



Willie James Rhynes

March 15, 1935 - April 30, 2024

Willie James “Big Will” Rhynes, 89 of Charlotte, North Carolina transitioned peacefully on April 30, 2024 at Presbyterian Harris Hospice after being loved on by family and friends from far and near. Will was born to Lola & Will Rhynes on March 15, 1935 where the family lived on Alexander Street in the First Ward neighborhood. Later the family moved to Southside, in Historic Brooklyn, and then to the Double Oaks Neighborhood. Will’s immediate family included his mother and father, elder sister Bessie, elder brother George and younger brother L.W. After marrying Margaret Miller in 1961 and welcoming son, Michael a few years later, Will lived in University Park and then Hidden Valley Estates. Will attended Alexander Street School and the Historic 2nd Ward High School (the first high school for African Americans in Charlotte). After leaving school, Will worked with his youngest brother briefly at Speas Vinegar Plant in Charlotte, but decided soon after beginning work, that he wanted to work for himself rather than someone else. Will, managed the The Delacardos , a DOO-Wop Group from Charlotte and told many stories of his travels and adventures while managing them. His early sixties entertainment career afforded him the opportunity to meet James Brown, Aretha Franklin, The Supremes and Otis Redding. His close friendship with Otis Redding included writing songs, recording music and traveling. Will was scheduled to fly with Otis Redding during his tragic plane crash on December 10, 1967 in Madison, Wisconsin and many believed that the unidentified passenger was Will. Will was actually traveling in Brazil, South America when the plane

crashed, but was scheduled to be on the flight with Otis. In the sixties and seventies, Will owned many successful businesses within the Oaklawn, LaSalle, Beatties Ford Road & Statesville Avenue Corridor. These included three restaurants (Soul Bowl I & II and Crazy Baby), two pool halls, two nightclubs (Star Lounge and Mr. Silks), two clothing stores (The Smart Shop and Mr. Silks), one record store, a laundromat and three grocery stores (The Big Apple Statesville/Southside/Wilmore). His mentor in business was the late Cicero Grier who advised him in business and who later was the catalyst for the construction of his shopping center on South Tryon Street. That building housed The Big Apple Southside and The Big Apple Laundromat. Additionally, he owned property at the corner of Statesville Avenue and Badger Court that housed The Big Apple Statesville, Anderton's Barber Shop and The Last Stop. The Big Apple Statesville was the site of one of the largest block parties on the West Side in the late 80's and early 90's, the Annual Labor Day Cookout. Will donated all of the food for the event, there were dance contests and parades and a good time for all who attended. Many family members worked alongside Will...and family knew that as long as he had a business, they had a job! As well, the Double Oaks Community was Will's extended family...the game room was a safe haven for many neighborhood kids, his office was a place where hearts were opened and wisdom and funds were shared, and the grocery store was a place where customers were able to buy groceries within walking distance of their home or on credit, if need be, like the old days. Will loved to help, share and mentor those who wanted to become entrepreneurs like himself. Will's legacy lives on thru the Po Boy Snack, that originated at The Big Apple, and can now be found at Mr. Charles Chicken & Fish, which was founded by his Son, Michael and is family owned and operated by Michael, his business partners and our families. His retirement years were spent enjoying his family, in particular his grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his sister Bessie (Grover), brother George (Pam), L.W. (Mattie) and wife of 50 years, Margaret. Will leaves to cherish his memory his son: Michael (Crystal)

Sevone Rhynes, Sr, grandchildren; Morghyn (Wade) Rhynes-Mosely, Michael (Camille) Sevone Rhynes, Jr and Corwin Rhynes all of Charlotte, NC.

grandchildren; Jahylen, Wade & Justus Mosley, Logan Rhynes , sister in law, Pamela Rhynes, many nieces and nephews and a host of family and friends.

Cemetery Details

Oaklawn Cemetery

1615 Oaklawn Ave
Charlotte, NC 28216
(704) 336-2123

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 4. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

First Baptist Church-West
1801 Oaklawn Avenue
Charlotte, NC

Celebration of Life Service

MAY 4. 12:00 PM (ET)

First Baptist Church-West
1801 Oaklawn Avenue
Charlotte, NC

Tribute Wall

CL

“ *Mr Will will surely be missed. I knew him from The Big Apple in Double Oaks. RIP Mr Will. Praying for His Family.*

Caffie Little - May 07, 2024 at 01:16 PM

SG

“ *My Will was very kind and generous! May his legacy live on!
RIP*



Sabreina Gilliam - May 07, 2024 at 03:21 AM

JM

“ *Rest in Power Mr. Will, thanks for your contributions to New Life Academy of the Arts. When my grandson Ahmir and I would come order food from Mr. Charles Chicken and Fish, you would ask him what he wanted you to bring to the school and you bless the kids at the school. You will be remembered for your generosity. Sincere condolences to your family. Jackie McCullough*

Jacqueline McCullough - May 05, 2024 at 03:07 PM

WM

Mr. Will was a blessing to me in my life. God bless the family a great man he was.

