



Mr. Joe Elbert Benton Jr.

August 10, 1946 - August 8, 2021

Celebration of An Afrikan Life

Our beloved Joe Elbert Benton, Jr made his transition to join the ancestors on Sunday, August 8, 2021, at the age of 74. Born on August 10, 1946, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Joe Elbert Benton, Sr and Bessie Burt Benton, he grew up in Seattle, Washington, the eldest of four children. After graduating from Garfield High School in Seattle, where he participated in sports and theater, Joe moved to South Carolina to attend university. He earned a BA in Social Sciences from Benedict College in Columbia, SC, where he was a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. It was while attending college that he met his future wife, Almateen Williams, who was at the time attending Allen University. They were married in December 16, 1967. He would go on to earn an MSW from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Ever committed to social justice and the wellbeing of his people, Joe began working in social services in 1965. Over the course of his five-decade career, he conceptualized, planned, organized, and implemented many human services programs with an emphasis on youth. He held positions as Assistant Commissioner in South Carolina's Department of Juvenile Justice and the Director of the Youth Development Bureau of Health and Human Services in President Jimmy Carter's administration. He was dedicated to service in his professional community as well. He served as interim director of the SC State Employees Association; the Board of Communities in Schools of the

Midlands; and the President of the National Association of Black Social Workers. Most recently, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the SC Organization of African Unity and visiting professor of Social Work at South Carolina State University. He was a member of the Alpha Iota Boulé Fraternity.

With his colleagues and special friends Burnett Gallman and Derrick Jackson, Joe pioneered Afrikan-centered rites of passage programs for manhood and womanhood training, graduating over 400 boys and girls since 1990. He was one of the founders of KRST Universal Temple where he served as the Senior Elder of the Elders Council for twenty-one years.

Joe received awards for his work, including the MLK “Keeping the Dream Alive Award” from the University of South Carolina; the Human Service Worker of the Year by SC Cross-Cultural Council; and The Pioneer Award from the National Association of Black Social Workers; and the SC State Employees Association State Male Employee of the Year.

Joe traveled widely in the US and abroad. He has regaled us all with his stories about his trips to Cuba, Ghana, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Mozambique and England. He was an avid reader, movie buff, and music aficionado. His library was a source of inspiration for all who ventured inside. He loved gadgets of all kinds and wowed his grandchildren with his treasure trove of toys. His family and friends all have shared their stories about his generosity, integrity and warmth. These memories will certainly be cherished by his devoted wife of fifty-three years, Almateen Williams Benton; one son, Joe E. (Bianca) Benton III, Columbia, SC; one daughter Adia Benton (Peter Bendix) of Chicago, IL; four grandchildren: Brianna Benton Jeremy Benton, Columbia SC; Salma Bendix and Dara Bendix, Chicago, IL; one brother, Clarence (Diana) Benton of Seattle, WA, two sisters, Belinda Williams, Fairbanks, AK, Joneene Walton, Seattle WA and a host of nephews, nieces, cousins and friends.

Cemetery Details

Crescent Hill Memorial Gardens

Columbia, SC

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Joe Elbert Benton Jr.*

October 04, 2023 at 11:33 AM



“ *Beloved Benton Family please accept our deepest condolences. Elder Benton will be remembered for his contagious smile. We will miss seeing him at our virtual service of Krst Universal Temple. Peace and Endless Blessings, Mrs. Zuri Wilson-Seymore and Mr. Nathaniel Seymore*



Zuri Wilson-Seymore - August 24, 2021 at 10:54 PM



“ *Elizabeth Evans lit a candle in memory of Mr. Joe Elbert Benton Jr.*



Elizabeth Evans - August 16, 2021 at 03:41 PM



“ *My condolences to Joe's family during this difficult time to many of us he was the Dean of social work sharing his wisdom and insight to a many of us as we worked in the social justice and human service field. We will miss his presence and celebrate his contributions to the community and the field. May God continue to bless you. Larry Salley*

Larry salley - August 13, 2021 at 09:49 AM

LF

To the Benton Family.

We were greatly saddened to hear of the death of a great martyr who gave service i tirelessly throughout his life for others. He will greatly be missed and his memories of steadfast service in the field of social and criminal justice will most certainly be missed but, most of all, remembers by other warriors on the battlefield serving to make a difference in the lives of others. He will truly be remembered as an social advocate and ambassador for justice!

*Lillian M. J. Dixon
Former President, Penna. NABCJ Chapter, Philadelphia.*

Lillian Foxon - August 13, 2021 at 05:53 PM

BP

President Joe Benton will be missed. Forever grateful for his teachings and all he offered NABSW. My Condolences to his family.

Charter President/Member ABSW of South Central Kentucky

Barbara J.M. Pollock - August 21, 2021 at 09:50 AM

WD

“ An Amazing Leader and facilitator of activities that brought comprehensive solutions of problems impacting Black People in Social Work and Health. His accomplishments will forever impact African Americans. Rest in Heaven and Health, Chief Benton.

Willie Davis - August 13, 2021 at 07:04 AM

BW

“ You all have our prayers and deepest sympathy. May the CREATOR continue to bless and strengthen you all everyday is our prayer.

Love Aunt B. Soror Brenda, Dr. Blake & Woods family.

Nana Joe E. Benton has been welcomed home by the Ancestors. Ase-Ase- Aseooooo'



Brenda Woods - August 12, 2021 at 10:51 PM

RM

“ We are sending our sincere condolences of sympathy for the loss of our dear friend, Nana Joe Benton Jr. He will be dearly missed. We are most grateful to have known your loved one, who was truly a righteous man of faith and justice. May he rest in peace with the Ancestors!

