



MEMORIAL SERVICE
FOR

Dr. Jonathan Smith

DECEMBER 17, 1959

JUNE 19, 2021

JUNE 30, 2021
10:00 A.M.

CHAIFETZ ARENA
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

DR. FRED P. PESTELLO
PRESIDENT
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

REV. DR. HERMAN E. TOLES
PASTOR
BLESSED HOPE M.B.C.

DAVID SUWALSKY, S.J.
VICE PRESIDENT FOR
MISSION AND IDENTITY
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

ORDER OF SERVICE



Prelude	
Musical Selection: <i>Amazing Grace</i> (Instrumental)	Shedrick Mitchell
Praise & Worship	Smith Family Singers <i>(Heather, Austin, Amber, Avery, and Amaris Smith)</i>
Family Processional	Rev. Dr. Herman E. Toles
Old Testament	Rev. Jennifer Strayhorn
New Testament	Rev. Jerrold Smith
Welcome	David Suwalsky, S.J.
Prayer	Rev. Sharon Dennis
Presidential Remarks	Dr. Fred P. Pestello
Reading: “Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman	Dr. Diana Hill Mitchell
Solo: <i>How Great Thou Art</i>	Heather Smith
<i>You are encouraged to read Dr. Jonathan Smith’s obituary (found on page 5) during this time.</i>	
Faculty Remarks	Dr. Bukky Gbadegesin
Activist Remarks	Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson
Student Remarks	Justice Hill ’22
Staff Remarks	Dr. Richard Marks
Musical Selection: <i>Every Praise</i>	Smith Family Singers
Acknowledgments	Rev. Dr. Herman E. Toles
Tribute Introduction and Video	David Johnson
Sibling Remarks	Rosalyn Bradshaw-Robinson Rev. Jeffery L. Smith
Daughter Remarks	Lauren Ashley Smith
Eulogy	Jacques Smith
Musical Selection: <i>I Shall Wear A Crown</i>	Smith Family Singers
Benediction	Rev. Dr. Herman E. Toles
Recessional Song: <i>Oh How I Love Jesus</i>	Smith Family Singers

Please join the family for light refreshments on the north lawn.

To My Son

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you [who are willing to learn] with My eye upon you.”*

— *Psalms 32:8 (AMP)*

He would call and say “Hi Mom, it’s your oldest son” being that he was my second oldest child, but oldest of my sons. He would tell me about his day. He would reflect on what his Dad and I taught him. We would chat and laugh together. For every one of those moments I’m grateful.

I also had the privilege of being his 5th grade teacher. He could come up with the answers quickly. He once told me he wished that he had a button on the side of his desk that would display the answers even quicker. He loved to learn and never lost the thirst for learning.

He loved to learn about God and the world he created. It led him to teach what he learned and practice what he taught.

Until that Glorious Day...

Love YOU Forever,

— *Mom*

To Our Brother

*“Most of us, no matter what we say, are walking in the dark, whistling in the dark.
Nobody knows what is going to happen to him from one moment to the next or how one will bear it.”*

— *James Baldwin*

As we gather together today to celebrate the life of our brother, Jonathan Cedric, we embody the sentiments of James Baldwin. We could not have imagined a few short weeks ago that this day would be a reality. We are once again reminded of the brevity of life and the preciousness of every moment. As we reflect on the millions of moments we have shared with our brother, we are grateful and honored that God allowed each and every one of them. We are all better due to Cedric’s exceptional attributes among which are his intellectual curiosity, faith, humor, and compassion. Each of us has a tale or two or twenty of the way he enriched our lives with his searing insight on a random subject. We will miss his presence here, but as Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, we don’t sorrow as those who have no hope. Our hope is to meet him again on God’s celestial shore.

To Rochelle, Lauren, Brooke, Rachel, Shannon and Mariah, we love you. We are here for you and are praying for you.

Rest well, big bro, until we meet again.

