



Obrie Smith, Jr.

November 24, 1940 - April 27, 2020

“And let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.” Galatians 6:9.

Obrie Smith, Jr. was born on November 24, 1940, in St. Louis, MO. He was the only child born to the late Mr. Obrie Smith, Sr. and Mrs. Inez Wheeler Smith of St. Louis, MO. He was peacefully called home by our Heavenly Father on Monday, April 27, 2020. He was a devoted son and a loving grandson to his maternal grandmother, Sarah Wheeler, with whom he spent many summers in Artesia, MS. He learned many life lessons from his grandmother. One of her quotes was “If you do right, right’ll follow you.” He spent his life trying to do just that. Obrie felt that God had given him the gift of “service.” It truly brought his heart joy when he could help those who were less fortunate.

He confessed a hope in Christ at an early age, was baptized and became a member of Christ Pilgrim’s Rest Missionary Baptist Church in St. Louis, MO. His career required him, and his family to move often. While living in Southfield, MI, membership was placed at the First Baptist Church of Detroit. After moving to Brookfield, WI, he and his family were members of St. Mark AME. Beginning in 1990, they lived in the Charlotte, NC area, worshipping and serving at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church of Charlotte. At Friendship, he was a valued member and a teacher of the Sunday School

Adult Leadership class. In October 2017, Obrie and Cora moved to South Carolina and found an inviting church home in Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church of Hilton Head Island.

He excelled as a student at Washington Elementary School and Sumner High School in St. Louis, MO, where he was a member of the National Honor Society and the Cross Country team. He took a number of accelerated courses while developing an affinity for math. After graduating from Sumner High School at the top 10% of his class in January 1959, he aspired to become a math teacher and eventually a high school principal. He met Cora Marie Green on his way to college, fell in love and after a long courtship they were married on December 24, 1964. To this union was born two sons, Obrie Smith III and Kyle A. Smith.

Obrie attended Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO, earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Education in 1964 and, later in 1970, a master's degree in Secondary Education. While at Lincoln University he joined the Army ROTC.

Interrupting his dream to be a math teacher, Obrie served his country for three years in the United States Army, beginning in 1964. As a result of his ROTC training, Obrie was able to enter the Army as a Second Lieutenant, eventually attaining the rank of First Lieutenant before his departure in 1966. He served 18 months in Germany before he returned to the U.S. and completed his military duty at Fort Campbell as a Company Commander. With his military service coming to an end, Obrie sought employment opportunities with one of the big three automakers and, in 1973, landed at General Motors Corporation in Detroit, MI. After five years with GM, Obrie's experience in corporate America served him well as he took on more responsibility at Miller Brewing Company in Milwaukee, WI. First as Manager of Community Relations and later as Director of Corporate Communications, he was responsible for

External Corporate Communications, Public Relations, Brand Communications, Corporate Contributions, Tour Programs, and Community Relations.

Obrie established the inaugural Phillip Morris Family Scholarship for students at North Carolina A&T, Grambling, Southern, Alcorn State, and Albany State Universities. Never forgetting his humble beginnings, his influence gave him many opportunities to serve those who were less fortunate—he believed this was his life’s mission. Due to his many philanthropic endeavors, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from North Carolina A&T State University in May 1984.

With honor and distinction, he served as president of North Carolina A&T State University Foundation, Inc. (later LLC) from July 1995 to April 2014. Under his guidance and leadership, the Foundation assets grew from \$3.2 million to \$116 million. Held in high regard by students, faculty, and administration, Obrie led the single largest on-campus expansion in the University’s history which included new undergraduate housing, tennis courts, and an Alumni-Foundation Office and Event Center. He had the utmost passion for service and leveling the playing field for students.

His servant leadership did not stop there. Obrie received many awards and recognitions for his outstanding service to the communities of Charlotte, NC, Greensboro, NC, Milwaukee, WI and Detroit, MI. He also served as a member of the NAACP and Sigma Pi Phi Delta Boule’ (Bluffton/Hilton Head Chapter).

Growing up in St. Louis, the aroma of smoked BBQ around the holidays influenced Obrie’s decision to become an entrepreneur and market his own barbeque sauce called Ms. C’s Soppin Good. After retiring from corporate America, he was highly regarded as a pit master known across the country for

his smoked ribs, turkeys, and hams.

He loved entertaining and cooking for guests throughout the years. Friends and family came from across the country to attend his legendary Super Bowl parties to enjoy good eating, camaraderie and fellowship. Obrie hosted Super Bowl parties for 20+ years.

Obrie is survived by his loving and devoted wife of 55 years, Cora Marie Green Smith of Bluffton, SC; two sons: Obrie (Jennifer) Smith III of Albuquerque, NM and Kyle A. Smith of Smyrna, GA; one brother-in-law, James Henry (Sharion) Green of St. Louis, MO; one sister-in-law Carol (Jimmie) Douglass of Searcy, AR; three nieces: Sharon (Grey) Powell of Edmond, OK; Tracie (James) West and Jacquelynn (Thomas) Brantley of Searcy AR; two nephews: Jimmie(Stevie Ann) Douglass of Neosho, MO, and Brian (Gabriella) Douglass of Searcy, AR; cousins: Roger Smith of Bolingbrook, IL, Allie Wiggins of Fayetteville, NC, Annie Dale Lawrence of Cherokee, NC, Mary Helen Hayes and Freda Germany of St. Louis, MO; a godson, Austin O. Webster, of Marietta, GA; goddaughters: McKenzii D. Webster of Germantown, TN, Enica Russell of Bristow, VA, and Megan Davis of Miami Beach, FL; special friends: Walter and Modena Gooley, Cassandra H. Webster, Phil and Cherry Saunders, Von Crume, Marlyne Glen; a host of great-nieces, great-nephews, great-godsons, great-goddaughters, and a host of other relatives, and friends.

