



Roosevelt Miller, Jr.

May 5, 1934 - May 18, 2016

The Ubiquitous Life Reflections

Roosevelt “Ted” Miller Jr. was born May 5, 1934 in Horatio, South Carolina. He was a loving son to Roosevelt and Elizabeth Dennis Miller, and a devoted brother to Shirley, Wallace, and Celestine. The eldest of the four children, while separated by distance, he was never but a thought away from his South Carolina home. Roosevelt was christened in the Willow Grove AME Church and received Christ at an early age. As devote members of the Willow Grove congregation, his parents ensured that he attended Sunday School regularly, and participated in all other church related activities.

Roosevelt grew up on the Miller family's 200 acre farm, working along side his “Daddy” at the tender age of eight. It was then that he developed an appreciation for nature, a love of the land and horses, and an appreciation for the value of hard work. As he grew older, he also worked on the Dennis Farm with his granddaddy, Joshua. An extraordinary child, "Ted" as many of us knew him, demonstrated talents and gifts well beyond his years. Recognizing how very bright he was, his mother wisely channeled his intellectual energy by enrolling him in the first grade at age four, at the school at which she taught. At the culmination of primary school, he attended Mather Academy Boarding School, where he received a superior education. True to form, he excelled, graduating at age sixteen, and matriculating into A&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina where he pursued a double-major in Engineering, Architectural and Civil, with a minor in Mathematics. While impressive given

today's standards, that was a tremendous milestone during his time of study. At the age of twenty, Roosevelt's esteemed scholarship was met with his usual humility. While his family always knew him to be quite talented and gifted, they never truly understood his brilliance until they met his beaming and pride-filled professors at his college graduation. It was then that they remarked that as one of four to graduate from the Engineering Department, not only was Roosevelt the youngest, but he was an outstanding young engineer.

Roosevelt's scholastic and physical work ethic were admirable and sustained throughout his life. Always interested in travel and exploration, he often chose work opportunities which allowed for both. Ted's jobs spanned from working on the railroad to spending time on the New Jersey Coast. As he gained engineering experience, he was recruited by the Federal Reclamation Bureau in Washington, DC to serve on a team of engineers in Ventura, California to build the water dam in Northern California, where he later became the lead Civil Engineer. Upon completion of that project, the government transferred him to Seattle, Washington where he continued his work in engineering. In the 1940's, he served in the United States Army with distinction, was honorably discharged from Fort Belvoir, Virginia, after which he returned to Seattle, Washington.

While he was an extremely disciplined individual with an eclectic and eccentric personality, he was very carefree but yet very principled. He loved jazz music (Miles Davis, Coltrane). While living in Seattle, Washington in the late 50's, he met and married Sharon LeAnna Render, resulting in the birth of their precious son, Courtney Render Miller. Roosevelt and Sharon relocated to the city of Los Angeles, California where he continued his employment as an engineer, with emphasis on Safety and Planning of major buildings and homes.

Roosevelt's Los Angeles engineering career, lasted from 1960 to 1991,

reflecting thirty-one years of dedicated service. His esteemed career blossomed, as he worked in many engineering departments over the years. In fact, he was a member of the team that designed and developed construction of buildings to have minimum impact from earthquakes. Throughout his career, he was often recruited by private engineering firms; however, he chose to remain with the city as he felt he was making a needed contribution. There was even a time when he was chided by Johnny Cochran to move on and up, yet if you knew Ted well, you knew that once he made up his mind, he remained steadfast and resolute. A voracious reader, and life long learner, he continued his studies at the University of Southern California where he earned 100 credits in Engineering and Math; exceeding a post-doctoral degree requirement. This was done over the years with quiet, gracious, enthusiasm with a desire to compete with himself.