— *Jennifer and Euclid, Jeff and Heather, Jerrold and Crystal, Jacques and Carly*



To My Son-in-Law

To my second son. My husband loved you, y'all had good long talks. You've been a wonderful support all these years to the Bradshaw & Shanks family and the best husband and father to Rochelle and your girls. There's so much I could say. Thanks for taking my hand, being a good listener and for everything.

I love you.

— Pearl Bradshaw

To Our Brother-in-Law

Our dear Jonathan: patient, kind, oh so talented, loving and devoted family man.

God blessed you and Rochelle to get married, and added to the Bradshaw family the greatest gift — another truly remarkable brother, uncle, son. Feels like we've been family forever, and it's hard to remember which side of our blended family is which.

Brother J, we will miss the calm and cheerful presence you bring to every family gathering; playing piano and taking pictures at reunions, leading spirited conversions, cooking breakfast at Christmas and Thanksgiving dinner, reading your original brilliant poems at family services, giving your shoulder for support, being musician and groomsman at our weddings, counseling the kids, joking and telling stories at each graduation, adding to the family nicknames, and hosting us at yours and Rochelle's home for surprise parties, Sunday dinners after church, baby showers, summer pool parties or car parades.

You were always, always there every time, and you extended your love, wisdom, your humor, and kindness to our extended family and friends. Anyone who had the opportunity to meet you and be in your presence even briefly knew that they had encountered an angelic genius. We will keep all the love, inspiring stories, funny jokes and beautiful memories you gave us. We thank you God and thank you, Rochelle and girls, for loaning him to us.

We love you, Jonathan.

— Roz, Raymond, Deidre (Russell Bradshaw)



Jonathan Cedric Smith was born December 17, 1959 in Montgomery, Alabama to JC Smith and Willie Mae Smith, the second of their five children. Christ was at the center of the Smith household and Jonathan's loving parents, who were raised by sharecroppers and active in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, instilled a commitment to activism and perpetual learning in all of their children.

In 1964, the family migrated north to Harvey, Illinois. Shortly after, a then 6-year-old Jonathan accepted Christ and was baptized by Rev. Napoleon Davis at Second Baptist Church. In Harvey, Jonathan started piano lessons at age 8; the beginning of a lifelong joy of playing the keys. In 1969, his father, Rev. JC Smith, founded Bethlehem Temple Missionary Baptist Church, where Jonathan was one of five charter members. At "BT," he played the organ and taught Sunday School from a young age. Jonathan attended Thornton Township High School, where he nurtured his passions and curiosity through Speech & Debate, Theater, Student Council and a life-changing trip to Germany.

For college, Jonathan set his sights on Princeton University and despite telling his mother that he had applied to multiple schools, he stepped out on faith and only applied to his top choice. He prayed and agonized until he received his acceptance letter. Only then did he confess to his mom what he had actually done, earning her affectionate nickname for him: "my faith child." At Princeton, Jonathan proudly participated in the 1978 Nassau Hall 24-hour sit-in, demanding the institution divest from companies operating in apartheid South Africa. He graduated from the university with a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1981.



Jonathan C. Smith
December 17, 1959 – June 19, 2021

In February of 1982 in Harvey, Illinois, Jonathan reconnected with his high school acquaintance, Rochelle Bradshaw, who became the love of his life. They were married by Jonathan's father at Bethlehem Temple on May 26th, 1984. After the birth of their first daughter, Lauren, Jonathan received a message from God to move to Ithaca, New York. Despite not knowing why, when Jonathan heard God say, "just pick up and go," he and Rochelle went. Once there, they quickly realized why: As Jonathan served as the Minister of Music at Calvary Baptist Church and worked in the Career Center

at Cornell University, they made lifelong friends and welcomed their second daughter, Rachel.