Ron & Barbara Johnson

Ronald Johnson, MD - August 12, 2021 at 06:19 PM

SM

“ Hotep, Peace & Blessings to the Family during this journey. Baba Joe was a true Warrior and Griot!! Such a Teacher, Mentor and Advocate for our Community.... May he Rest as he meets the Ancestors and greets him smiling.

On behalf of NABSW, the Executive Committee, my Houston Chapter & over 2000 members; “we will always call your name, Baba Joe!!! “ Ase’

Sondera Malry - August 12, 2021 at 04:46 PM

MM

“ My condolences to Almertine and the entire family. May Joe Rest In Peace.

Marlene M. McClerklin - August 12, 2021 at 04:04 PM

JS

“ Mr. Benton
Thank you for the impact you've had on my life. You were one of the few professors who genuinely cared about the well being of the students. You were a true servant. And I'm thankful to have crossed your path.



Rest in Power. 🙏

Janey Sow-McCray - August 12, 2021 at 03:49 PM

PH

“ My condolences to Almateen and family. Continue to pray and trust in God. He will provide the strength you need. God Bless. 🙏🙏🙏

Penelope Wright Hughes & Family

Penelope W Hughes - August 12, 2021 at 02:56 PM

AB

“ 7 files added to the album Memories Album



Almateen Benton - August 12, 2021 at 10:57 AM

AB

“ 24 files added to the album Memories Album



Almateen Benton - August 12, 2021 at 10:21 AM

TO

“ My condolences to the family. I pray that beautiful memories of Joe will bring you joy and comfort in your journey through your grief and loss. As the 12th president of the National Association of Black Social Workers and the chair of NABSW's Civil Liberties committee for many years, Joe demonstrated his love for and commitment to all people people of African ancestry and made tremendous contributions to NABSW that will be noted in its history of accomplishments. Nana Joe embodied, modeled and elevated of the virtues of Ma'at. Joe's caring, concern and commitment was a blessing to everyone who's life he touched. He will be remember for his many virtues and for his sincere desire to be helpful to people and causes in any way possible. I was honored to serve with him as his Vice President and to be among his many friends. He will be missed and he will be remembered. Nana Joe leaves an abundant legacy to his family, friends, students and colleagues. His beautiful spirit will be with us forever as we continue to call his name. Let the circle be unbroken. Asé, Asé, Aséo

Warmly,
Toni Oliver



Toni Oliver - August 12, 2021 at 09:13 AM

MH

“ *Baba Joe taught, encouraged and guided many emerging leaders of The National Association of Black Social Worker. He stands with my father Ancestor and fellow NABSW Pioneer with four NABSW current officers and leaders. We will always speak your name.*
Asante Sana



Melissa Smith Haley - August 12, 2021 at 08:40 AM

MC

“ *Mildred Atkinson Council,MSW sent a virtual gift in memory of Mr. Joe Elbert Benton Jr.*

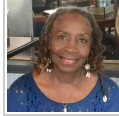


Mildred Atkinson Council,MSW - August 11, 2021 at 03:46 PM

MC

Our President, Dr. EveAngel Savage and the members of the Eastern NC Regional Association of Black Social Workers, Greenville, NC send their love and prayers to Mr. Joe Benton Family. Some of us had the privilege of witnessing his leadership as he was the 11th President (2010-2014) who led National Association of Black Social Workers. Thanks to God for his legacy. Mildred Atkinson Council,MSW- An Historian and a founding Member/first Preisent of the above chapter in 1975.

Mildred Atkinson Council,MSW - August 11, 2021 at 04:06 PM



Baba Joe was such a Warrior; he truly blessed our lives and was one I will remember with a smile, lovingly. On behalf of the NABSW Executive Committee, the Houston ABSW Chapter, and our former EC body, along with the Steering Committee members, we bid him a "Farewell", but never forgotten. Ase'!!! Sondara Malry, Recording Secretary, 8/12/2021

Sondara Malry - August 12, 2021 at 04:07 PM

TO

“ Our Hearts are heavy, laden with pains and grief, at the announcement of the passing on to glory of The President of the Board of Organization of African Unity, SC, Elder Joe Benton, our highly revered President, a distinguished Pan African numero uno, an accomplished Pan African Elder, a seasoned bureaucrat, quintessential unifier, unique personage, and exemplary President, whose tenure brought distinction, immense class, finesse and integrity to Board matters and the community at large.

His uncommon courage was symbolic of the can-do spirit of the Pan African.

OAU indeed has lost our shining star. The one who's wisdom and patience so to the creation of OAU. I sure benefitted from his wisdom. He took me as a son and I took him as a Father. I doubt the success we both recorded would have been possible if he were not a wise sage who could see in me that my heart was pure and loyal to the cause. Where others may crucify me, he loved me and encouraged me. He was our Daddy in OAU. The constitution of OAU was drafted in his house. Him and I went to Columbia city council to fight for the grant we got to organize our first Festival. OAU has lost her Eagle.

We are enveloped with a deep sense of nostalgia that our great President has now joined his ancestors.

*Diken ala nmor- our Warrior has gone to the land beyond beyond
Ohen ekin diken- Good night great warrior, until we meet to part no
more
Kene ndi ri enu- Greet our ancestors for us*

*your adopted son
Tonna Okei
Ikuku oma(The good wind)*

Tonna Okei - August 11, 2021 at 10:30 AM