

## **Mr. Will Rufus Carter, Jr.**

January 29, 1929 - April 6, 2010

### ***Life's Reflections***

(from Memorial Service)

Will Rufus Carter, Jr. was born in St. Louis Missouri, the fourth child and only son born to the union of Will and Annie Thornton Carter. He attended Cottage Avenue and Simmons Elementary Schools. Will graduated from Sumner High School (where he played in the band and on the basketball team) and Ludwig College of Music. He took courses at St. Louis University, Washington University and Stowe Teachers' College.

After graduating from high school, he joined a group of other young musicians called the *Rajas of Swing*. They played for fraternities and college dances, but most of their gigs were across the river on the east side at the Blue Flame. They would catch a bus over and work for a percentage of the gate, sometimes making \$3.50 per man - \$10.00 was a really good night.

After finishing college, Will served in the Army. When he tried to apply to audition for the band at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, he was told that blacks were not welcome because they often played off-base and that would not be acceptable. He was sent to Korea and took his beloved alto sax with him.

When Will returned from Korea he worked for a short time for the Army Record Center. One of his friends, Gerald DeClue, suggested that he apply to teach. Will taught several grades at different schools, retiring from Visual and Performing Arts High School. While teaching, he also played with George Hudson's Band and gave private lessons at Mel Bay's.

Mr. Carter joined Local 2-197, American Federation of Musicians in early 1957. Will loved music and later played many other woodwind instruments. He was a member of Antioch Baptist Church until he moved to Las Vegas.

Will is preceded in death by his parents and two sisters, Nancy and Fay. After losing his mother at age eleven, his sister Fay became a major factor in his life.

After four years of illness, Will departed this life April 6, 2010 at 4:00 a.m. at Mountain View Hospital in Las Vegas. He leaves to cherish his memory his sister Mary, first cousins Booker Carter (Mary), Rachel Carter Ellis, and other cousins and friends.

Seven friends of Will Carter played a musical prelude before the funeral service. They were: Robert Edwards – trombone, Larry Wilson – trumpet, Edward Nickelson – piano, Eddie Randle, Jr. – bass, Eddie Brown – drums, Willie Murry – sax and Hugh "Peanuts" Whalum – sax, piano and vocals. Selections performed included *Tenderly*, *Take the A Train*, *Satin Doll*, *Blue Bossa*, *C Jam Blues* and *Unforgettable*.