



## Howard Austin

October 31, 1921 - April 29, 2014

Mr. Howard Austin October 31, 1921 - April 29, 2014 OPELOUSAS- Funeral services will be held at 11:00 AM, Monday, May 5, 2014 at Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Opelousas, LA for Mr. Howard Austin, 92, who entered eternal rest on Tuesday, April 29, 2014 at his residence in Opelousas. Interment will be in St. Landry Catholic Cemetery in Opelousas. Fr. Jaison Mangalath will officiate at the Mass of Christian Burial. During the last quarter century of his 92 years, Howard Austin gratefully acknowledged, "I've cheated death!" Born the first child of nine offspring from the union of Gilbert Austin & Elinor Meche, he witnessed the burials of two of his siblings (Fertis & Verdie Mae) before his 12th birthday. In adulthood, Howard outlived 2 more of his younger brothers ("LJ" & "Boy") by several decades and thrived. Throughout his vigorous longevity, as a proud American of African descent, Howard remained a fully active citizen engaged in numerous civic, political & social groups. He never lost vigilance and always sought to preserve & exercise hard won civil and political rights for his vulnerable, economically disadvantaged sisters & brothers of all skin shades & colors in the community. Additionally, Howard carefully, happily & unapologetically nourished all aspects of his soul as a Holy Ghost parishioner, lover of Zydeco music, good food & the companionship of lovely and vibrant women. Despite achy joints in his advanced age, he never missed the opportunity to dance to his beloved harmonies & rhythms until death fatally interrupted his mortal steps. Howard took his first breath as newborn babe just outside of Opelousas

town limits. After traveling the globe in a 21 year military career that thrust him into combat in the South Pacific as a 19 year-old WWII draftee and allowed him to reside in Europe, Asia and several different regions of United States, Master Sergeant Austin could think of no place finer to retire than his own Louisianan hometown. After participating in the desegregation of the US Army, as a 40 y.o. financially independent bachelor in the 1960's, Howard immediately joined the NAACP. He gathered with other concerned, like-minded compatriots and strategically began to battle for Civil Rights to end the racial discrimination that unfairly stunted the human potential of Black Americans to prosper in society. The loss of his first campaign for public office spurred Howard to file a successful Federal Civil Lawsuit that sought to increase the chances of political office representation for candidates of color by allowing district specific voting rather than citywide elections. Capitalizing on this change, with the support of family, friends & a track record of fair-mindedness, Howard consecutively won 7 re-elections to the St. Landry Parish Police Jury. He faithfully & conscientiously served his community for 28 years. During this time period, two of his career highlights include the implementation of: a) the first Head Start programming for pre-schoolers & their families in Opelousas and b) opportunities for summer employment in public service for local youths through the Federal CETA Job Training Partnership Act. When this second career ended, Howard directed his efforts to continue to increase voter registration and campaign for his political candidates. Throughout his life, numerous folks are gratefully indebted to Howard for sharing his personal financial acumen & resources with them in their times of fiscal crisis. Howard is immediately survived by 5 younger siblings Curtis of New Orleans, James of Richmond, CA, Gilbert, Jr. of Opelousas, Clydia Giron of Opelousas, & Evelyn Frelow of Baltimore, MD & other cousins. Howard often insisted that all children of the community were his own; and alongside of these were dozens of his nephews & nieces and great grandchildren ranging in age from 66 years to several-weeks-old. His confident spirit, discerning mind & good humor lives on in all of those who

were fortunate enough to know, respect & love him. Visiting hours will be observed from 7:00 AM until 10:30 AM Monday, May 5, 2014 at Williams Funeral Home in Opelousas. A rosary will be recited at 9:00 AM. Share words of comfort with the Austin family at [www.williamsfuneralhomes.net](http://www.williamsfuneralhomes.net) Funeral arrangements entrusted to Williams Funeral Home of Opelousas, 817 E. South St. 337-942-2037

# Tribute Wall



“ *Howard Austin*

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January 28, 2023 at 08:52 AM



“ *1 file added to the album DVD Tribute*



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**Majestic Memories** - August 26, 2015 at 04:42 AM



“ *Prayers and condolences are offered to the Austin family and the "families" he embraced and nurtured including but, not limited to: Holy Ghost Church, the city of Opelousas, and St. Landry parish.*

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**Andrea Brisco** - May 13, 2014 at 07:27 PM



“ *Our condolences to the Austin family.*

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**Vincent & Joyceline Stelly** - May 06, 2014 at 11:43 AM

IT

“ I was saddened to hear of the passing of Mr. Austin. Howard touched so many lives in Opelousas and the surrounding communities. His legacy as a fair- minded person with a genteel heart who helped so many will be remembered always. We were all blessed and have greatly benefitted from his work for equality for all. Opelousas has lost one of its great Trojan warriors, who spoke up always even under adverse circumstances. My deepest sympathies to his family.

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**isabella b thompson** - May 05, 2014 at 10:28 AM

MC

“ Our sincere sympathies to the Austin Family for their loss. Mr. Austin was bless to be active all of his life. God will stand by your side and help you.

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**Monroe & Joyceline Collins** - May 05, 2014 at 12:44 AM

RF

“ We would like to express our deepest condolences to the Austin family during their time of sorrow. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

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**Russell and Artherine Gradnigo White and Family** - May 04, 2014 at 09:19 PM

SM

“ Dear Austin Family, Please accept my sincerest condolences on the loss of Howard. He was a good friend to us all. He will be missed. All the best, Stella J. Mason

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**Stella J Mason** - May 03, 2014 at 04:51 PM

CP

“ *Please accept my sincere condolences on the death of your brother. May his soul rest in peace. Your family is in my prayers.*

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**Carol A. Phefferkorn** - May 03, 2014 at 01:42 PM

AP

“ *His footprints are immeasurable to the St Landry community. Thank you for being our Giant, and letting us stand on your shoulders!*

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**Adam & Melanie Prince** - May 02, 2014 at 08:53 PM