



## W. Lee Catoe

March 26, 1947 - June 3, 2021

Willie Lee Catoe, affectionately known as Lee, entered into eternal rest on June 3rd, 2021 at Prisma Health Baptist Hospital in Columbia, South Carolina. Lee was the youngest son of eleven children, born on March 26th, 1947 in Flat Rock, SC to the late Reverend Henry and Carrie Drakeford Catoe. He received his early religious training at Flat Rock Missionary Baptist Church in Westville, South Carolina.

Upon relocation to Columbia, he joined Second Calvary Baptist Church. He was a faithful and dedicated member, and served on the Board of Deacons, Brotherhood Ministry, and Calvaliers Choir. After graduating from Jackson High School in Camden, South Carolina in 1965, he continued his education at Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, Florida, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree then later obtained a Master's Degree from the University of South Carolina. He did further study at Arizona State University, University of Georgia

in Athens and Emory University. Upon graduation from Edward Waters College, Lee was drafted into the United States Army where he served honorably in the Vietnam War. Lee retired from the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce (GCCC) where he served as the Vice President for Community Affairs and Special Assistant to the President/CEO.

Prior to retirement, he served as Metro Director of the National Alliance of Businessmen, and at The GCCC as Executive Director of the Community Relations Council. While at the Chamber, he was instrumental in the

implementation of the current form of city government, the 4-2-1 Plan. He then went to work under Governor Carroll Campbell as the Executive Assistant to the Governor in the Office of Executive Policy and Programs. While working here, he was appointed as the governor's designee to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees for the University of South Carolina.

He was also invited as one of the first three African American men to join the Summit Club, a private business club. From there he worked as a Commissioner with the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission, then at the South Carolina Department of Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) as the Director, where he expanded numerous programs and grants and educated youth about the dangers of alcohol abuse. Lee served on the Board of Directors of the Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau, Columbia Museum, Richland/Lexington Counties, Cultural Arts Council, Children Unlimited, Inc. and the Columbia Housing Development Corporation. He was also on the Board of Visitors for Winthrop College, as well as a servant on the boards of the Family Service Center, Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality, Children's Trust Fund and United Cerebral Palsy for SC. He was a member of the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, Hospital Advisory and Educational Committees (SC Workers' Compensation Commission) and Environmental Planning Advisory Committee (Central Midlands Regional Planning Council). Lee consulted with the S.C. School Board Association, Carolina Society for Training & Development, Benedict College, National Commission on Career Education and the National Conference of Christians & Jews. He also served as a Statewide Campaign Coordinator for United Way. Lee was presented with a host of awards, two of which were Order of the Palmetto presented by the Honorable Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., Governor of S.C. and the Outstanding Black Alumnus award, presented by the Greater University of SC Alumni Association.

Aside from serving his community, Lee was an avid outdoorsman, and enjoyed spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren who called

him "Papi".

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brothers, Pernell W. Catoe and Henry Catoe, Jr., and three sisters: Mattie C. Allen, Jessie C. Drakeford and Elizabeth R. Catoe.

He leaves to cherish precious memories his wife Dr. Stephanie Lewis Catoe; his son, Lee Toddson (Shana) Catoe; grandson, Toddson Kevon; and two granddaughters, Michaela Aleisha and Lauryn Elizabeth; five sisters: Sarah (Nathan) Thomas, Florine Simons, Henrietta (Benjamin) Giles, Clemijene (Willie) Alexander and Marian (Roger) Fletcher; a mother-in-law Zinie Murray Lewis; sister-in-law C. "Kaye" Lewis Jefferson; brother-in-law Clarence Allen; and a host of nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to St. Jude's Children's Hospital or to a charity of one's' choice.

