



Mr. John H. Givens III

February 8, 1936 - December 30, 2019

John was the third child born to Drucilla and John Henry Givens II in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on February 8th, 1936. He is a product of the Milwaukee Public School System and graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In 1959, he entered the Armed Service and spent two years as an Official Army Correspondent in France. While there, he was the only American on an all French basketball team. Upon learning he was to return home in 1961 the Town of Pont l'Eveque Caen petitioned then President John Kennedy to grant him permission to remain in France. President Kennedy was involved in Cuba's Bay of Pigs and did not respond. This became an imemational news item.

He returned to Milwaukee in me summer of '61, attended college and worked at American Motors Body Plant in the Labor Relations Department. In 1962, he became an Advisor to the NAACP Youth Council leading demonstration against discrimination in employment, a rampant condition in Milwaukee at that time. In 1963, he cofounded the Milwaukee Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equaliry (CORE) and become its first Chairman. CORE led some of the most militant demonstrations in Milwaukee's history. Under his leadership, CORE attacked discrimination in Housing Employment, and Education. Prior to CORE, Blacks were relegated to the most mental job, attended segregated schools, and didn't live east of the river more than one block north of Capitol Drive nor south of Juneau Avenue and west of 12th Street. A litany of arrests from sit-in demonstrations

and a week-long boycott of the Milwaukee Public School system brought on some rather significant changes.

John led sit-in demonstration in the County Court House on the day of the March on Washington (8/28/1963).

The group also held sit-ins at City Hall, Marcus Big Boy, DC offices and organized numerous marches.

He kept getting arrested for Disorderly Conduct while participating in peaceful sit-in demonstrations.

The defense centered on the contention that a peaceful sit-in could not be interpreted as "disorderly conduct".

On June 25th, 1965, he won a major civil rights case: STATE OF WI vs. GIVENS that gave individuals the right to protest peacefully without being arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.

In February 1968, John was summoned to the office of then Mayor Henry W. Maier, thus becoming the first Black in the history of Milwaukee to hold such a post. In 1969, John was appointed Associate Director of Model Cities and then Director, becoming the first black to head a city agency. Later, as Associate Director Of Community Development Agency, he helped play major role under the Mayor Maier administration handling and administering more than 100 million dollars for the city. One of John's proudest accomplishments was being nominated by Henry Maier and the U.S. Conference of Mayors to the Sixth Session for Urban Executives, at the Alfred P. Sloan School of Management at MIT. He was elected Co-Chair of this session.

In 1979, John joined state government and was appointed Director of Milwaukee Metropolitan Area Job Service. He was later appointed by Governor Lee Dreyfus to re-organize the Council on criminal justice. He retired in 1999, as the Deputy Director of the Department of Human Resources for Milwaukee under County Executive Tom Ament's administration. John served and held many offices on a number of local, state, national boards and commissions.

On December 30, 2019, John H. Givens III entered into his eternal life. He was preceded in death by parents, Drucilla and John Givens; siblings, Patricia Givens, Vernard Givens and Beverly Givens Jarreau-Overton; and niece, Cheryl Jarreau. He is survived by two daughters, Roxanne Smith and Richelle Baylor (Keith); proud grandfather to Wesley and Winston Baylor; younger brother, Leon Givens; two nieces, Lisa Givens-Pugh and Lauri Givens-Best; and a host of great nieces, nephews and many friends who will miss him dearly.

Cemetery Details

Northwest Cremation Services

6630 W. Hampton Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53218

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 8. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Mark AME
1616 W. Atkinson Ave
Milwaukee, WI

Service

JAN 8. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Mark AME
1616 W. Atkinson Ave
Milwaukee, WI

Tribute Wall

RJ

“ I was in the Army stationed in St. Andre France early 1960's with John Givens, we co-wrote the base newspaper "St Andre Advocate" John F Kennedy was our new president it was a heady time. I visited John in Milwaukee and he visited me and my wife in Rockford, Il. RIP John

robert g johnson - July 21, 2020 at 11:23 PM

SG

Daddy I'm having a small problem here in Orlando Florida I'm scared and I really need you right now your grandson just got attacked some kind of way and I don't even know but I started singing with somebody and I really shouldn't have and I've been singing for a while I really don't know what's going on now but I can't let nobody do nothing to my baby text me back and the two people name is Jonathan Nicholson which is tank and then Jeffrey weissinger which is August you already know who I am I'm every woman but please it's an emergency I'm scared

Shanita Yowanda Givens - April 22, 2024 at 02:15 AM