In 1990, Jonathan and Rochelle moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where their third daughter, Mariah, was born. Jonathan chose to continue his academic pursuits at Washington University in St. Louis, where he earned a Master of Fine Arts in Writing and later his doctoral degree in English & American Literature. He earned two advanced degrees and became the recipient of the university's prestigious Chancellor's Fellowship for African American Students, all while juggling school drop-offs, being an attentive husband, and giving the girls' their preferred hairstyles of the day. In coming to WashU, Jonathan formed a deep and multifaceted legacy in the city of St. Louis.

Chief among that was practicing his faith as a charter member of Blessed Hope Missionary Baptist Church where Rev. Dr. Herman E. Toles is Pastor. Under Rev. Toles, Jonathan served as the Minister of Music and a Sunday School teacher for 31 years. From hosting choir rehearsals in his living room — usually with a dog napping under his chair — to most recently facilitating worship via Zoom, he never wavered in his service to the church.

In every age and stage of his life, Jonathan expressed himself through writing. A prolific poet, he was an alumnus of Cave Canem and was published in *Callaloo*, *Quarterly West*, *Obsidian II: Black Literature in Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Minnesota Review* and the *Riverfront Times*. He was a respected Speech & Debate coach at Thornton, Lindbergh and Clayton High Schools, where he awakened the creative spirits of countless students. He parlayed his passions for the arts, history and teaching to become a faculty member in African American Studies programs at both Washington University and ultimately Saint Louis University, where he was a devoted force for good since 2001.

In his work as Saint Louis University's first-ever chief diversity officer and, later, Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement, Jonathan was known for his keen ability to change the tempo of a conversation while still elevating important and difficult issues. He used Nina Simone songs in the boardroom to engage colleagues. He was a prolific DEI thought leader who created enlightenment over shared humanity. Jonathan's calling was to teach. In 2014, Jonathan was the recipient of SLU's Ernest A. Calloway Teaching Award and one of his proudest achievements was directing Robert Hawkins' dissertation which won the Gabriel Prize in American Studies in 2011. And more than anything else, he was quick to tell those with whom he worked about his daughters' many accomplishments and the overwhelming joy of sharing a life with his beloved wife, Rochelle.

As a father, Jonathan exposed his daughters to diverse perspectives with purpose. He encouraged them to "be good, do well, study hard and pray much." He was their loudest cheerleader and biggest fan. His love for his family was unending and unconditional. Together for a total of 40 years, he and Rochelle were an example of a marriage filled with prayer, love and mutual respect. He and his "Chelle" were avid brunchers who loved mentoring others and hosting events in their home, at which their door was (and is) always open.

Jonathan, also known as Cedric, Ced, Jono, Uncle, Classic Jon, Black Google, Faj, Doc, DSmith, Dr. J, Black Dad, Dad and Jonathan Honey lived by a mission to help people while he could with what he had. He established a legacy of creativity, compassion, service and activism. His love language was music, from Scott Joplin to Chance the Rapper, and he could play any song by ear. He gave bone-crushing hugs and gentle hand squeezes. He had enviable penmanship that looked like art. He had an incredible sense of humor and loved making people laugh. He was a dynamic speaker, a passionate leader, a talented artist, a technology wiz, a lefty, a voracious reader, a limitless mind, a fount of knowledge, a people person and a dedicated father who changed people's lives. There was no one like him.

Dr. Jonathan C. Smith, lifelong teacher, faithful servant, loving dad and cherished husband died the evening of June 19th, 2021, in Meriden, Connecticut, wrapped in the prayer and love of his family. While it felt too soon for our earthly understanding, much like when God called him to Ithaca, Jonathan heard God call him home and he obediently went. He was, after all, his mom's faith child.

Jonathan is preceded in death by his father, Rev. Dr. JC Smith, and his dog, Lucky. Proud to carry on his legacy of love and service, Jonathan leaves behind Rochelle (Bradshaw) Smith, his loving wife of 37 years. His mother, Willie Mae (Myricks) Smith and four siblings: Jennifer (Euclid) Strayhorn of St. Louis, Missouri; Jeffery (Heather) Smith of Flossmoor, Illinois; Jerrold (Crystal) Smith of Orlando, Florida; and Jacques (Carly) Smith of Los Angeles, California. A proud father of daughters, Jonathan's spirit will be remembered and celebrated by Lauren (Brooke) Smith of Los Angeles, California; Rachel (Shannon) Smith-McCourt of Freeport, New York; Mariah Smith of Los Angeles, California; his three pups, Rowdy, Tillie and Swarley; and many beloved relatives, colleagues, and dear friends.



