

A C E L E B R A T I O N O F L I F E



DR. JOHN S. EPPS, JR.

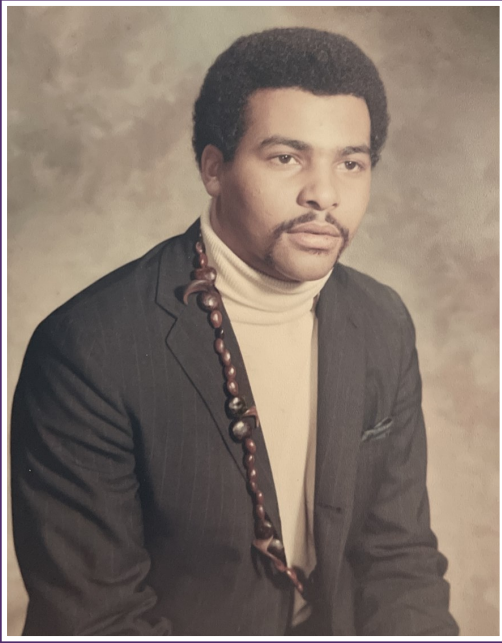
SUNRISE: AUGUST 18, 1945 | SUNSET: JULY 25, 2025

Monday, August 18, 2025

Fraternity Tribute: 12:30PM | Memorial Service: 1PM

website://www.rememberingdrjohnpepps.com

JB Jenkins Worship Center
1 Kettering Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20774



ORDER OF SERVICE

Musical Prelude: Dean Johnson (pianist)

Prayer of Comfort
Rev. Carlynn Fuller Edwards

Song Selection
Precious Lord, Wanda Rogers (vocalist)

Reading of Obituary
Kirsten L. Wilkerson

Epps Family Remarks
Michael Epps Sr.

Reflections from Grandchildren
Sharita Page, Ivey Epps-White,
Kamiko "Kami" S. Epps, Michiko "Mimi" V. Epps

Reflections from Sons
Darius Epps and Kareem Epps

Reflections from Close Friends
John Wilkerson and Alvin Pulliam

Musical Selection
Amazing Grace, Wanda Rogers

Tributes
Kym Beverly Taylor, Delegate
Maryland Legislative District 23

Wanda Rogers, Council Member at Large,
Bowie City Council

Eulogy
Rev. Dr. Crystal Kuykendall
Shiloh Baptist Church

Benediction
Paul Purnell



REMEMBERING DR. JOHN S. EPPS, JR.

Dr. John S. Epps, Jr. was born on August 18, 1945, in Lake Charles, Louisiana. He was the third child of John S. Epps, Sr. and Victoria (Gauthier) Epps, who were united in marriage on August 1, 1943. Raised in Yonkers, New York, he attended Public School #19, Benjamin Franklin Junior High School, and Sacred Heart High School. He played point guard on the varsity basketball team and excelled in academics and sports.

Dr. Epps attended Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC) where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Education. During his undergraduate years at SIUC, he was initiated into the Nu Chi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity in 1965. At SIUC, he also met the love of his life, Valerie L. Hatcher.

After graduating college, on February 8, 1969, John married Valerie in Chicago, Illinois. They were later blessed with two sons, Darius and Kareem.

He went on to earn a Master of Science in Education from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, as well as a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from SIUC.

Dr. Epps served as an educator in the East St. Louis Public School District 189. He later progressed to the role of an Assistant Professor of Medical Education at SIUC. In 1984, he changed careers and made history as the third Executive Secretary of Omega Psi Phi. He was promoted to serve as Executive Director in 1990, helping to relocate the international office for the organization from Washington, DC to Decatur, GA.

He retired from SAEOPP, leading an initiative to federally fund programs that impacted students nationwide.

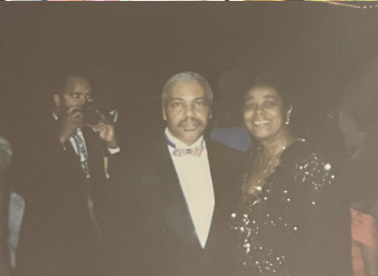
John was preceded in death by his parents, brother Therald, sister Olga, brothers-in-law Richard Hatcher and Edward Hatcher, as well as sisters-in-law Barbara Epps, Jean Gray, and Phoebe Hatcher.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 56 years, Dr. Valerie L. Epps; sons Darius Epps and Kareem Epps (Michiko); grandchildren Sharita Page (Darnell), Ivey Epps-White (Walter III), Kamiko "Kami" Epps, Michiko "Mimi" Epps; Great Grandchildren: Sydney Page, Darnell Page, Jr., and Walter White, IV.

He also leaves to mourn his dear siblings Michael (Andrea), Cecil (Jacqueline), Marilyn (Robert), and Catharine, along with sisters-in-law Beulah Burt and Pat Hatcher. His nieces and nephews Micheal Epps Jr., Courtney Epps, Brendan Epps (Marcia), Sean Epps, Cecelia Epps, Aliya Abdul-Khaliq McCloud (Darren), Alim Abdul-Khaliq, Khatim Abdul-Khaliq, Armond Gray, Jr. (Karen), Clark Gray Sr. (Tara), Colette Hatcher, Belinda Hatcher-Jenkins, Richard Hatcher III, and Tanika Hatcher. His Godchildren Charles Shelton III (Tammy), Erika Adams, Kristen Wilkerson, Melva Collins (Corey), W. Constinia Charbonnette (Eric), and Jeanette McMillan (Clark Sr.).

John is also survived by a host of great nieces and nephews, cousins, and friends.

