



## Adell Wright

December 15, 1923 - November 23, 2012

Adell Wright was born on December 15, 1923, in Mayersville, Mississippi. He was the much-adored son and only child born to the marriage of Peccola Sias and Clarence Wright. After the death of Clarence Wright, the principal adult male figures during Adell's youth were his maternal grandfather Shedrick Sias, his stepfather John Thomas and mentor "Prof" Winston. Raised as an only child, Adell developed strong bonds with his first cousins, who were as close to him as brothers and sisters. When he was middle-aged, Adell was delighted to discover a half-sister, Corean Vertison Young, with whom he forged a strong, loving relationship. Cousins Eddie Carter, Harry Sias, and all the members of the Sias family were a constant and caring support system for him throughout his illness.

In the Mississippi Delta, opportunities for Black males were severely limited. So in 1943 Adell joined the Army Air Corps, transferring later to Army Air Corps Reserves and in 1950, to the United States Air Force. While stationed at Bryan Field, Texas, he met a local beauty, Alvora Christina Lightfoot. They were married for nearly 67 years. Adell made the military his career, and Alvora and their children accompanied him on assignments all over the USA, to Japan and, in 1962, to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, where he served for several years. When he learned that he was being deployed again, Adell settled his family in Camden, Delaware, and embarked on several tours of duty; briefly to the Washington, DC area and the Philippines, then twice to

Vietnam. After Vietnam, he had closer assignments on the East Coast, which enabled him to return home more frequently.

His final Air Force tour of duty took him back to the DC area, where he was placed on special assignment under the direction of Dr. James L. Jones with the DC Mayor's Office to train the Youth Courtesy Patrol. After his military retirement in 1974, he continued working with the youth program until he accepted a position as a supervisor at the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO).

During those years in DC, Adell commuted home on weekends. Finally, in 1990, when he retired from GPO, Adell returned permanently to Camden, Delaware. He was invited to visit Mt. Zion AME Church in Dover by his friend and former neighbor, Austin Grice. Eventually he decided to make Mt. Zion his church home, which he often declared was one of his best decisions ever.

Adell was characterized by his love of family, including his Mt. Zion Church family; his strong work ethic and sense of duty; and his firm beliefs in the importance of education and in protecting and exercising our right to vote. One of his proudest accomplishments was that he successfully organized the Sias Family Reunion for his mother's huge family. Largely due to his vision, leadership, encouragement, and continued involvement, this annual reunion has a sophisticated governance structure and has been going strong for 36 years.

A lifelong learner, Adell attended elementary and secondary schools and auto mechanic school in Mississippi. Decades later, at Bedford High School in New Hampshire, he made good on a promise to himself – to earn a high school diploma before his youngest child received hers. He continued to pursue his

education, taking undergraduate and graduate-level courses and receiving several certificates of advanced study while he was in the military and at GPO.

Left to carry on his legacy are: his caring and ever-supportive wife Alvora Lightfoot Wright; 7 children: Ms. Rosie Wright (Illinois), Chief Justice Carolyn Wright-Sanders and husband James Sanders (Texas), Dr. Patricia Wright (Maryland), Mr. David Currie and wife Melissa (North Carolina), Mr. Dwight Hassan Shabazz and wife Fadia (Pennsylvania), Mr. Michael Wright (Delaware), and Judge Tania Wright (Pennsylvania); 5 “surrogate” daughters: Ms. Cynthia Harmon, Mrs. Joan Thurston Tyree, Minister Shirley Jones Everett, Rev. Dr. Bettina Scott, and Rev. Dr. Ann Lightner-Fuller; 9 grandchildren: Jennifer Wright Bankston, Sean and Karolyn Wright, Cotiittico Ferguson, Dwight and Serena Currie, Tyler Logan Wright, and Nour and Haneen Shabazz; 2 “surrogate” grandsons: Gary, Jr. and Philip Lewis; 26 great grandchildren; 2 great-great grandchildren; one sister, Mrs. Corean Vertison Young; and 2 sisters- in- law, Mrs. Alma Louise Lightfoot Davis and Mrs. Velma Mitchell Lightfoot; hundreds of beloved cousins; numerous nieces and nephews; and many others for whom he served as mentor and father figure. With the blessing of advanced age comes the pain of frequent parting. Over the years, he bade farewell to his mother; all 11 of his Sias aunts and uncles - the children of the late Shedrick and Lizzie Sias; his precious Aunt Gussie; “surrogate” grandson, Justin Lewis; and several of his dear brother-cousins, including David Collins, Ronald “Sonny” Broome, Richard Norris, and Dan Wallace. Very recently, his brother-in-law, Rev. Dr. James Lightfoot, and his grandson, Darius Jonte Wright, preceded him in death-- as did his good friend and neighbor, and favorite visitor and conversationalist, Malcolm Scott.

## MILITARY HONORS

A 31-year military veteran, Adell Wright served the United States during three wars --World War II, the Korean Conflict, and the War in Vietnam. He was awarded many service-related honors, including the Good Conduct Medal and the Bronze Star (Vietnam, July 1971). During his tours in Vietnam, he was cited for many forms of meritorious service, for example: engaging in ground operations against opposing forces; being the single most influential force in improving the effectiveness of his work section-- working overtime at great risk to his personal safety; and persevering under constant threat of hostile fire to provide outstanding support to the base combat group. Also, in Vietnam, during particularly volatile times, he was appointed and proudly served as a special liaison for troop race relations.

Three weeks ago, Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church sponsored a moving Veterans Day Tribute, featuring the Wilberforce University Choir in concert, to honor Adell Wright for his outstanding military service, as we knew it to be at that time. Since then, while going through his papers, his family has discovered that Adell also earned a Korean Service Medal with two Bronze Stars, a United Nations Service Medal, and a National Defense Service Medal. He was a true hero.

# Tribute Wall

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“ MRS. WRIGHT AND FAMILY, WE ARE PRAYING THAT GOD WILL THROW HIS COMFORTING ARMS AROUND YOU AND KEEP YOU IN HIS CARE DURING THESE VERY DIFFUCULT DAYS. YOU CAN ALSO TAKE COMFORT IN KNOWING THAT THE LIFE THAT MR. WRIGHT LIVED WAS ONE TO BE VERY PROUD OF. THE GREAT LIFE HE LIVED SPEAKS FOR HIM. MAY GOD WATCH OVER ALL OF YOU AND FILL YOUR NEEDS.

SORROWFULLY SUBMITTED, DOROTHY FRANKLIN AND FAMILY

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Dorothy Franklin - December 02, 2012 at 12:00 AM