THE FAMILY HAS REQUESTED SUPPORT
OF THE FOLLOWING CAUSES:



THE JONATHAN C. SMITH
SCHOLARSHIP AT
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Established in memory of Dr. Jonathan Smith, a fierce advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion at Saint Louis University, the endowed scholarship will support SLU students who graduated from St. Louis-area high schools who demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. All gifts will be matched by SLU, dollar for dollar.

THE ST. LOUIS BLACK
REPERTORY CO.

Poetry and the arts were a huge part of Dr. Smith's scholarship and life. Dr. Smith has long been involved with St. Louis' Black Rep Theatre, most recently serving as the president of its Board of Directors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

slu.edu/remembering-jonathan-smith.php



To Our Uncle

Uncle Jonathan was the most amazing uncle one could ever hope to be blessed with.

One of the many things that will be missed is his crushingly loving bear hugs — you could not get around him without one, and he intuitively knew when we needed one the most. His stories and vast knowledge were applicable to life situations, and we will carry his immense wisdom with us. The impact Uncle Jonathan had on his family, friends, university, and community as a whole is palpable. You can literally see how much his presence affected everyone he came into contact with. His positivity constantly uplifted others, and he always had an encouraging word to spare. When you were speaking with him, he made you feel as if it was just you and him in the world. Not many people take the time to truly listen and understand, but he was one of those singular people. He took a sincere interest in our education and wellbeing, and we know that he cared about what our futures would look like. Uncle Jonathan was a master of many talents, but his musical abilities were something we all enjoyed watching and learning from. The utterance of the word “Love” was something we could always count on from him, and you knew it was genuine and strong. Through him, we were introduced to a beautiful bonus family in the Smiths, who we will continually love and support. Dr. Jonathan Smith is the epitome of what a man is supposed to be for his family, friends, church, and community — demonstrated through his love, knowledge, and faith in Christ. We cannot imagine a world without him, and these words do not even begin to explain how many memories we hold or how much he will be missed, but we will continually try to make you proud.

We love you, Uncle Jonathan.

—from the Bradshaw nieces and nephews

You were our walking encyclopedia—one of the only people who could discuss everything from the Bible to Biggie lyrics to Beloved. No matter the question, you had an answer. You had a thirst for knowledge that was unparalleled, and encouraged all of us to heed our Grandfather's words and pursue our educations wholeheartedly. (Although none of us has as many degrees as you).

From an early age we heard Granny refer to you as her “faith child”, and you inspired each of us in our own ways to achieve things that seemed unimaginable or take a route that seemed unconventional. Whether starting a business, becoming a lawyer, starting a music career, preaching, or becoming an actor, we've all taken a leap of faith because we watched you do it time and again.

What a privilege to have spent our lives with such a brilliant mind. Leaving a conversation with you without having learned something was impossible: a piece of trivia, a new word, a joke, anything. We feel so blessed to have had you. And while the thought of you being gone is still surreal, we thank GOD for your incredible life and the many memories you have left us.

We will remember your chuckle and the way you used to play that old piano at Granny's. We will remember your longstanding aversion to socks and your love of great coffee and a donut.

Most importantly, we will remember to cherish our family, as you did. We will take pride in each other's achievements, as you did.

And we will continue to remind each other to take a leap of faith, as you would.

