated to the legendary “Fifty Cent Tour” - a 3-hour car ride around the city. With wife Laura riding shotgun, he loved to load up the car, on a hot summer day, with the kids, and sometimes even the family dogs, and drive the 800 miles west on I-80 to Joliet. Bruce was also a driving force in the family’s biennial reunion, a tradition now for over 20 years. The reunion became an important event for the extended family and Bruce worked diligently to ensure its ongoing success. Big Bruce, or Poppie as he was lovingly called by his granddaughters, could often be found with a camera in his hand. The photos he took over the years captured many priceless moments in the family’s history.

In addition to his work at the water treatment company, Bruce also operated a second business, Gallery Mazvita, a dealer of high-quality African art. In 2011, after Bruce and his partners retired and sold Aquatec he began to devote his free time to his art business. He brought on board granddaughters Shanon, Talea, and cousin Raquel, who were all excited to be part of the company.

Left to cherish his legacy is: his wife of fifty-two years, Laura D Burford; sons; Bruce (Melissa), Brian (Deborah), Barry, and Bradley (Flavia); sister, Barbara (Carol) Moore; brothers, William (Shirley), Gerald (Lisa), and Robert; his five granddaughters, Shanon, Talea, Briana, Naomi, Sydney, and a great-grandson, Blake. Counted amongst his grandchildren were Raquel Marion and Marc Hernandez, whom Bruce had often taken along during those many memorable summer vacations. A pillar of the family, Bruce will be remembered by his many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. Bruce is preceded in death by his brother, Micheal.

# *Order of Service*

Processional ..... Ministers

Hymn ..... “How Great Thou Art” 77

Invocation ..... Rev. Dr. Irvin George

Hymn ..... “It Is Well With My Soul” 377

Prayer ..... Eld. Leslie George

Selection ..... by Choir

## Scripture Readings

1st - Old Testament - Psalm 121

2nd - First Corinthians 15:34-45

Hymn ..... “Amazing Grace”

Reflection ..... Tributes of Family and Friends

Hymn ..... “Let The Work I Have Done Speak For Me”

Obituary ..... Shanon Marion

Solo ..... Brother Harris

Sermon ..... Rev. Dr. Irvin George

Final Viewing

Benediction

Recessional ..... “When We All Get To Heaven”

## **Interment**

Elmhurst Cemetery

Joliet, Illinois

# I'm Free

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free  
I'm following the path God laid for me  
I took his hand when I heard Him call  
I turned my back and left it all.  
I could not stay another day.  
To laugh, to love, to work or play.  
Tasks left undone must stay that way,  
I found that peace at the close of day.  
If my parting has left a void,  
Then fill it up with remembered joy.  
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,  
Oh, yes these things I too will miss.  
Be not burdened with times of sorrow,  
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.  
My life's been full, I savored much.  
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.  
Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,  
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.  
Lift up your heart and share with me,  
God wanted me now, He set me free!

-author unknown

## Acknowledgement

On Behalf of the family of **Bruce L. Burford**, we would like to acknowledge with deep appreciation the abundance of love, prayer, and support given to us during our time of bereavement.

### *Special Thanks to*

*St. Paul's Progressive Methodist Church  
1400 Bronx River Avenue, Bronx, NY 10472  
Unity Funeral Chapels, Inc.  
2322 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10027*

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