



# James Garfield Booker

NOV 10, 1946 - DEC 17, 2012



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\*/table.MsoNormalTable{mso-style-name:"Table Normal";mso-tstyle-rowband-size:0;mso-tstyle-colband-size:0;mso-style-noshow:yes;mso-style-priority:99;mso-style-parent:"";mso-padding-alt:0in 5.4pt 0in 5.4pt;mso-paramargin:0in;mso-para-margin-bottom:.0001pt;mso-pagination:widow-orphan;font-size:12.0pt;font-family:"Cambria","serif";mso-ascii-font-family:Cambria;mso-ascii-theme-font:minor-latin;mso-hansi-font-family:Cambria;mso-hansi-theme-font:minor-latin;}Curious JamesJames Garfield Booker was born in Nashville, Tennessee to Hardina and Simon Booker. As a child, he was always into something. His sister Helen refers to him as “curious” rather than mischievous, but some of his curiosity did amount to trouble. She recalls one instance when their parents were at work, leaving them at home alone. James, in his nature, explored the brand new refrigerator, only to push some of the wrong buttons and break it. James remained in Nashville, where he completed his education at Pearl High School. Following high school, James had a short stint working for the US Postal Service before finding his true passions as a husband, father, and air traffic controller. The Family ManOnce married, James and Jo Ann Booker relocated to Maryville, Tennessee where they started and raised their family. His three beautiful children, and later his grandchildren, brought James the greatest joy. He cherished his family and his time spent with them. He shared with them his stories, sometimes over and over again, and always had a joke for them. He taught them to be strong, independent and that value in life means people, not things. Champion of the AirAfter finishing his training at Air Traffic Control School in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, James worked for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in Knoxville, Tennessee, and later as a contract controller in the US Virgin Islands. James was the first black air traffic controller in Knoxville. As such, he was met with some racial adversity, but he stayed



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positive, “Don’t let anyone think you can’t do anything”, he would say.

Determination and skill allowed him to work through the adversity and gain the respect he so deserved. While others landed one plane, he landed three! During more than twenty-two years as an air traffic controller, James received several accolades and awards for his expertise. Other Joys for James James took pleasure in time spent supporting the University of Tennessee football team. He was a simple man, enjoying the everyday gifts life has to offer. According to his brother, James didn’t mind working hard to make a living; in fact, he quite enjoyed it. In his younger years, James enjoyed hunting and shooting. Throughout his life he spent many cherished moments outdoors on hikes and loved fishing. James also loved to cook. According to his daughter, James could make a mean pot roast. S.O.B. Best friends, Clinton and Delores Harris, referred to James as S.O.B. (Same Old Booker)! They met James and his wife Jo Ann when the two drove up on a motorcycle in Maryville, Tennessee. They instantly found James to have an “open spirit” and a great sense of humor. According to Clinton, they immediately trusted the two – leaving their children with James and Jo Ann when they went on holiday. Clinton jokes, “The kids used to come home cleaner than when we sent them!” Clinton also shares, “He was like a brother to me; he exceeded my church family in his closeness. He was always dependable; you could set your clock by him.” The Music Man His time in the US Virgin Islands sparked a love of music. Although not a musician himself, James loved music, especially reggae and the blues. He attended several concerts and accumulated a vast collection of records and CDs. When in the islands, James enjoyed the company of many friends. “Party days” would start at noon with food, drink and music. His daughter, Jamease, recalls visiting her father at one such occasion. At the party, James started off in his typical fashion with a joke. Jamease, not to be outdone by her father, followed with a joke of her own. The two carried on back and forth for over an hour much to the delight of each other and the complete hilarity of the guests. A Life Well Lived James touched the lives and hearts of many. He had a magnificent life filled with successes, including his family and career. This devoted, wonderful man passed on December 17, 2012. He is preceded in death by his parents, Hardina Thompson and Simon Booker, step father Robert Lee



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Thompson and his beloved brother Ernest Thompson. He is survived by his lifetime companion, Jo Ann Booker; sons Darrin Booker (Misty) and Kenny Harris (Blanca); daughter Rhonda Jamease Miles; brother James Fletcher Sr.; sister, Helen Alford (Howard); granddaughters, Morgan and Payton Booker and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

So sorry, Joann and family! EmmaLynn and I were hoping to see him some time this year. We have valued his friendship since we knew him in St. Croix...I couldn't figure out why I couldn't reach him until I Googled him. He was an awesome friend and we had Sue Pier

February 18 at 6:42 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Condolences to the Booker family. May the God of all comfort be with you at this difficult time. (2 Corinthians 1:3,4) My prayers are with you. Damon Williams

December 26 at 12:13 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

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