



Merrit Alston Jr.

September 10, 1941 - July 17, 2024

Merrit Alston, Jr., 82, of Peoria, formerly of Tennessee, passed away at 10:34 pm on Wednesday, July 17, 2024 at Carle Health – Methodist Hospital in Peoria. He was born on September 10, 1941 in Tennessee to Merrit Alston, Sr. and Ida Mae (Roberts) Alston. He was the 3rd oldest child born of 11 children produced by the union of his parents.

As a child, Merrit loved to go fishing and play the guitar. After becoming a young adult, he met and married Ruby L. Jones of Humphrey, Arkansas, and in 1964 they moved from Tennessee to Peoria, Illinois. Throughout his adult life in Peoria, Merrit worked at various places such as Caterpillar Inc., Sheridan Village where he served as a security officer, Hunt's Drive-In restaurant as a meat butcher, and the Howard Johnson Hotel (aka the HoJo Inn) as a maintenance technician. Most of his career, he worked as a well-known handyman, nearly mastering self-taught skills in electrical, plumbing, carpentry, and masonry; certainly a jack of all trades. Merrit was very popular on the CB Radio, spending many years transmitting and broadcasting over the airwaves as the "Black Bird", "King Krow", "Sugar Shack", "Wolfman Jack", and the "Mawl Dropper". Merrit learned how to grow crops at an early age, and for many years, wherever he lived, he tilled and cultivated fertile soil, and grew the most beautiful gardens. After each harvest, he proved to be a master cook of collard greens, sweet potatoes, pinto beans, black-skillet cornbread, and homemade biscuits from scratch, and several other foods.

During downtime, he enjoyed watching western cowboy movies, singing, and playing tunes on his guitar. Merrit wasn't committed to a specific church, but certainly committed to Christ at an early age, and was well versed in the biblical scriptures throughout his saved Christian life. He followed God's will for him to express genuine love to all whom he encountered.

He is survived by 3 brothers, Harry (Patricia) Alston, Robbie James Alston, and David (Dorothy) Alston, all of Memphis, Tennessee; 2 sisters, Georgia Dyson (Alston) of Brighton, Tennessee, and Jeanette Walker (Alston) of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Also surviving are his 3 sons, Jimmy L. Alston of Florida, Rodney (Erica) Alston, and Larry (Tiffany) Alston, both of Peoria; 3 daughters, Oonna Alston, Shanna (Allen) Sheegog, and Iescha Alston, all of Peoria, Illinois. Merrit had 29 grandchildren at the time of his death, including 3 step-grandchildren, Brooklyn Stewart, Donasia Caldwell, and Tiana Wright, all of Peoria; and a host of great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other family members, and friends. Also surviving is a special aunt, Mildred Tipton of Los Angeles, CA, who was so dear to him.

Merrit was preceded in death by his parents; Merrit Alston Sr. and Ida Mae (Roberts) Alston, 3 sisters; Mary Thomas (Alston) of Munford, TN, Bobbie Jean Alston of Memphis, TN, and Glenda Ousley (Alston) of Memphis, TN, 2 brothers; Robert Earl Alston of Peoria, and Harold "Hal-Wayne" Alston of Memphis, TN, his only and former wife; Ruby Lee Jones of Peoria, 3 grandsons; Kameron Alston of Chicago, Sah'eed Alston, and Ravante Ward, both of Peoria.

Merrit's life will be celebrated at 10:00 am on Saturday, August 3, 2024, at the New Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church in Peoria. Pastor Felton Beck of the Faith Tabernacle COGIC Church in Peoria will officiate. His visitation will be from 9:00 am to 10:00 am. also on Saturday at the church. The burial will take place in Parkview Cemetery in Peoria.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Schmidt-Haller Burial & Cremation Services in Peoria.

Repast will be at Trewyn Pavillion, 2219 S. Idaho St., Peoria, IL. 61605

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to New Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church.

Online condolences may be shared with Merrit's family at www.SchmidtHaller.com

Cemetery Details

Parkview Cemetery

2001 N. University
Peoria, IL 61604

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 3. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

New Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church
2112 W. Forrest Hill Avenue
Peoria, IL 61604

Funeral Service

AUG 3. 10:00 AM (CT)

New Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church
2112 W. Forrest Hill Avenue
Peoria, IL 61604

Committal Service

AUG 3 (CT)

Parkview Cemetery
2001 N. University
Peoria, IL 61604

Tribute Wall

DL

“ Mr. Alston was a great friend of my late father Reverend Alphonso Lyons Sr, whose CB Handle was “Globetrotter.” These two were always calling one another Globetrotter and Sugar Shack 😭😭😭😭. My condolences to the family

Don Lyons - July 30, 2024 at 03:42 PM

DL

I can only imagine these two in heaven getting on God's last nerve with their CB radios 😭😭😭😭

Don Lyons - July 30, 2024 at 03:44 PM

DW

May God's Blessings continue to be with the family during this difficult chapter in their lives
Family keep looking towards the hills & knowing that your help comes from the Lord
With Love & Respect
Jeneen & Dwayne Williams

Dwayne Williams - August 01, 2024 at 05:03 AM

FJ

Mr Alston and I have been friends for many a year I think I was about 17 when I met him it was ever so funny and always kept us laugh I'm going to miss him p-town / black agitator

Forrest Holcomb Jr - August 03, 2024 at 10:47 PM