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Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church

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Service of Triumph

of a life well-lived for

Thomas T. Edwards

Friday, July 9, 2004
10 'Oclock in the Forenoon

Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church

641 Masten Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14209

Reverend G. Ewart Morris, Pastor
Sunrise
December 8, 1927

Sunset
July 3, 2004

"... do unto others expecting nothing in return."
At the passing of Thomas Taylor Edwards, the city of Buffalo and the business community has lost someone very special – a man held in the greatest affection and respect. In the present day of rush and drive there is serious danger of giving way to the temptation that we have no time to devote to the little duties of being thoughtful and kind.

Of all the beautiful things in life, one of the most beautiful is character; Thomas T. Edwards possessed a beautiful character. He was a tireless and unselfish laborer among us. The good he did, the things he taught and gave exemplified the depth of his character. He possessed the Abrahamic type of faith, filled with the spirit. He extended friendship free of deceit and met all with a kindly smile. He was a hard worker who sought to help and encourage all who were in need – always busy and ever alert to find something to do or a word to encourage.

THOMAS TAYLOR EDWARDS was born to Frank and Lillian Bullock Edwards on December 8, 1927, in Henderson, NC. He attended the Vance County School System. After completing his education, he moved to Washington, DC and on June 7, 1949 enlisted in the US Air Force. He was stationed in Germany and rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant. He was honorably discharged on December 5, 1952. He was united in holy matrimony to Johanna on November 23, 1953. After settling in Buffalo, he joined the Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church.

Mr. Edwards was a faithful and devoted member of Lincoln Memorial since 1958. He served on a number of boards and committees, including the Finance Committee, the Board of Trustees, Pastor Parish Relations, Administrative Council and Council on Ministries and he was a member of Lincoln’s Men’s Club. At the time of his death he was a member and the treasurer of the Board of Trustees.

Thomas had a childhood dream of becoming a funeral director. After much soul searching and contemplation he applied and was accepted at the Simmons School of Embalming and Mortuary Science in Syracuse, New York. In September 1959 he accomplished his goal – graduated with honors and completed courses to become a licensed funeral director. He returned to Buffalo where he did his internship under the late Sherman L. Walker. He worked for Mr. Walker for seven years. In 1966 he worked with the H. Alfred Lewis Mortuary and proved himself as an experienced embalmer and funeral director. He became manager and remained with H. Alfred Lewis until he decided to open his own business. On August 23, 1970, Thomas T. Edwards Funeral Home Inc. was founded fulfilling a life long dream.

Thomas was affiliated with St. John Lodge #16 F & M PH (past Master); Honorary Past Potentate of Hadji Temple #61 AEASONMS; the Bison Consistory #29 AASR; Past Excellent High Priest of Companion Chapter #35 Royal Arch Masons; Grand Trustee Emeritus of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of NYS; elevated to the honorary 33rd Degree in 1985 by the United Supreme Council. He was also a member of the US Chamber of Commerce, Buffalo Urban League, life member of the NAACP, National Funeral Directors Association and a yearly sponsor of the Black Achievers Awards. He was a member of the Erie-Niagara Funeral Directors Association and NYS Funeral Directors Association.
Thomas lived, worked and operated a successful business in the inner city of Buffalo for over thirty years. His name is synonymous with compassion commitment and reliability. He has been a role model for our youth and admirers to those seeking to own their own businesses. He served and supported the community at every call without hesitation verbally and financially.

He was predeceased by Frances (Ambrose) Robinson formerly of Buffalo; Mary Bell (James) Burton of Henderson, NC; Clementine (David) Bishop of Washington, DC, William M. (Clarice) Edwards of Cherryville, NC.