Love you and miss you Uncle Jonathan,

—Your Smith/Strayhorn nieces and nephews,
Cortney, Tenecia, Eliya, Emmanuel, Nia, Justin, Chelsea, Chauncey, DJ, Emmett, Zora, Austin, Amber, Avery, Amaris, Joslyn, Jarrett & Caymen

To Our Colleague

Hey Dr. Smith,

How's it going up there? It's been some days since I got the news about your passing, and I still can't process that you're gone. Not you, Dr. Smith. How is the world not falling apart with you gone? Why wasn't your passing breaking news? I'm still at a loss for words on how tremendous this loss is or how hard it hurts, but right now all I can say is thank you. Thank you for your wisdom, leadership, service, and excellence. Thank you for your unconditional love and your deep hugs so full of love and warmth. Thank you for always being my strongest supporter and advocate whenever I couldn't be one for myself.

Thank you for our talks on life and the (many) geek-out sessions we had about our latest interests! From jazz, to Baldwin, to your family, and to K-Pop, I always left your office with something to think about and a smile on my face. Thank you for being the rock of our DCE/CCC family and the faith you had in our team and the work that we do. The love you have shown us will not be forgotten. Nowhere could I have been my truest self without judgment but with you. You were my mentor and role model in more ways than one. From student to now working professional, you have always been there for me with nothing but a smile and love, so thanks for taking me under your wing — thanks for believing in me and my potential.

Thank you for sharing with us your grand and beautiful vision of creating a world of true inclusion and equity and allowing me to be a small part of it. You had so much thrown onto your plate throughout these past seven years in your position, but you dealt with it while always thinking about others. Without a doubt, you were our Champion; always fighting so that the voices of those underrepresented and marginalized were heard and accepted. Not only did you bring us to the table, but you created a home for us! Whenever one came into your presence, we immediately feel assured, valued, and supported. Thank you for showing me how to not only live justly but to think, love, and fight radically in the work that we do. I absolutely would not be where I am or who I am today without your influence. We always joked about how I could never just call you Jonathan but my respect and admiration for you was and still is so immense that I can't even fathom calling you anything else — at least not until I felt ready that I could proudly live up to your regard. But just this once, I'll break that rule:

Jonathan, thank you for being YOU. You were a gift to this world, and your impact and influence run deep throughout SLU and within the outer community. Who else could have a whole arena turn out for their memorial service, lol? For all this and so much more I want to thank you.

You were taken from us far too soon. You had so much more you wanted to do. I've tried going about doing things normally but then I recall that you're no longer with us and just stop with tears in my eyes. This hurts way too much. But I'll spend the rest of my life continuing your work and legacy despite the atmospheric level you raised the bar. I find solace in that our last physical contact with one another was one of your deep hugs. That our last words were those of warmth. Rest easy, Boss, and continue watching over us.

Love,

— *Luella*

Dr. Smith (Jonathan),

I am at a loss for words! My mind and heart cannot wrap around the idea that you are no longer with us. James Baldwin stated, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." So, I'm going to do my best to face this and find my voice.

Jonathan, thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with and for you. In 2017, I began a journey that forever changed my life. You have been a friend, a mentor, a big brother, and a great supervisor and colleague. You were optimistic about the work we did in Diversity and Community Engagement. If it were something we thought we could not do, you would say, "Let me work on that. I got some irons in the fire; let me see what I can do." Your absence will be felt. I pray we will be able to stay the course.

Your leadership and guidance have been eye-opening experiences. Listening to your stories, your hearty laughter, especially after you teased me about something I had said or done — typical teasing of a big brother toward a little brother. I admired your insight and foresight in making decisions, which, at times, might not be as popular, but you knew it was the right thing to do. I am going to miss being able to come into your office to talk about life. LIFE!!! The good, the bad, the funny, and the serious. Your wit was epic! It was coupled with some form of academia, philosophy, history, and cultural rhetoric. CLASSIC!

The heavens have gained an angel; the Earth has lost a soldier. You are now among our ancestors guiding us as you did here on earth. While you are not here physically, your essence and spirit will forever be felt in my heart. I thank God for allowing me to have a fragment of time spent knowing you. While the time was short, the lessons were transformative. Thank you for being my teacher, my colleague, my brother, and my FRIEND!

