

*Celebrating the
Journey
of a
Lifetime*

Yusuf Jamal Lee

**Sunrise
February 22, 1944**

**Sunset
August 6, 2015**

Memorial Service

Saturday, August 22, 2015 - 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

UNITY FUNERAL CHAPELS, INC.

2352 8th Avenue • New York, NY 10027

Obituary

YUSUF JAMAL LEE, was born February 22, 1944 in the village of Harlem, New York, to his loving parents, Angelena Bennette (lovingly known as Big Mama) and Joseph Lee, Sr., (lovingly known as Big Daddy.) He was the fourth of eight children. After attending Catholic school in Harlem, Yusuf went on to attend Aviation High School. Yusuf was a good student, curious and always seeking more knowledge. Upon graduation, Yusuf decided to enter the military and joined the United States Air Force in 1961. After completing three years and traveling the world, including a deployment to Korea, Yusuf returned home to Harlem and married his childhood sweetheart, Aisha Lee. Yusuf and Aisha had two beautiful sons, Van Allen, (name after Yusuf's brother, Uncle Porgie) and known to all of us as Umar Lee and Joseph Lee, III, known to all of us as Sulaiman. Years later, Yusuf would have a third son, Yusuf Jamal Lee II, born to him and Sheila Scott.

Always an advocate for social, political and judicial reform, Yusuf became an activist and a voice for those less fortunate and the disenfranchised. He was a devout follower of Malcolm X and he was an avid reader who studied the cultures, techniques, and customs of those who were leaders and world change-makers. Along with his best friend, Sulaiman (whose name he gave to his middle son), Yusuf ran an active and successful non-profit, helping those who needed housing, health care and other means of support.

In 1994, Yusuf transitioned to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and went to work for the VA Medical Center in Northport, New York. Here, Yusuf would successfully rise from clerk to supervisor to an administrative manager. He was a hard worker, attentive to detail and determined to make a difference. He was active in Blacks in Government and led the VA chapter of this organization. Yusuf went back to school at Stoneybrook College, completed his Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and completed all, except one quarter, of work toward his Master's Degree. He was a part of the VA's Bridges Leadership Program where he gained many certificates and took numerous classes that improved both his skillset and his performance at the VA.

Yusuf was a giving and caring person who loved his family dearly. He took care of his mother when she had a stroke; he was a caretaker for his older sister, Bernice, and he looked out for his younger sister, Yasmin whom he dearly loved. After the passing of his two sisters, Yusuf became somewhat reclusive, a bit sad and lonely. Divorced for more than twenty years, he was ready to find a life partner, and his younger son, Yusuf, suggested Match.com.

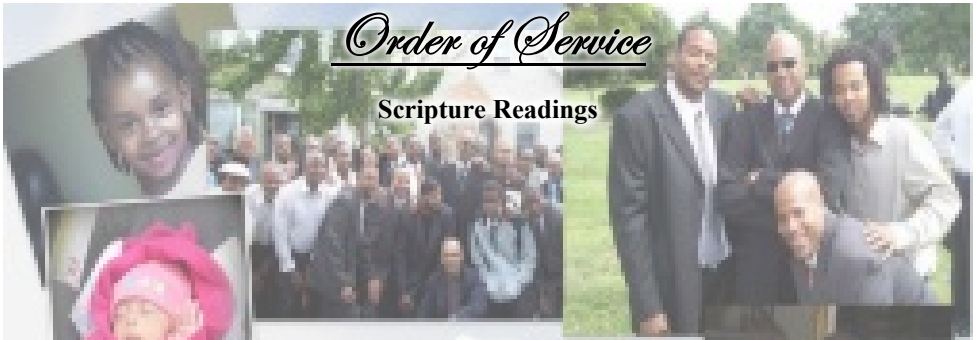
As a result of Match.com in May of 2010 in California, Yusuf met Darcel. The two dated long-distance, for one full year and then married in New York, on Long Island, on May 29, 2011. After the wedding, Yusuf moved to California, to a beautiful new home on the water, to the San Francisco VA Medical Center, and to a promotion and a set of new and loving friends and colleagues. Here, Yusuf's life blossomed as he and Darcel enjoyed traveling and attending special events, including meeting Mrs. Michelle Obama at the White House on his 70th birthday. Yusuf was an amazing writer and published a book of poetry called, "Cracks in the Rainbow." He thoroughly enjoyed chess, reading, was an incredible dancer, and he loved listening to music, especially traditional jazz. He always said, "The world is my neighborhood..." and so he embraced a variety of cultures, spiritual journeys, and ethnicities.