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” Deuteronomy 31:9

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to honor Obrie Smith may donate to:
The Byrd-Kirchhofer-Smith Scholarship Fund
The 62nd and 65th Regiment Legacy Foundation, Inc.

PO Box 1376
Jefferson City, MO 65102
or online at 62-65rlf.com.

Tribute Wall



“ *Obrie Smith, Jr.*

October 04, 2023 at 11:33 AM




“ *Beloved Cora (Sister-Cousin) Obrie and Kyle, Your Detroit Family sends prayers for precious Holy Spirit to bring comfort and healing. Corletta, Ruth, Mary, Dwayne and our children. Obrie was such a LIGHT and leader.. a special, special man indeed.*

Miles and Miles of Love

Corletta Vaughn - May 25, 2020 at 08:59 PM



“ *Jessie  lit a candle in memory of Obrie Smith, Jr.*



Jessie  - May 13, 2020 at 11:21 PM



“ *Nathaniel Wilbert lit a candle in memory of Obrie Smith, Jr.*



Nathaniel Wilbert - May 13, 2020 at 01:06 PM

CB

“ Claude Burns lit a candle in memory of Obrie Smith, Jr.



Claude Burns - May 10, 2020 at 02:33 PM

SS

“ Love and comfort to Cora, Kyle, Obrie III and family. Thank-you Obrie, for all you have given. Your steadfastness in faith and ever positive outlook enhance the legacy you left for us to move on with. Peace and well earned joy on your journey home. Sylvia Ann Soares, Providence, RI



Sylvia Ann Soares - May 10, 2020 at 08:42 AM

JM

“ Jacqueline Murphy-Ealey lit a candle in memory of Obrie Smith, Jr.



Jacqueline Murphy-Ealey - May 09, 2020 at 07:32 AM

JM

“ Jacqueline Murphy-Ealey lit a candle in memory of Obrie Smith, Jr.



Jacqueline Murphy-Ealey - May 09, 2020 at 07:29 AM

LS

“ Lillie D Scott lit a candle in memory of Obrie Smith, Jr.



Lillie D Scott - May 08, 2020 at 11:56 PM

AK

“ Dear Cora, Kyle and Obrie III and Extended Family,

Please know how much we enjoyed knowing Obrie - if even for just a couple of years.

He was always kind, fun and genuine whenever we had the pleasure of being with him.

He seemed to never complain, even if he had a lot going on, or if he was in pain.

God Bless you all~ your loss is very great.

He will be missed by so many, including us.

May God hold and keep you all in this very sad time.

*With love,
Anne and Kevin Karwath
HL Neighbors/Friends*

Anne Karwath - May 08, 2020 at 01:02 PM

MS

“ Mary Jo, Simmons lit a candle in memory of Obrie Smith, Jr.



Mary Jo, Simmons - May 05, 2020 at 02:28 PM

LP

“ In the words of Dorothy Ferguson...
“Only a moment you stayed, but what an imprint your foot prints
have left on our hearts.” Rest In Peace, dear friend
Lois Parsons
.....

lois parsons - May 04, 2020 at 11:01 PM

BC

“ Obrie an I were friends at Lincoln University. He was a real
gentleman an through our entire Lincoln University experience I
never heard an unkind word spoken about Obrie. To Cora and the
family please know that Obrie will live in the hearts of those he
touched forever. Rest in peace! Bob Coleman

Bob Coleman - May 04, 2020 at 04:23 PM

LP

RIP Lincolnite

LaMonte Pruitt - May 08, 2020 at 11:15 AM

LP

“ *Lois Parsons lit a candle in memory of Obrie Smith, Jr.*



lois parsons - May 03, 2020 at 09:27 PM



“ *Wow! My boss who was Director of PR and Marketing for Miller Brewing under Arkansas native Thomas Shropshire, first Black VP for Miller. Both hired me to Ketchum PR in Chicago to the Miller Brewing account! Smith ordered an audit of the firm and fired Ketchum after I quit. I loved this dude! He was a class act! Just mentioned him to Tara Shropshire, Tom's daughter who is a Hollywood producer. My prayers and thoughts are with you. Victoria Ryan-Bailey, 4333 West Belle Pl. St. Louis, MO. 63108 314-282-0681*

Victoria Ryan-Bailey - May 03, 2020 at 06:33 PM

LB

“ *We were in the same high school accelerated advisory group throughout high school. He was an athlete and a scholar and will truly be missed.*

Larry Brown - May 03, 2020 at 04:41 PM

LP

“ *Lois Parsons lit a candle in memory of Obrie Smith, Jr.*



lois parsons - May 03, 2020 at 01:49 PM