Upon retirement, he quickly decided to return to the roots of his childhood. He purchased forty acres of land in Yucca Valley where he developed a horse ranch and decided to train racehorses. Yes, his previous passions for academia and jazz, evolved into the pursuit in training thoroughbreds. He leaped into this arena with the vigor of a young man for the next twenty-six years. Roosevelt bought, bred, and trained racehorses. He continued his hobby of riding horses in the mid 80's. He aspired to excel just as he had done in his previous career as an Architectural/Civil Engineer in Los Angeles. He always set the bar high for himself. Eventually he produced two winners in the Santa Anita Racetrack in Acadia, California, Turf Paradise in Phoenix, Arizona and a spawn from Secretariat, a winner at the Belmont Racetrack in Elmont, New York and far too many others to mention.

He was indeed a multi talented individual who had the ability to touch others with his quick wit and gifts of communication. Roosevelt did not stop pursuing learning and wanted to remain current; he attended the Desert College in

Yucca Valley and completed the baccalaureate degree online in Computer Technology. It was stated that Roosevelt was extraordinarily fond of horses in his early childhood where he learned to ride and manage the horses on the Miller Farm. He taught his baby sister, Celestine, to ride horses at a very young age, “she was his equestrian.”

Many do not know that Roosevelt had a flair for architecture as well, designing the home of his parents in Rembert, South Carolina, as well as the home he was building in Landers, California. The significance of the home in Landers is that Ted challenged himself to build this house with minimal assistance. It was not unusual to see him manipulate what everyone else would call “the unimaginable heights” with 2x4’s, 2x8’s and the like.

Roosevelt remained very attached to his family in the East. He would fly in to New York for all occasions: weddings, funerals, graduations, birthday parties, and major celebrations for his niece and nephew. While he loved California, he took the time to visit with his parents, his sisters and brother back East. He never allowed distance to be a factor in his embrace of love for the family.

All who knew him will share in a single voice that he was a very kind, humble, erudite and giving person with a very warm heart; he met no strangers, they were always friends. The community, church and friends in Yucca Valley and Landers, lauded Roosevelt with admiration and respect as a gentleman. He will be remembered as a gentle, peaceful, loving spirit who was always willing to generously help others.

Over the last years of his life, he read the Bible three hours each Sunday as he would report to his youngest sister who always chided him about his faith and conviction for God. This he accepted with great love.

His engaging wit, intellectual fortitude and down home demeanor always

inspired others to pursue their dreams in life. Although Roosevelt developed health challenges in the last three years, he never complained or allowed those challenges to prevent him from living his life and pursuing his dreams. His daily tenacity was a testament of his faith in God, and in living and enjoying every moment of life.

On May 18, 2016, Roosevelt received God's Clarion call and stepped into eternity to reunite with his parents, Roosevelt Sr., Elizabeth, his brother Wallace and a host of many family and friends. Roosevelt is survived by his son Courtney Render Miller (Gloria), Oliver and Nelson of Los Angeles, CA, Sharon Render Miller of CA, Shirley Miller Garrett formerly of New York, Rembert, SC, Celestine Miller Harris, formerly of New York, Charleston, SC, niece Cherise, nephew Michael (Dianne), grandnephews Stephen, Miller and Jordan of New York, Aunt Wilhelmina Dennis Scott, Rembert, SC, my Grandfather's closest surviving relative Wilhemina Atkinson Dean of Savannah, GA, and a host of Miller and Dennis family relatives around the United States, a group of friends in Yucca Valley, Landers, and members of the church of his last attendance in Yucca Valley, CA.

We shall miss our dearly beloved Roosevelt; he was indeed a shining star.

In lieu of flowers, a Roosevelt Miller, Jr. Scholarship Fund has been established, in care of Willow Grove AME Church.

Cemetery Details

Evergreen Memorial Park

802 N. Guignard Drive
Sumter, SC

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 11. 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM (ET)

Willow Grove AME Church
Horatio, SC

Tribute Wall



“ *Roosevelt Miller, Jr.*

October 04, 2023 at 11:33 AM