

12-7-1988

## RS-obit; 1988-12-07; Willis, Fred (a)

The Royal Serenaders Male Chorus

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12/10/88

The Buffalo News/Sat

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## Fred D. Willis Sr. Is Dead; Was Hospital Executive

A memorial service for Fred D. Willis Sr., assistant to the vice president for planning at Buffalo General Hospital, will be held at 6 p.m. today in the Emmanuel Temple Seventh Day Adventist Church, Peckham and Adams streets.

Willis, 70, died Wednesday (Dec. 7, 1988).

A native of Winston-Salem, N.C., he lived in Buffalo most of his life and was associated with Buffalo General for nearly 20 years.

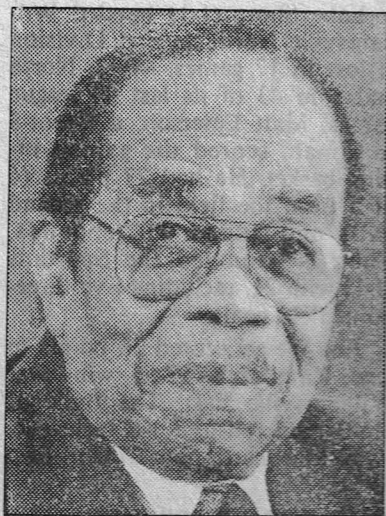
In 1969 he joined an advisory board charged with planning programs for the hospital's Community Mental Health Center. He served a two-year term as chairman of the center's board of directors and was a member of the hospital board of trustees from 1972 to 1979.

Willis was named manager of Buffalo General's Ambulatory Services Clinic in 1979, and when planning began in 1980 for the hospital's 16-story tower, he was appointed an assistant to vice president for planning, a position he held until his death.

"In the almost 20 years he was associated with us, Fred touched and influenced hundreds of lives," said Dr. William V. Kinnard Jr., Buffalo General president. "We will never forget his gentle, caring and compassionate manner."

A community leader, Willis was a member of the Community Action Organization in the 1960s. He later served as VISTA coordinator for Erie County and in 1968 returned to the CAO as youth development director.

In 1971 he became executive director of the Drug Abuse Research and Treatment Center. There he created and directed a countywide mental health program serving 250,000 residents.



Fred D. Willis Sr.

A lifelong Democrat, he also was a musical figure who performed as a soloist, director and arranger, once collaborating with Duke Ellington to present a concert of sacred music at Kleinhans Music Hall. He was a member of several singing groups and director of the Twin Coach Choir.

Willis was an elder in the Emmanuel Temple Church, where he was choir director and taught a class on the spirit of prophecy.

Surviving are his wife, the former Alice McPheters; his mother, Sadie C. Willis of New York City; two sons, Fred Jr. and Cleo V., both of Dayton, Ohio; five daughters, Mildred E. Gill of Pine Forge, Pa., Ruth E. of Orlando, Fla., Linda C. Edgecombe of Norwalk, Conn., and Karen A. Britton and Ava M. Rivers, both of Huntsville, Ala.; a stepdaughter, Rosalind; two brothers, William R. Jr. and James P. Sr. of New York; two sisters, Rosa E. Small of New York and Mary C. Fulton of Winston-Salem, and 21 grandchildren.