# Previous Events

## Burial

JUN 9. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Fort Jackson National Cemetery

# Tribute Wall



“ *W. Lee Catoe*

October 04, 2023 at 11:33 AM



“ *Shawne Colón lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



**Shawne Colón** - June 28, 2021 at 01:01 PM



“ *Natasha Suber lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



**Natasha Suber** - June 11, 2021 at 09:46 AM



“ *Priscilla Foggy Murrell lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



**Priscilla Foggy Murrell** - June 10, 2021 at 08:11 PM

ON

“ *Olandra Nowell lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



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**Olandra Nowell** - June 10, 2021 at 07:45 PM

MB

“ *Mary Bates lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



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**Mary Bates** - June 10, 2021 at 01:27 PM

(L

“ *I treasure the years we shared in community service and his leadership in so many roles and so many other places. Please accept my condolences.*  
*(Rev.) Marvin I. Lare*

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**(Rev.) Marvin I. Lare** - June 09, 2021 at 09:17 PM

LG

“ *Lena Grant lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



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**Lena Grant** - June 09, 2021 at 11:46 AM



“ Stephanie & Family,

*Wallace and I send our deepest condolences to you, Toddson and the entire family for your loss. We know that words cannot wipe away your tears, nor hugs ease any of the pain you're feeling now; but the comfort of God and your beautiful memories of Lee will remain in your hearts. Please know that our many thoughts and prayers are with you all during this difficult time.*

*Yours in Christ,  
Wallace & Gloria Preston*



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**Gloria Waters-Preston** - June 09, 2021 at 10:55 AM

TR

“ My prayers are with you and your family.



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**Trina** - June 08, 2021 at 08:04 PM

RJ

“ Rosetta Johnson lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe



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**Rosetta Johnson** - June 08, 2021 at 07:49 PM

CM

“ Stephanie & Family- I am so sorry for the loss of your husband. May God wrap his arms around you and comfort you always. Thinking of you and praying for you and your family.

Love- Carla McNiff  
Blythewood, SC

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**Carla McNiff** - June 08, 2021 at 02:42 PM

KH

*Dear Stephanie and Family, I am broken hearted to learn of the passing of your husband and father. Columbia is a better place because of Lee's tireless advocacy and leadership. He not only has touched the hearts and minds of those fortunate to have worked with him, he has strengthened the foundation of our community, a legacy few can achieve. He is gone too soon and will be greatly missed.*

*In deepest sympathy, Kathleen Hayes*

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**Kathleen Hayes** - June 08, 2021 at 10:37 PM

HB

“ Harriett Brevard lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe



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**Harriett Brevard** - June 08, 2021 at 01:48 PM

LF

“ Lachelle Frederick lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe



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**Lachelle Frederick** - June 08, 2021 at 12:23 PM

CD

“ Lee was always sharing knowledge and wisdom in casual conversations. This was always so motivating for me. Lee actively visited my mom, Carrie Turner, while recovering from a serious automobile accident. In addition he generously provided dinner expenses for myself and my brothers. I thought to myself now that is such an act of kindness and how observant of him. Rest in Paradise Lee!

*Cassandra Turner Drakeford*

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**Cassandra Drakeford** - June 08, 2021 at 11:58 AM

MG

“ Mario Glisson lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe



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**Mario Glisson** - June 08, 2021 at 11:48 AM

CM

“ *Stephanie & Family-*  
*I am very sorry for your loss of your husband. I am thinking of you and your family. God is always there for you and will be with you in the days ahead. Grief has no time line. You are in my thoughts and prayers.*

*Carla McNiff*  
*Blythewood, SC*

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**Carla McNiff** - June 08, 2021 at 10:30 AM

SD

“ Mr. Catoe served as the Director of the South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services for 8 years, the second longest serving director of the agency. I was fortunate to be his Chief of Staff for a majority of those years. He was always ready with a smile and his quick wit made the whole agency feel at ease, even when we faced some hard times. I will remember him for his service to this state and more importantly, his friendship and mentorship to me. As both our names were Lee, we often called ourselves Lee Squared. It was a great partnership. My sympathy for the entire family.

*Stephen Lee Dutton*

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**Stephen Lee Dutton** - June 08, 2021 at 10:26 AM

DP

“ May God’s hope bring comfort to your soul and peace to your heart and mind during this time and days ahead.  
*With heartfelt condolences*  
*Desi Carter Pate & Family*



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**Desi Carter Pate** - June 08, 2021 at 09:19 AM

AN

“ Alex Nelson lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe



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**Alex Nelson** - June 08, 2021 at 09:08 AM

IS

“ *Ira, Gail, & Khari Scott lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



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**Ira, Gail, & Khari Scott** - June 07, 2021 at 10:44 PM



