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Obituary; 1963-06-12; Wiley Evers, Medgar

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IN MEMORIAM

MEDGAR WILEY EVERS

July 2, 1925 — June 12, 1963

Today's memorial observance is in tribute to Medgar W. Evers, Mississippi NAACP Field Secretary, killed in action June 12, 1963.

It is an occasion when we also memorialize other martyrs: Reverend George W. Lee of Belzoni, Mississippi, Harry T. Moore, Florida NAACP Field Secretary, Vernon Dahmer of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and Wharlest Jackson of Natchez, Mississippi, who also died as a result of their courageous labors in the cause of Full Freedom.

We realize, however, that the most lasting monument to these departed heroes must be built with continuing day-to-day deeds of dedication by those of us who remain. There are barriers in such areas as education, employment, public accommodations, housing and voting rights yet to fall.

With heartfelt appreciation for the sacrifices of these heroes and with faith in ultimate victory, we commit ourselves to this task.

MEDGAR WILEY EVERS, son of James and Jessie Evers, was born in Decatur, Mississippi, on July 2, 1925. He was educated in Decatur Elementary School, Alcorn High School, and Alcorn A. & M. College at Lorman, where he received a degree in Business Administration.

He served in the United States Army for two and a half years, during World War II, spending two years in the European Theatre of Operations.

He was agency director for the Magnolia Mutual Insurance Company of Mound Bayou, Mississippi.

In December, 1954 he joined the staff of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and served as Field Secretary for the State of Mississippi until his death.

He married Myrlie Louise Beasley of Vicksburg, Mississippi on December 24, 1951. Their three children are Darrel Kenyatta, age 13; Rena Denise, age 12; James Van Dyke, age 7.

He was the recipient of the American Veterans Committee Award for outstanding service in 1963.

The Litany of Remembrance and Dedication

(To be read responsively)

Leader — Almighty God whose concern for mankind is gloriously expressed through leaders of heroic mould and courageous action.

People — We give thee thanks and praise.

Leader — For great causes such as ours, which inspire men to give their all even their lives.

People — We give thee thanks and praise.

Leader — For the assurance that Justice will triumph in spite of violence, tensions and conflicts.

People — We give thee thanks and praise.

Leader — For daily evidences of sacrifice and devotion exhibited by individuals, young and old, in the communities where we live and serve.

People — We give thee thanks and praise.

Leader — For our deepfelt commitment to the job yet to be done if freedom is to be made a reality in our times.

People — We give thee thanks and praise.

All — Accept we pray these symbols of gratitude for lives well spent, and undergird our determination to face the challenges before us in the days ahead — Amen.

Solo — “The Lord’s Prayer”

The Memorial Address

Audience — “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing”

The Offertory

Pertinent Comments on the Situation in Mississippi and the Task Yet to be Done to Complete the Work of Medgar Evers.

The Closing Hymn — “We Shall Overcome”

The Benediction

The Prelude

The Opening Sentences

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid.

The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

The Opening Hymn — "My Country 'tis of Thee"

The Memorial Prayer:

Almighty and eternal father who has inspired courageous men to embrace great causes and perform noble deeds; grant unto us thy consolation and assurance in these moments of precious memory and renewed dedication.

Accept we pray our heartfelt gratitude for the labors of great souls who "forgot themselves into immortality." Make us wise enough to look beyond the tragic circumstances which attended their lives to the high ideals that sent them forth to serve so faithfully.

We reverently bow in memory of the sacrifice of thy servant Medgar Evers who symbolizes the spirit of martyrs in every age.

Keep us ever conscious of the abiding truth that no violence and artificial barriers can permanently hinder the increasing struggle for Justice and Freedom.

Kindle within us a deeper awareness of the contribution that these departed co-laborers have made to the victories we enjoy in this hour.

Enlarge we pray the borders of our vision so that we can identify the struggle of these heroes with the quest for dignity and democracy in faraway corners of the earth.

Then grant unto us the courage to erect for them a memorial of deeds in freedom's cause which will be worthy of their everlasting devotion and great trust.

In Thy name we pray — Amen.

The Scripture — (Romans 8, 35-39)

Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril or sword?

As it is written for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor depth, nor any creature shall separate us from the love of God.

The Moment of Silent Meditation

(Heads bowed in solemn tribute to the Memory of Medgar Evers.)