I will miss you my friend,

— *Richard*

Dear Jonathan,

My heart is broken, but I will continue to do my best to live out what you have started.

You have always been close to my heart. Although we were not that far apart in age, you were like the brother and father figure I never had. Consequently, you were my hero, and I had a lot of respect for your wisdom and spiritual advice. It was such a blessing and honor to work for such an incredible and amazing man. I truly believe that you lived out your purpose in life, by being the first, Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement at Saint Louis University.

As always, I will adhere to the promises that we made to each other in terms of not giving up on the work we had to do. When things got shaky in the office, I remember you would always say to me: "Regina, we cannot fly the plane until we get the tools." Thank you for reminding me.

I also knew how much you loved your dad and family. You would talk to me about them periodically, in terms of their accomplishments, and how as a dad, you were so proud of them. I also remember your favorite quote from your dad, "It's just nice to be nice."

In closing, I would like to share with others your favorite quote from James Baldwin: "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

Thank you, Jonathan, for allowing me to see the good in people, when I couldn't. Thank you for allowing me to trust again. Thank you for being an awesome role model, and thank you for always being authentic.

Thank you for teaching me not to take things too serious and to stop sometimes to listen to the music from James Brown, Kendrick Lamar, and of course, the speech from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

May God continue to watch over your beautiful wife, Rochelle, your impeccable daughters, Mariah, Lauren, and Rachel, (who are like family). God has truly gained an angel. RIP.

Love you always, BOSS,

— *Regina*

To Our Dad

Dad, Daj, Mr. Chatlin, Black Dad, Father, Faj, Papa Blintze, Daddy, Classic Jon, Daddy...

Thank you for being the perfect parent, cheerleader, mentor, proofreader, teacher, coach and friend.

Although you were taken from us prematurely, we are confident — and find peace — in the fact that we have been extraordinarily fathered and loved by a man unlike any other.

We will miss your early morning and during the workday phone calls. Every voicemail that started with, “Hi, it’s your dad!” Your forehead kisses, hand holds, classic cocktails, and incomparable hugs.

Your brilliant mind and unconditional love are irreplaceable, dada. You are and will forever be our favorite guy.

Love, your daughters:

— Boopers (Lauren), Lu (Rachel), Marivagus (Mariah), Brooklyn (Brooke), and Dr. McCourt (Shannon)

To My Husband

“I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.”

— Song of Solomon 6:3 (KJV)

My dear sweet husband. How do I make sense out of the unimaginable? How do I understand this incredible loss?