In April of 2015, Yusuf was diagnosed with cancer. His wife and children rallied to his side, but, after a brave, hard struggle, Yusuf passed away on August 6, 2015 at 8:50 p.m. Yusuf leaves a host of family and friends including his older brother, Ernest Lee; sisters, Olivia, Violet, Tina, and Hope; and a younger brother, Ibrahim (Derek) Lee. He also leaves three sons, Umar, Sulaiman and "Young Yusuf; three step-children, Towana, Phya, and Mann; eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren, a sister-in-law, Valerie and his in-laws, Mr. & Mrs. William Harris. Lastly, he leaves a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, a 100-year-old aunt, and many beloved friends and colleagues. Yusuf was well-liked and respected by all who came in contact with him. He was a caring, loving, intelligent, and compassionate individual.

Yusuf may be gone from this place, but certainly not from our hearts. We will all miss him dearly. Job well done Yusuf! God Bless You!

Order of Service

Scripture Readings



Poem



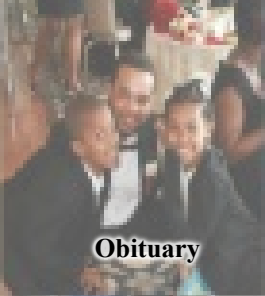
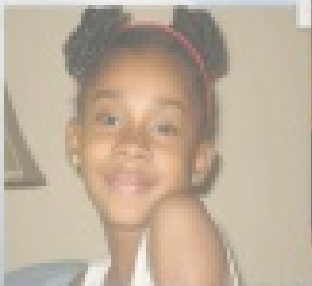
Selection



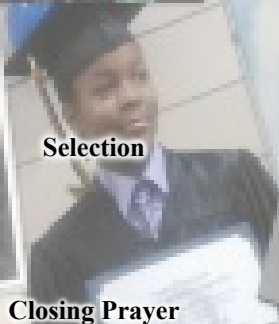
Acknowledgements/Remarks (Two minutes please)



Obituary



Selection



Closing Prayer

Resurrection

By Yusuf Jamal Lee

From the Collection: *Cracks in the Rainbow*

Beneath a masquerade of coolness,
Submerged by ego's lie to itself, there is
A yearning so intense, a thirst never once quenched,
A need as real and sacred as life itself to discover the strength
And beauty of who I was before the fall.
With the heart of a child I shiver and shake with excitement
and hopeful

Expectation. Lacking complete faith, I attempt
To bolster this sometimes timid heart against the unknown.
Wanting to love life and all that it contains, and yet fearing
The nakedness of truth. I sometimes feed and clothe my spirit
With useless garments and artificial desires. Blocking out the warmth
Of the sun, the moonlight of love, and distorting your perception
Of who I really am. Even making me forget...sometimes.

Who am I, really?
Long before I learned that drugs could temporarily ease my pain,
Long before I relied on other forms of addiction to shelter me
From the challenges of real life, long before I submerged feelings
Of loneliness and uncertainty beneath a disgusting mountain
Of self-destructive behavior; and long before my emaciated body
and broken spirit dove into the heart-wrenching abyss of self-imposed exile...
I knew who I was,

And now, through the grace of God, I see a spark.
Deep within the innermost sanctuary of my heart I hear a voice,
A whisper that causes my soul to stir and projects an image
On the screen of my mind's eye of a once-sleeping giant,
Emerging from a tomb of self-doubt, hungry for new life
And grateful to see the sun once more.

Acknowledgement

*The family acknowledges with deep appreciation all acts of
kindness extended to them during this bereavement hour.
May God bless you for all your thoughtfulness and concern.*

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