On Saturday, July 3, 2004, he was translated from the labors of this life and cherished memories will ever remain with his devoted wife: Johanna; sisters: Ruth E. (Prince) Smith of Sedalia, NC; Ruby E Nottage of Bel-Aire, MD; Olivia E. (Thomas) Williams of Greenwood, SC; two aunts, Alfreda Blackwell, Henderson, NC; Annie Hobbs of New Jersey, several nieces and nephews; godchildren: Jenice Smith and Vernon K. Jones; his loving staff and children of Thomas T. Edwards Funeral Home, Inc., special recognition to his primary caregiver, Louis “Skip” Gist and the Center for Hospice and Palliative Care.

Dear Thomas,

Even though you are gone, your memory will always be carried on. You have touched my life in so many special ways, and I know that touch is in my heart to stay.

You will always be remembered for your big heart. I thank God for making special people in this world like you.

Let’s not think of this as a loss, but heaven’s gain, of a beautiful person, who has made a great impact in my life, as well as in the lives of others.

Just knowing you cared... helps to wipe all the tears away. The presence of your memory will make this day, and every day, brighter for me and all those you have touched.

I love you and will miss you dearly. As I reflect over the many years we have been blessed to have together, I am eternally grateful to God.

My love for you will never die. As each day comes, my love will continue to grow stronger.

Your love,
“Honey”

Johanna M. Edwards
ORDER OF SERVICE

Organ Prelude .......................................................... ................................. Mr. Willie Dorsey
Processional ................................................................. "Amazing Grace"
Opening Sentences
Hymn of Comfort .......................................................... "Blessed Assurance"
Prayer ............................................................... "Eternal God" UMH 369

The Lord's Prayer
UMH 895

Responsive Psalm .......................................................... Psalm 23 UMH 872
Selection ............................................................... "I Am Redeemed" UMH 754
The Gospel Choir, Lincoln Memorial UMC

Scripture Lessons:
Old Testament – Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Hymn ............................................................... "How Great Thou Art" UMH 77

Reading of the Obituary
(silently)

Reflections .......................................................... Mrs. Ruth Smith,
Sister

Mr. Bee Fogan,
President of Board of Trustees, Lincoln Memorial UMC

Mr. Brian K. Lewis

Mrs. Andrea Mays

Reverend Alan R. Core, Sr.

Selection ........................................................... "I Shall Wear a Golden Crown"
The Union

Eulogy and Words of Comfort ........................................... Reverend G. Ewart Morris

Hymn ............................................................... "It Is Well With My Soul" UMH 377

Commendation and Prayer of Thanksgiving ................................ UMH 874, 875

Dismissal with Blessing

Recessional ........................................................... "When We All Get to Heaven" UMH 701
Active Pall Bearers

Members, St. John’s Lodge #16 F & AM PH
Mr. Patrick J. Freeman, Worshipful Master

Honorary Pall Bearers

Casimir Skretny
William R. Willis, Sr.
Rev. Alan R. Core, Sr.
Darrell M. Saxon II
Andrea D. Mays
Rinaldo Moss
Rollin E. Carpenter
Clayburn J. Powell
Charles H. Simmons

E. Paul Smith
Gregory L. Smith
Tony L. Pickens
Linda R. Parker
Walter M. Griggs, Jr.
Michael A. Williamson, Sr.
Theodore Williamson, Sr.
Johnathan Gerald
Regina Stitt

Flower Bearers

Members, Naomi Chapter #10 OES PHA
Mrs. Fannie Mae Hilliard, Worthy Matron

Final Resting Place

Mount Calvary Cemetery
800 Pine Ridge Road
Cheektowaga, New York

Service of Care and Comfort

Provided by the Loving Staff of
Thomas J. Edwards Funeral Home, Inc.
995 Genesee Street
Buffalo, New York 14211

Acknowledgements

Mrs. Johanna M. Edwards and the Edwards Family wish to express our deep and abiding appreciation for the many expressions of love, comfort, support, kindness, prayers, and sympathy extended to us at this time in our lives.
We will appropriately acknowledge all individual acts and endeavors in the near future. Thank you and may God richly shower you with His blessings.