



## Sylvester Eugene Hayes Jr.

August 1, 1947 - December 11, 2023

Sylvester Eugene Hayes, Jr. passed away peacefully on Monday, December 11, 2023. Gene was born on August 1, 1947, in Charlotte, NC, to Sylvester Eugene Hayes, Sr. and Bernice Sarah Hayes. As the oldest of eleven children, he took his responsibility as the eldest seriously and did his best to look out for his brothers and sisters. Gene spent his early years in the Bronx, NY, where he graduated from James Monroe High School and obtained his BA from City College of New York, where he played basketball and joined the brotherhood of Phi Beta Sigma fraternity, Alpha Delta Chapter in the Spring of 1967. He later relocated to Charlotte, NC in the early 1980s and even though his city changed, his passion for basketball never faded. He continued to share his love for basketball as a coach, impacting the lives of many young players and fostering a sense of camaraderie and growth on the court. Gene's ability to connect extended far beyond the basketball court. He was also an avid photographer and videographer, capturing countless precious moments for his family and friends. Through his lens, he preserved memories and found a way to express his artistry and capture the essence of those he loved. He was a true people person, creating

deep and lasting friendships wherever he went. Gene's natural warmth instantly puts people at ease, making them feel valued and cherished in his presence. His genuine interest in others and his kind-hearted nature made him the kind of person that people gravitated towards. Whether through a shared passion for basketball, a captivating photograph, or a heartfelt conversation, he made everyone feel seen, heard, and valued in his presence. The relationships Gene formed throughout his life were a testament to his warmth and genuine spirit. He believed in the power of building connections and fostering positive relationships, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of those who knew him. In the hearts of Gene's loved ones, he will always remain a source of love, light, and guidance. He is survived by his eight children, as well as two sons-in-law and two daughters-in-law. He also leaves behind thirteen grandchildren who brought joy to his life. Among his extended family are four brothers (with two brothers predeceased) and three sisters (with one sister predeceased). Additionally, he is remembered by three aunts, two uncles, numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and a multitude of friends who were touched by his presence and will forever hold him in their hearts. He will be remembered for his love of basketball, being the life of the party, and his infectious laughter and dry sense of humor.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 28. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

A.E. Grier & Sons Funeral and Cremation, LLC.  
2310 Statesville Avenue  
Charlotte, NC 28206  
(704) 377-4243  
info@aegriersonsfcc.com  
<https://www.aegriersonsfcc.com>

## Celebration of Life Service

DEC 28. 1:00 PM (ET)

A.E. Grier & Sons Funeral and Cremation, LLC.  
2310 Statesville Avenue  
Charlotte, NC 28206  
(704) 377-4243  
info@aegriersonsfcc.com  
<https://www.aegriersonsfcc.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sincere condolences to the Hayes family.*

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**The Redd family** - December 28, 2023 at 01:17 PM

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“ There are certain people in your life who you will never forget. These people are unforgettable because they're unique; they've touched you in some way, and ultimately, you feel seen, heard, and loved by them. Gene Hayes was one of those people, for me.

*My first memories of Gene were as a little girl sitting in my living room with my dad, Greg, and hearing the sound of Gene's really interesting laugh. I wondered how somebody could make that kind of sound. How does he do it? Is he inhaling or exhaling? I never said these things out loud, but I thought about them. The cool thing about Gene was that if he were laughing, he'd try to include you in on the joke, so I always felt like he'd always talk to me as a kid and ask me questions, not those standard questions like how school felt like he wanted to know who I was and how I was doing.*

*The other thing I remember about him is where his children were. Just like Gene, all of his children were special in some way. They were all so beautiful and interesting. I especially remember Yasmin and Jamal because I think they're around my age. I specifically remember driving in a Winibego that I think Gene had gotten and fixed up one summer to go to an amusement park. We had a blast!*

*The next chapter where I got to be in Gene's presence was in the mid-90s, and I was in my early 20s. By then, he'd had several other beautiful, unique, brilliant children: Barry, Nuri, Erin Tiffany, and eventually Sylvester. Man, what great memories we made!*

*My favorite memory of Gene in Charlotte while visiting him and the family was the time he went out to the grocery store to get dinner and came back with a pheasant that he had hunted for dinner. I remember thinking, "What is a city boy from the Bronx doing hunting pheasants?" But hey, that was Gene; he always had some skills you didn't know about. Like the time I discovered that he was a cameraman for the Charlotte Hornets. Who knew he worked in production, the same field that I worked in? No matter what, Gene was always very present with me and always appreciative of the*

*little things in life.*

*In one of my last conversations with him, after he had fallen ill, we just laughed and talked about my father. He told me stories about the two of them living together in Harlem, near Columbia, and all of their adventures and shenanigans. It was a quiet moment for the two of us to reminisce, and we bonded once again. Although Gene and I were not connected by blood, I always felt like he was my uncle or a family member. I will miss him. I'll miss that really, really interesting laugh, and I'll miss his joyous, simple, brilliant creative spirit. Rest in peace, Gene, and God bless the family.*

*From Angela Harmon, Greg's daughter*

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**Angela Harmon** - December 28, 2023 at 01:00 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Sylvester Eugene Hayes Jr..*



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December 27, 2023 at 02:00 PM