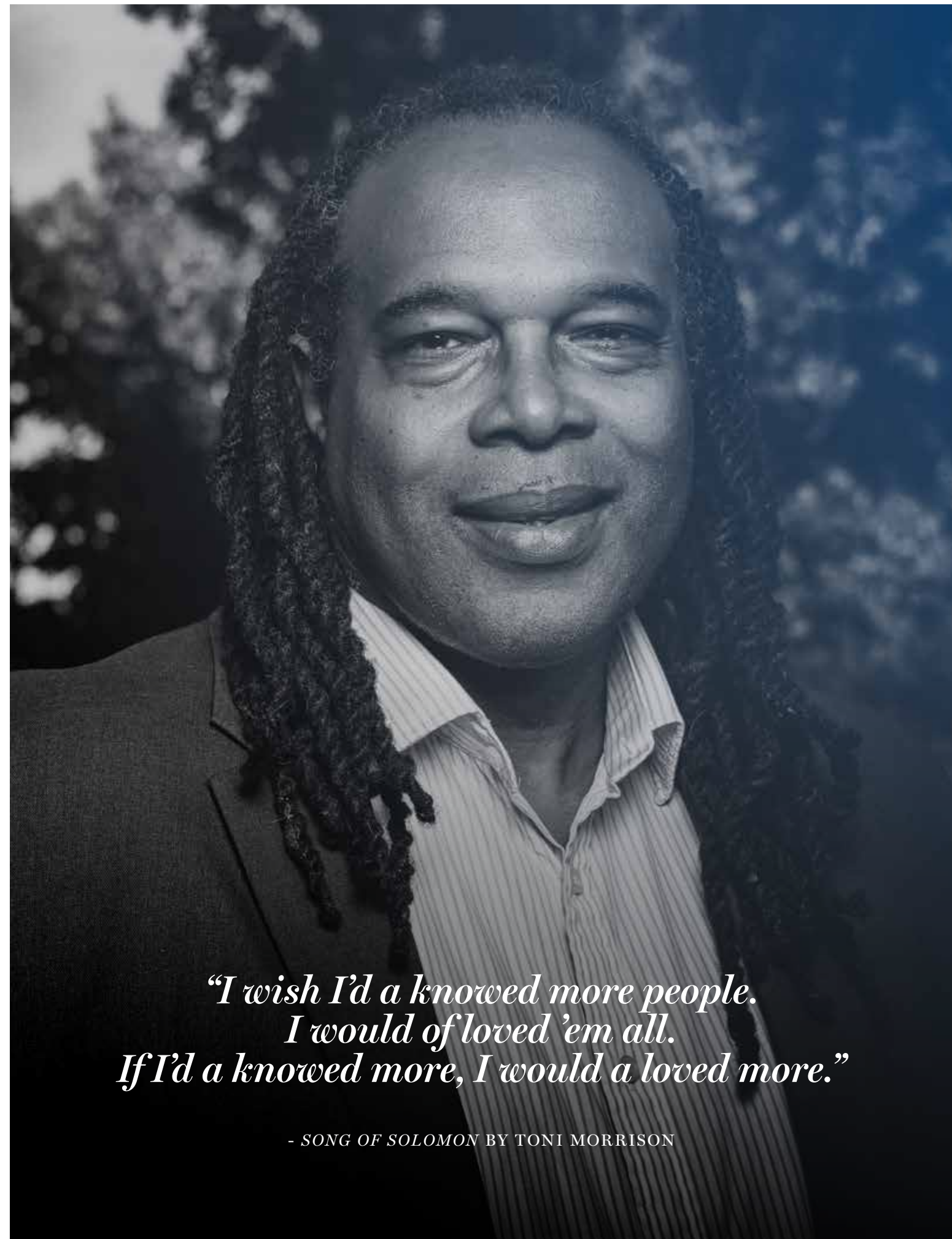
There will never be enough time nor enough words to express how much I love you.

Thank you for 37 years of so much joy, laughter, and love. Thank you for being such a superb, Godly and wonderful Dad to our dear children.

I was not ready for you to go but God was. Even though I can’t make sense of you leaving us so soon, I will remember to trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding. God is in control.

I’ll see you in the morning, honey.

— Love, Rochelle



*“I wish I’d a knowed more people.
I would of loved ’em all.
If I’d a knowed more, I would a loved more.”*

- SONG OF SOLOMON BY TONI MORRISON

With Thanks

We are filled with gratitude for the overwhelming amount of prayers, food, flowers, love and support we have received during this time. Without the help of our Blessed Hope, Saint Louis University, Washington University in St. Louis, and Yale communities, our friends and family — we would be lost. Darin Latimore, thank you for being our rock in New Haven. To our dear friends, Fred and Fran Pestello, your loving kindness knows no bounds. We are especially grateful for Matt Krob who designed the program, and Amelia Arnold, Ashley Jost, David Johnson, and Regina Walton who worked tirelessly with us to coordinate the memorial service. May God richly bless you all triple fold for your benevolence.

*“Not that I speak in respect of want:
for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am,
therewith to be content.”*

— PHILIPPIANS 4:11 (KJV)



Care of the body and cremation was entrusted to

HOWARD K. HILL FUNERAL SERVICES

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