



Jerry L. Gentry

June 3, 1947 - July 20, 2020

Mr. Jerry L. Gentry, “Trigg,” 73, originally of Lexington, Kentucky, entered eternal rest on July 20, 2020 at the Seattle VA Medical Center. Jerry was born June 3, 1947, the son of Mrs. Lillian Ballew Gentry and the late George E. Gentry, Sr. At an early age Jerry confessed hope in Christ at the Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Lexington, KY. He was a member of the Concord Predestinarian Baptist Church, Richmond, KY. Although not a member, he was active with the youth group at the Historic St. Paul AME Church, Lexington, KY. Jerry was a graduate of the old Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, Lexington, KY, Class of 1966. He participated in basketball, football, track and field, and the marching band. After graduation, Jerry enlisted in the United States Navy where he served as an Aircraft Carrier Electrician for 23 years, traveling throughout the Western Pacific, Gulf of Tonkin, South China Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea. Jerry also did three tours in Vietnam. His last assignment before retiring in 1989 was as supervisor of the Aviation Electrical Branch on board the USS Nimitz, an aircraft carrier based out of Bremerton, WA. He later worked at a Seattle Shipyard, U.S. West, and the U.S. Postal Service.

After his retirement, Jerry moved to Seattle, volunteering at the Downtown Food Bank at Pike Place, and eventually becoming the lead janitor at Pike Place Senior Center, a position in which he was lovingly remembered by countless guests and visitors. During this time, Jerry also struggled with alcoholism, a struggle about which he was open. After hitting rock bottom, he decided to take charge of his life again by entering rehab in 1998. He remained sober for the rest of his life.

In 2006, through the Seattle Housing and Resource Effort (SHARE) program, Jerry found his way to All Saints Episcopal Church in Rainier Beach, where he eventually served as sexton for many years. When All Saints closed its doors in 2013, and the buildings began housing the Atlantic Street Family Resource Center, Jerry continued as the residential building manager (or “gentleman in residence” as he was fondly known). Like most things in which Jerry was involved, this work

was more than a job for him—much more. He became a grandfather to countless children, a father figure to single mothers and others in the neighborhood. As he once said, “Sometimes someone needs a little rainbow in their cloud, if only for a minute.” For hundreds of people, Jerry was that rainbow.

Jerry had been a member of the St. Peter’s Episcopal Church since 2014, active in many ministries, including serving as an usher, a reader, on the coffee hour team, and perhaps most memorably as St. Nicholas of Myra. As he once said to his good friend, Dawn Blanch, “Dawn, when I’m asked to serve, I serve.”

Preceded in death by his father, George E. Gentry, Sr. and sister, Norma J. Brack, Jerry leaves to mourn his passing his mother, Lillian Ballew Gentry; his siblings, Paulette (Samuel) Coleman and George (Diane) Gentry, Jr.; his nieces, Jennifer (Marvin) Baker and Toleka (Tyrone) Simpson; his nephews, John (Sharon) Williams, Craig (Ly’Tonya) Williams, Philip Gentry, Trenten Gentry, Joseph Coleman, and Andrew Gentry; an uncle, James (Annell) Ballew; an aunt, Verdell Gentry; and a host of other relatives and friends. While in Seattle, Jerry was looked upon by many as a father, grandfather, uncle, mentor, and friend. He had a very special group of friends who adopted him as family, looked after him, and were with him until the end: Florida Marie, Fallon, Sheila, Shemeka, Marcella, Raquel, Dawn, Alma M., Junior, Charley, and Curtis.

Cemetery Details

Camp Nelson National Cemetery- Nicholasville, Kentucky

Previous Events

Service

AUG 11. 12:30 PM (ET)

Smith and Smith Funeral Home

340 East Third Street

Lexington, KY 40508

(859) 255-6273

<https://www.smithandsmithfuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Jerry L. Gentry*

February 01, 2023 at 11:02 AM