willie jones from Holly springs miss. - June 27, 2024 at 07:38 AM

VG

“*“Condolences to the loss of your loved one” Yes Mr. Will (J) will truly be missed.” You said that your good days outweighed your bad days, and you wouldn’t complain. Goodbye my friend, you were a special person, a special face, someone we loved and can never be replaced. A thousand words won’t bring you back, we know because we tried, neither will a thousand tears, because we cried. Your Wings were ready but, our hearts were not. No More Pain My Friend. Rest In Peace!!!! Virginia Gilliard 05/04/24*

Virginia Gilliard - May 04, 2024 at 02:59 PM

AC

“*I am so Sorry for your Family Loss 🕊️ Will was a Good Man. He was very kind and funny. I enjoyed talking to him, he would always tease me about when I worked at the Big Apple. Rest In Paradise 🙏🙏 You will be Missed by many people. GOD BLESS*

Adriane Clinton - May 04, 2024 at 11:49 AM

CW

“*Cynthia Williams lit a candle in memory of Willie Rhynes*



Cynthia Williams - May 04, 2024 at 10:57 AM

WW

“*Wanda Whipple purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Willie James Rhynes.*



Wanda Whipple - May 04, 2024 at 06:26 AM

WW

“ Wanda Whipple planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Willie James Rhynes.

Wanda Whipple - May 04, 2024 at 06:26 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



A.E. Grier & Sons Funeral and Cremation, LLC. - May 03, 2024 at 12:47 PM

TF

“ Tim Furr and family purchased the Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet for the family of Willie James Rhynes.



Tim Furr and family - May 03, 2024 at 11:41 AM

FT

“ My sincere condolences are expressed to the family. Ann Taylor

Fortune Taylor - May 03, 2024 at 09:08 AM

PC

Love and sympathy to Mike and Family. Phyliss Caldwell and Sons

Phyliss Caldwell - May 03, 2024 at 04:07 PM

ST

*Our thoughts and prayers are with the family during this time of transition. May God give you peace that surpasses all understanding.
Shawn Gormley Turner and Family*

Shawn Gormley Turner - May 04, 2024 at 09:08 AM

RG

My condolences to Will family. Will and my husband go way, way back. Ed Garriett introduced me to Will and I can say he was a great man. He will be truly missed here on earth but God needed another flower in his garden. Rest in peace Will

Robbie Garriett - May 07, 2024 at 07:51 PM

AE

*My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. Rest in peace Mr. Ryan
Audrie Edwards*

Audrie Edwards - May 22, 2024 at 05:56 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Willie James Rhynes.*



May 03, 2024 at 09:08 AM

RF

“ *Richard Black and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Willie James Rhynes.*

Richard Black and family - May 03, 2024 at 09:08 AM

JM

“ Praying for the Rhynes family. So sorry for your loss. Big Will and I shared good down home conversations and laughs. He will truly be missed. To Mike and family treasure the memories.

With deepest sympathy
The Young and Mccollie families



Julia Mccollie - May 02, 2024 at 01:43 PM

JS

“ To the family of Willie James "Will" Rhynes; Sorry for your loss. Will help a lot of peoples in the Charlotte area. He loved his family. We Will be praying for you. John W. Love, Sr., John W. Love, Jr. (Buddy), Jewel C. Love, West Charlotte class 1962, West Charlotte National Alumni, Second Ward and West Charlotte Men's Breakfast Club, Par Busters Golf Group. John Love, Charlotte, NC.

John W. Love, Sr. - May 02, 2024 at 12:00 AM

LM

Uncle Will was the best. Was such a loving gentle Giant. Always willing to help others. Everybody was somebody to him. Thank God for the years that he allowed him to live and spread Love to Everyone. Really gonna Miss you my buddy my Pal. 💔💔💔

Laura McCullough - May 02, 2024 at 04:13 PM

BR

Our Sincere Condolences To Mike & The Entire Family.
Rest In Paradise Will, We're See You On The Other Shore 🕊️❤️
One Love,
Barbara A. Ratliff
The Honorable Kim M. Ratliff

Barbara A. Ratliff - May 03, 2024 at 12:38 PM

TG

“ Will was a Pillar in our community. A man that was a genius in entrepreneurship and always gave sound advice to anyone who wanted to start a business. I remember as a kid how he would come to my dad’s tailor shop and encourage me to keep the trade going. Always one of the best dress Men in Charlotte, I salute you Sir and all you stood for. RIP. Terry Grier

Terry Grier - May 01, 2024 at 11:08 PM

DM

“ So Sorry for your lost, we loved Will Rhyn,great Man Great Friend, he will be truly missed!! Rest Easy Big Will, Nay Lyles and Doris Threatt Maxwell and Families

Doris Threatt Maxwell - May 01, 2024 at 04:32 PM

CW

Sorry for your loss.

Cynthia Williams - May 02, 2024 at 07:23 PM

VG

"Prayers goes out to the family in the loss of your loved one." Goodbye my friend you'll truly be missed. You were a special person, a special face. Someone we loved and can never be replaced. A thousand words won't bring you back. We know because we tried, neither will a thousand tears, we know because we cried. (Your wings were ready, but our hearts were not) No more pain! REST IN PEACE:

Virginia Gilliard - May 04, 2024 at 02:00 PM