“ *My entire life Mr. Catoe was always ready with a smile, a joke, and a warmth of person. I will miss talking about gardens and such with him. My thoughts and prayers are with Todd and Stephanie.*

*Love, Stephanie Abramson Hayden*

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**Stephanie Abralise** - June 07, 2021 at 05:08 PM

VS

*Lee and I spent much time standing in our yards trading stories, and laughing, Tami and I will really miss him.  
Vincent and Tami Northington*

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**Vincent L. Northington Sr** - June 08, 2021 at 09:42 AM

DW

“ *Dywanna Washington purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of W. Lee Catoe.*



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**Dywanna Washington** - June 07, 2021 at 01:57 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of W. Lee Catoe.*



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June 07, 2021 at 01:14 PM



“ *Elizabeth Pinchback lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



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**Elizabeth Pinchback** - June 07, 2021 at 10:43 AM



“ *Clara K Wade lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



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**Clara K Wade** - June 07, 2021 at 10:37 AM



“ *Angela Prophet lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



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**Angela Prophet** - June 07, 2021 at 10:26 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of W. Lee Catoe.



June 06, 2021 at 11:46 PM



“ Carolyn Cannon lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe



Carolyn Cannon - June 06, 2021 at 05:38 PM



“ May the beautiful memories of your loved one bring you and your family comfort now and strength in the days ahead. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers.  
With Heartfelt Sympathy,  
Carolyn Clark Cannon

Carolyn Cannon - June 06, 2021 at 05:36 PM



“ Our prayers and condolences to the Catoe Family...  
From the late Vannie & Sophia Clark Drakeford Sr.  
Betsy, Geral, Vannie Jr., & Alvenia

Alvenia Drakeford Dinkins - June 06, 2021 at 02:18 PM

RB

“ *The Bell family send condolences and love to the Catoe family in honor of your love one.*



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**Ruby Bracey Bell** - June 06, 2021 at 01:15 PM

SR

“ *Shirley Reynolds sent a virtual gift in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



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**Shirley Reynolds** - June 06, 2021 at 12:07 PM

TC

“ *So sorry to hear about cousin Willie Lee Catoe. May god continue to strengthen the family love always Thomasenia Drakeford Cauthen*

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**Thomasenia Drakeford Cauthen** - June 06, 2021 at 11:37 AM

TF

“ *Tom Felder lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe*



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**Tom Felder** - June 05, 2021 at 11:50 PM

RB

“ To The Family of Mr. W.Catoe, I'm sorry to hear of passing! We would to extend our sincere condolences! May God keep you close!Rev.Norman and Carolyn Butler-Duckett 🙏🙏

Rev.Norman and Carolyn B.Duckett - June 05, 2021 at 07:12 PM

BB

“ Bessie Catoe Bracey lit a candle in memory of W. Lee Catoe



Bessie catoe Bracey - June 05, 2021 at 05:13 PM

JF

"Condolences to the family. We thank Lee for his contributions."

James M. Hinton Foundation Board of Directors

James M Hinton Foundation - June 07, 2021 at 06:58 PM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of W. Lee Catoe.



June 05, 2021 at 04:00 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of W. Lee Catoe.*



June 04, 2021 at 11:01 PM



“ *Condolences to the Catoe family. Praying your strength during your time of loss.*



**Mary Bracey Brevard and family** - June 04, 2021 at 09:36 PM



*My deepest sympathy to the Catoe family. To be absent from the body is to be present with the lord.*

**Mattie Rabb Williams** - June 05, 2021 at 06:56 PM



*Our heartfelt condolences to the Catoe family.*

**Robert and Pearl Thomas Columbia, SC** - June 05, 2021 at 09:52 PM



*My condolences to our family may God keep you In good strength and praying for all with love Carrie Turner*

**Carrie Turner** - June 07, 2021 at 05:05 PM



*I am so very sorry to learn of Lee's death. He was a great friend. We worked together at the SC Workers' Compensation Commission and often shared meals. We studied together at the Judicial College in Arizona. His death leaves a hole in my heart. Sherry Shealy Martschink*

**Sherry Shealy Martschink** - June 09, 2021 at 12:17 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of W. Lee Catoe.* ”



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June 04, 2021 at 04:07 PM