Dr. John S. Epps, Jr. was a man of purpose, principle, and profound love. His life's work and legacy will continue to inspire all who had the privilege to know him.



HIS JOURNEY'S JUST BEGUN

By Ellen Brenneman

Don't think of him as gone away ~

His journey's just begun

Life holds so many facets

This earth is only one.

Just think of him as resting

From the sorrows and the tears

In a place of warmth and comfort

Where there are no days and years.

Think how he must be wishing

That we could know today

How nothing but our sadness

Can really pass away.

And think of him as living

In the hearts of those he touched...

For noting love is ever lost ~

And he was loved so very much.



F O R E V E R I N O U R H E A R T S

LETTERS

I remember a great deal about my brother. I remember how we were always part of the neighborhood and the community. I remember shared friendships; some of his friends were my friends, some of mine were his. I didn't realize the respect he had for me until he went away to college and I found that he appreciated the person I was becoming. That is the John Epps I know. I say "know" and not "knew" because a part of him will always stay with me. John was a proud man; we inherited pride from our parents. The pride of family; pride of accomplishments; the pride of service. Dear Valerie, Darius & Kareem and ALL the grandkids; the love my family and I feel from you stems from his love and respect to us. Be Strong! Be Proud! Be Happy!

Brother Michael, Andrea & Family

I will always remember the love- the things to look up to. The stability, his love of jazz, and of course his sense of humor. I am always grateful for the time spent and shared!

Niece Courtney

I'm Lil' Johnny's younger cousin, his father and my mother (Catherine L. (Epps) Howard) were first cousins. We spent many times together in the early years, when my family (Mother- Catherine, Father- Bill, and my two siblings: Carol and Yvonne) visited his childhood home in Yonkers, NY. We also enjoyed gatherings with many of our other family members, too. I remember Lil' Johnny as warm hearted, fun-loving, energetic, physically fit, good natured, serious, always studying, and learning. His smile and outgoing persona will be missed. Sincerely with our warmest condolences.

Cousin Jamal (Wm.) and Family

Papa John was my granddad and one of the best to ever do it. We will miss him soooo much but his memories will live on forever.

Love you Papa!! Granddaughter Ivey, Tre and Family

PJ, I will always cherish the wonderful summers, vacations, teaching me Geometry and golf, the talks, the laughs, the hugs, being apart of every milestone and overall joy to my life and my family's life. You were truly the best uncle/granddad. We love you and will hold on to the memories of you, FOREVER!

Granddaughter Sharita, Darnell and Family

You fought like a champ until the end.

Darius

Uncle John Epps was my great uncle. My grandpa, Michael Epps, was very fond of his brother. I remember seeing them interact when I was younger. Even then, I thought Uncle John was so cool. He was funny, kind, never the loudest in the room, but if you sat next to him, he could make you laugh endlessly. I live in New York, so I didn't get to see him often, but one memory stands out. We were at a birthday party, and I ended up sitting next to him the entire time. He told me stories about growing up with all of his siblings, and hearing about my grandpa from his perspective (outside of the stories my grandpa had told me himself) was a gift I'll always cherish. I'm deeply saddened that I can't be there with you all today to celebrate his life in person, but please know I'm thinking of everyone and sending my love across the miles. I hope you can feel it through this message. To me, Uncle John will always be remembered as the big brother to his siblings, the cool uncle to all his nieces and nephews, and the person who could make you laugh without even trying. Thank you, Uncle John, for letting me sit next to you that day. For sharing your stories, your humor, and your time with me. Even though we didn't see each other often, it felt like we just clicked instantly. We realized that day how similar we were and that connection is something I will carry with me forever. We love you, Uncle John, and we will always remember you.

Grand-Niece Jordan

Say what's up to Uncle George and Uncle Bebe for me. See you when I get there!

Kareem





HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Cecil Epps, Michael Epps, John Wilkerson, Alvin Pulliam, Dr. Ronald Braithwaite, Donald Cross, Ernie Andersen, Armond Gray Jr., Clark Gray Sr., Richard Hatcher III, Mike Epps Jr., Sean Epps, Brendon Epps, Khatim Abdul-Khaliq, Alim Abdul-Khaliq, Therald Epps, Jr., George McNeil (deceased), Charles Shelton III (deceased)

THANK YOU AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FROM THE EPPS FAMILY



The family expresses its sincere thanks for your response to our needs during this difficult time in our lives. We thank you for the cards, flowers, and all expressions of kindness.

To Darius and Kareem Epps: you are the rocks of the family; your father loved you both dearly. To Bernea Bell, Ivey Epps-White, Walter White III, Lynette Porterfield, Michiko Gadson, Sharita Page, Arvellene Bell, Kamiko Epps, and Michiko Epps: thank you for providing 24-hour home caregiving and love for John. Please know you ensured that John transitioned with grace and dignity.

To the Brothers of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Ricky Lewis, Grand Basileus; John F. Howard, Executive Director, The Tenth District; Nu Chi Chapter, and Gamma Pi Chapter: we thank you for your support and thoughtful generosity.

To the Sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. who volunteered and cooked for the family: thank you for your time, support, and love.

Last, we thank all the volunteers who made this Celebration of Life possible.

ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Web Design: Jeanette and Clark McMillan
Slide Show: Sharita Porterfield Page
Musical Arrangements: Wanda Rogers
Planning Committee: Kareem Epps, John Wilkerson, and Terry Rogers

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ENTRUSTED TO:

JB Jenkins Funeral Home
(301) 322.2300

Programs By Twanitta (240) 606.6876