



*In Loving  
Memory of*

*Michael Anthony Gray, Sr.*  
May 12, 1959 - May 5, 2022

Thursday, May 19, 2022 - 5pm

**UNITY FUNERAL CHAPELS, INC.**  
2352 8th Avenue • New York, NY 10027

# Obituary

**Michael Anthony Gray, Sr.** was born on May 12, 1959, to Msg. Sergeant Lee A. Gray and our Late Great Gracie Louise Gray, in Harlem, New York. Michael Sr. was one of their seven children. He retired from New York City MTA with over 15 years of work.

When meeting Michael Sr., he would introduce himself, as “Mike G.” He was also known as one of the Coolest Dudes you ever met in Harlem.

Growing up, Michael was athletic and a sports enthusiast. He loved playing and talking sports—baseball, basketball and football were his favorites. From grade school he played basketball and baseball well and was part of his school’s basketball teams, and baseball in the Minor Leagues. Michael also had a love and joy for music; and his infamous two-step dance, “The Hustle”. He loved a variety of music. He loved and enjoyed having a great time with his family and friends; as he listened to some good music and wouldn’t hesitate to sing to you a ballad.

On May 22, 1981, Michael Anthony Gray, Sr. married Vertis Regina Gray. They met in Harlem and went on to have three children, Michael Anthony Gray, Jr., Sharell Regina Gray-Cortez, and Adanna Simone Gray. He would later relocated his family to Jamaica Queens.

He became a grandfather to his two beloved grandchildren, Zaniya Larice Gray (who was born on his mother’s birthday) and Maverick Gray Cortez (who was born the day after his birthday).

Michael Sr. leaves behind: his loving family; his son-in-law, Mauricio Cortez, Sr. (son, Mauricio Jr.); his brothers and sisters; (his late sister, Cynthia “Che-Che” Gray); his brother and best friend, Ronald “Ronnie” Craig, his adored baby sister, Donna D. Gray, and his baby brother, Byron Gray; his stepsister, Rosita D. Jackson; stepbrother, Ezell Jackson, Jr.; his nieces and nephews, Shalonda Jackson, Anthony “Foogie” Jackson, Landon Washington, and his baby niece, Diona Phoenix; his aunts and uncles, (the late Blannon Craig), Carrie “Babysis” Craig, and Marolyn “Suga” Craig; his beloved aunts, Mickey Brown, Brenda Hudson and Brenda Bailey-Craig; his great aunt and family matriarch, Addie Johnson.

Mike G. over the years made lifelong friendships. He had a loving companionship with Ms. Laura Miller. He developed a family bond with her sons, Ivan Miller, Rodney Miller, Vernon Miller and Hasan Miller; with grandchildren and a godson who referred to him as “Pop Pop”, Keyasia Miller, Kye Miller, Adelina Miller and Devin Odum.

**Michael Anthony Gray, Sr. will be immensely missed. We will miss him!**

# Order of Service

**Chairman/Obituary Reading**  
Chris Kilpatrick

#140 - "Life Without End—At Last!"  
(John 3:16)

**Memorial/Funeral Discourse**  
Darrell Kilpatrick, Jr.

1. Can you see with your mind's eye,  
Peoples dwelling together?  
Sorrow has passed. Peace at last!  
Life without tears or pain.  
(CHORUS)

**Song**  
#140 - "Life Without End-At Last!"

Sing out with joy of heart!  
You too can have a part.

**Closing Prayer**  
Darrell Kilpatrick, Jr.

Live for the day when you'll say,  
"Life without end, at last!"

**Extended Obituary**  
Adanna Gray

2. In those days all will be young,  
All at peace with Jehovah.  
Troubles are gone, from now on,  
No need to weep or fear.  
(CHORUS)

**Poem**  
"When Great Trees Fall" (Maya Angelou)  
Zaniya Gray

3. Paradise all will enjoy  
As we sing of God's glory.

**Remarks**  
Michael Gray

Long as we live,  
we will give Honor and praise to God.  
(CHORUS)

**Final Remarks and Acknowledgements**  
Sharell Gray

(See also Job 33:25; Ps. 72:7; Rev. 21:4.)

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## Extended Obituary

Michael Sr. had a way with words to make a person feel good and special because of his charismatic personality. His mother and aunts taught him to always be respectful and to be a gentlemen. You would hear him say "Hey Beautiful", just to brighten up your day! He would then leave you laughing or smiling with a good memory of his kind words. Michael was a loving and adoring father to his children and grandchildren, who he showed off so proudly to the world.

Mike G. was well known for his Swagger, Graciousness, Smooth Walk, Appeal and Suave Personality. One of the Flyest Dudes in Harlem. You could tell when he graced the room by his alluring scent, confident stride, and complimentary greetings. He was also respected by his younger generation; they would call him the "OG".

Knowing Mike G., you would know his baseball and basketball skills; you would know his deep love for music and in his younger years he would shake up the dance floor with his infamous two-step dance called 'The Hustle'. He loved a variety of music. He could go from the Dells, Delfonics, Luther Vandross to Prince. Then from Anita Baker to Regina Belle and Tina Marie, just to name a few. He loved and enjoyed having a great time with his family and friends; and wouldn't hesitate to sing to you a Luther Vandross ballad, as if he was Howard Hewett. Mike G. always start off his ballad with "Check Mike 1, 2"; Check Mike 1, 2".

All Mike G. needed was a Good Fish Fry, a Cranberry and Vodka drink on the rocks, and some Good Ole School Music. If you gave Mike and his brother Ronnie a microphone to sang, you knew it would be the life of the party. You knew the night would not end early and knew you were going to have a good time.

# *When Great Trees Fall*

Maya Angelou

When great trees fall, rocks on distant hills shudder,  
lions hunker down in tall grasses, and even elephants lumber after safety.  
When great trees fall in forests, small things recoil into silence,  
their senses eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die, the air around us becomes light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe, briefly. Our eyes, briefly, see with a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory, suddenly sharpened, examines, gnaws on kind words  
unsaid, promised walks never taken.

Great souls die and our reality, bound to them, takes leave of us.  
Our souls, dependent upon their nurture, now shrink, wizened.  
Our minds, formed and informed by their radiance, fall away.  
We are not so much maddened as reduced to the unutterable  
ignorance of dark, cold caves.

And when great souls die, after a period peace blooms, slowly and always  
irregularly. Spaces fill with a kind of soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed. They existed. We can be. Be and be better. For they existed

## *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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