



Mr. Merritt Marks

September 27, 1927 - January 7, 2021

Life of Merritt Marks

Merritt Paul Marks was born on September 27, 1927 in Opelousas, Louisiana to Carlton Berchman Marks and Viola Valmont Marks. The oldest of seven children—a point of great pride for Merritt—he enjoyed playing board games with his five sisters and only brother, James. As a child, Merritt enjoyed listening to music, playing dodge ball, and reading to his siblings. One of his favorite stories was “The Littlest Angel.” Merritt was also known for having a sweet tooth and always enjoyed his sweets. At an early age, Merritt liked drawing still life and sketches of his sisters. Merritt was baptized at Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Opelousas. A devout Catholic, he often shared his passion for his faith with his family and friends.

Merritt left Opelousas after high school in 1947 to join the U.S. Marine Corps. After serving honorably, Merritt attended Xavier University of Louisiana and became a proud HBCU (Historically Black College or University) graduate, earning a degree in Fine Arts. Shortly after graduating, Merritt re-joined the military, this time as a member of the U.S. Air Force. As an Airman, Merritt worked on Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in the drafting department creating blueprints and mechanical drawings.

After Merritt was honorably discharged from the Air Force, he pursued his dream of moving north and relocated to Chicago, Illinois. Once in Chicago, Merritt had several jobs, including working at the Sheraton Art Gallery where he loved admiring the vintage artworks, taking in the beauty of the top-of-the-line pianos, and experiencing the excitement of the gallery’s auctions. For a short time, Merritt drove the elevated train (known as the “El”) in Chicago. He became well known by many riders for using rhymes to announce his train station arrivals.

Later in his career, Merritt worked for 31 years as an art instructor for the Cook County House of Corrections. Initially, he taught mechanical drafting, but later Merritt honed teaching art as a tool to rehabilitate and provide his students with marketable skills. Merritt had a great passion for music and art. Over the years, his operatic voice could often be heard in the church choir or during his enthusiastic participation in Sunday mass. He also exhibited his artistic flare through calligraphy in his frequent letters to family and friends, his stylish dress, and his hand-drafted poetic expressions.

During Merritt's early years in Chicago, he met and married Marjorie Zinn (m. 1962-67), and they shared one daughter, Michelle. In 1970, he married the love of his life, Josephine (Enoch). Merritt and Josephine celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary shortly before God called Merritt home on January 7, 2021.

Merritt is preceded in death by his father, Carlton Marks; his mother, Viola Marks; and his brother, James Marks. He is survived by his wife, Josephine; daughter, Michelle (Joseph) Williamson; his sisters, Janie Dupree, Carolyn Marks, Rebecca Marks, Margaret (Arthur) Thompson, and Joyceline (Vincent) Stelly; sister-in-law, Lillian Marks; aunt, Juanita Blackwell; three granddaughters, Felicia (David) Bond, Margaret (Joseph) Savage, and Virginia Williamson; three great grandchildren; nieces; nephews; cousins; and many cherished friends, including the other faithful parishioners with whom he worshipped at Saint Columbanus Catholic Church in Chicago.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Williams Funeral Home of Opelousas, 337-942-2037.

<http://rememberingmerritmarks.com/>

Comments



“ Words can never sum up how Blessed we all are, to have you in our lives. From my first plane ride, seeing the Nutcracker, teaching me French, improving my art skills, the list goes on. You were a great man and Heaven sent. We LOVE you, Rest in Peace

Azelea Williams - January 16 at 08:15 AM



“ My condolences and prayers go out to the Marks Family. I will forever miss the Sunday telephone chats we had. It seems we could talk for hours just about family updates. Cousin Merritt, thank you for sharing your memories RIP -Cousin Anita Morrow

Anita Morrow - January 16 at 12:50 AM



“ Lillian Rideaux Savoy lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merritt Marks



Lillian Rideaux Savoy - January 13 at 10:02 AM



“ My deepest condolences to the Marks family. May your memories of Merritt comfort your heart during this difficult time.

Martha Johnson-Hamilton (Anolia Marks) - January 13 at 10:00 AM



“ The Holy Ghost Church Marian choir offers prayers and condolences to Mr. Marks' family as they celebrate his remarkable earthly life and heavenly homegoing. May he Rest In Peace.



Andrea Brisco, HG Marian Choir - January 12 at 02:16 PM



“ My uncle was a great Man! He loved good food and red wine, when he could get it. He was very fashionable! I loved him and he will be missed! RIP Uncle Mark

Fern M Brown-Tyler - January 12 at 12:07 PM