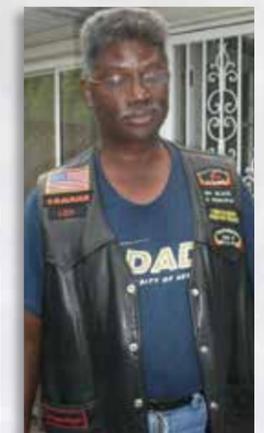


*Honoring the Life of*  
**BENARD RUSSELL**

SUNRISE | August 10, 1956  
SUNSET | November 14, 2023

# Benard's Journey **BUN'S** Corner

*Life is a long but wondrous journey that begins with a single step.*



*Benard~*

My love, you were the light of my life and your love still shines bright.

The memories we shared comfort me every day. Although you are no longer with me, I still feel your love. I honor our life together by focusing on the joy and plans we shared.

I never wanted to be without you, and life without you by my side is going to be possible because I will get through each day because of the love we shared.

You left this world, but not my heart and even death can not end my love for you!

Ours was a great love story and your death left a gaping hole in my life that I will fill with the love we shared.

Loving you always,  
~ Bunny

LUCAS MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
Friday, November 24, 2023  
Family Visitation | 2pm to 4pm

Saturday, November 25, 2023  
Homecoming Celebration | 2:30pm

Pastor Michael A. Crawford  
Officiant

# Order of Service



## MUSICAL PRELUDE

Processional . . . . . Minister & Family  
Old Testament Scripture  
Psalm 121 .....*Dr. Angelique Orr, cousin*  
(Chicago, IL)

New Testament Scripture  
2 Corinthians 1:3-4.....*Jajuan Sudds, niece*  
(Inglewood, CA)

Prayer of Comfort..... *Min. Vernita Fenn, cousin*  
*Living Word Christian Center (Chicago, IL)*

## MUSICAL SELECTION

*Robert Crawford, Music Director*  
Straightway Bible Fellowship

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & REMARKS  
(2 minute limit per person please)

## SPECIAL PRESENTATION

READING OF OBITUARY  
*Keith Acey*



## EULOGY

*Pastor Michael A. Crawford*  
Straightway Bible Fellowship

4386 Mayfield Road • South Euclid, Ohio 44121  
216-381-4653

## RECESSIONAL

*Family will receive guests immediately following the service up the stairs of Lucas Memorial Chapel.*

*There is a handicap ramp off the Garfield Blvd. entrance of the building.*

## Interment

Monday, November 27, 2023 @ 1:00PM  
Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery  
10175 Rawiga Road • Seville, Ohio 44273  
Departing from Lucas Memorial Chapel @ 12 Noon

## Pallbearers

Vanguards of Cleveland

## Acknowledgements

*The family of Benard Russell wishes to extend sincere gratitude to family and friends for prayers, support, and loving acts of kindness during this time of bereavement.*

LUCAS MEMORIAL CHAPEL, INC.  
9010 Garfield Boulevard  
Garfield Heights, OH 44125



# Honoring Benard

The story of Benard Russell begins in 1956 Cleveland Ohio; born to James Monroe & Corlius Russell on August 10. He was the second of four children & grew up on Darwin Road during the Civil Rights movement.

As a young man Benard apprenticed at J&B Sunoco on East 143rd & St. Clair under his father who was not only a master mechanic but a leader in the Freedom Fighters organization and an active civil rights activist.

Benard graduated Collinwood High School Class of '74 and briefly enrolled at Cleveland State University before joining the United States Air Force. As a member of the 305th Transportation Squad at Grissom Air Force Base in North Central Indiana, Benard received several accolades for outstanding contribution and service to the mission of Strategic Air Command. After four years of service to his country, Benard returned to Cleveland where he encountered the Vanguard's Of Cleveland; a chapter of the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters. These contacts mentored Benard as he prepared for the written and physical exam for the Cleveland Fire Department; of which he scored EXCEEDINGLY well, earning a high position on the list of candidates for hire. Benard was hired July of 1983.

Benard enjoyed a very rewarding career as a Cleveland Firefighter and as a loyal and active member of the Vanguard's; serving as trustee and chairman of the entertainment committee which was the fund-raising arm of the organization. With Benard's support, the Vanguard Legal Defense Fund was capable of funding lawsuits that reached the Supreme Courts TWICE to fight discriminatory hiring & promotional practices within the city. Benard, like his father before him was a hands-on activist that loved working to empower his community.

Benard had taken a personal and very active interest in the mission of providing smoke detectors to every resident in and around the Glenville, Forest Hills & St. Clair-Superior neighborhoods. He later then widened this undertaking to include as many residents on the east side of Cleveland as he could reach. Benard was not just providing smoke detectors, he gave of his time personally installing every smoke detector himself. Benard could not accept the tragedy of a fire call where the presence of a working smoke detector could have prevented the loss of life or property. Because of this dedication, the city recognized Benard as Firefighter of the Year in 1996.

On July 11 of 1976, Benard married his high school sweetheart, Wilma Lewis. Together they raised three smart, strong and spirited children: Shaun Monroe, Stanton Phillip and Simone Diane Russell. Benard was a strong, committed and loving father who guided two college graduates and a certified Army hero; all as strong-willed as he was. Benard was an indomitable spirit (and this cannot be understated



by those who knew him well); but he was also a selfless figure with an extremely generous heart and personality. Benard studied scripture under Elijah Span, Pastor emeritus of Straightway Bible Fellowship.

Benard enjoyed playing chess, bid-whist, backgammon, backyard parties with "ol school" music, gardening and riding his motorcycle.

Upon his unexpected death, Benard's memory is cherished by his wife of 47 years, Wilma, two sons, Shaun (46) of Charlotte, North Carolina; Stanton (39) of Fayetteville, North Carolina and Simone (30) of Garfield Heights, Ohio. Three grandchildren: KaMoria (6), Luca (5), KaMaia (2) and expecting a 4th granddaughter Ava in the next several weeks. Two sisters Verneda Williams & Vanessa Abston, and brother Mustafa Shabazz; as well as a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Benard will be greatly missed. He left a hole in our fabric of life that only time and GOD can fill.

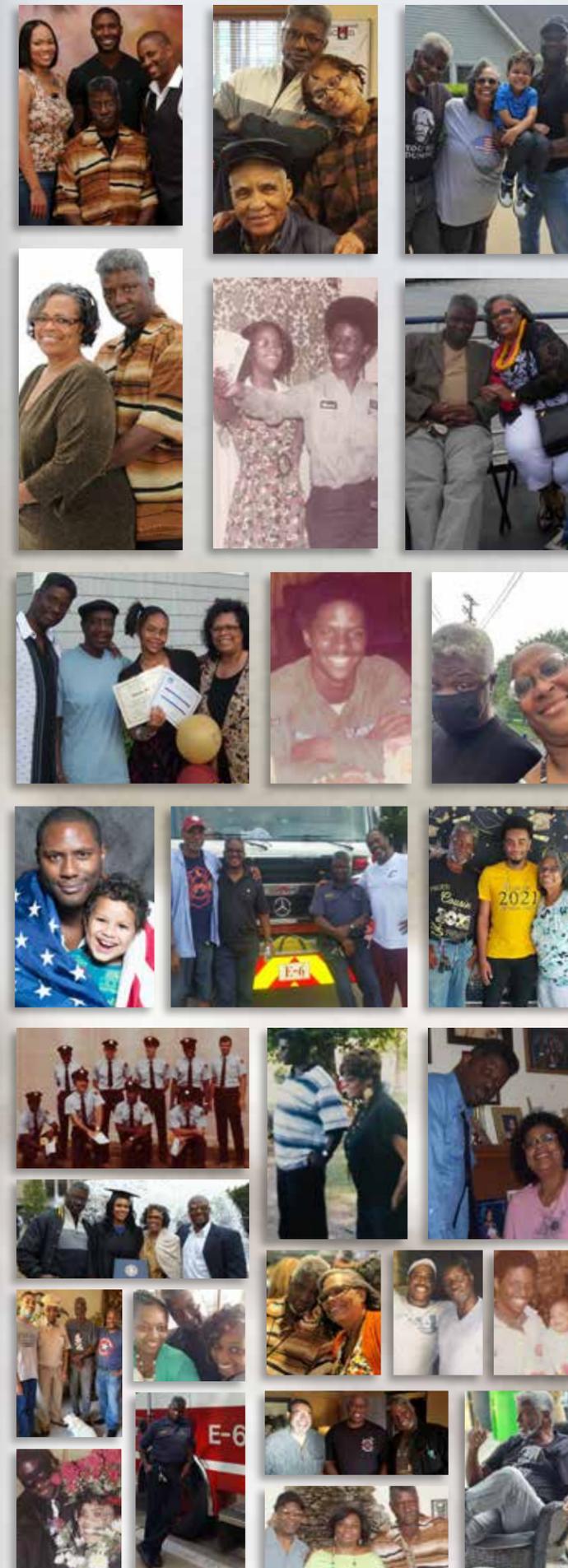


*Not how did he die, but how did he live?  
Not what did he gain, but what did he give?  
These are the units to measure the worth  
Of a man as a man, regardless of birth.  
Not, what was his church, nor what was his creed?  
But had he befriended those really in need?  
Was he ever ready, with word of good cheer,  
To bring back a smile, to banish a tear?  
Not what did the sketch in the newspaper say,  
But how many were sorry when he passed away.  
Dad, I am often told I am just like you.  
I am honored beyond measure if that is true.  
You were the best example of what a man should be.  
I am overwhelmed that someone would say that of me.  
I never told you enough, how proud I am  
to be called your son.  
Now that you are gone, I want to tell everyone.  
You gave me much more than a name,  
Someday, I hope my son says the same.  
- Summer Sandercox & J. Allen Shaw*



Humbly  
The Family

## FOR THE GOOD TIMES



Let The Work I Do Speak For Me