

Celebration of Life
**HENRY EUGENE
(GENE) PINKNEY**



Sunrise:
October 27, 1946

Sunset:
September 22, 2023

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

Viewing: 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Service: 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

J.B. Jenkins Funeral Home, Inc.
7474 Landover Road, Hyattsville, MD 20785
Minister Rashaad A. Khaalid, Officiating

Gene's JOURNEY

Henry E. Pinkney was born on October 27, 1946 to the late Armand and Carrie Pinkney in Baton Rouge, LA. He is preceded in death by his brother, Armand Pinkney. Gene departed this life peacefully on September 22, 2023.

Gene was raised in Natchez, MS and was a member of the Zion Chapel AME Church. As a teenager, Gene and his brother, Armand, would congregate in a place affectionately known as the “Hole” with neighborhood friends to fellowship, and provide stylish haircuts. Gene attended Sadie V. Thompson High where he excelled in academics as well as football and basketball. He was the first All-American from Mississippi to lead his high school basketball team to a state championship in 1961. After graduating from high school in 1964, Gene attended the University of Missouri after receiving a full basketball scholarship. He graduated from the University of Missouri in 1968 with a BS Degree in Education and became a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. In 1967, Gene married the late Shirley Henderson and became the proud parents of one daughter, Tresa. After college, he worked in Michigan and Missouri before relocating to Maryland in 1983.

Once in Maryland, Gene embraced another sport: softball. He started playing for IBM then expanded to local leagues and travel teams for over the next forty years. During this time, he won over 100 championships. Gene was known for engaging in deep conversations about sports philosophy especially basketball. He loved to play softball but tailgating was his favorite “must do” activity after the games. Gene used this opportunity to share his extensive music collection and the ultimate adult beverage with his teammates. He had a special place in his heart for softball, mainly for the camaraderie and making new friends.

Gene leaves to cherish his memory, loving daughters, Tresa, and Angelia (Willie) Moore; sister-in-law Clara Pinkney; father figure to Courtney Haynes and Darius Pugh; beloved devoted companion Deborah Pugh and host of relatives and friends.

Gene lived a full life and leaves a legacy of memories with whomever knew him. We will miss his smile, humor, and charming personality. You will remain in our hearts forever...until we meet again.

Order of SERVICE

Minister Rashaad A. Khaalid, Officiating
The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Processional

Opening HymnKenneth Coles

The Holy Scriptures.....

Old Testament Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-4.....Kim Swift

New Testament Reading: 2 Timothy 4:6-8.....

Prayer of Comfort.....Minister Cheryl Harrison

Reflections (2 minutes).....Randy Moses

Courtney Haynes

Musical SelectionKenneth Coles

Eulogy.....Minister Rashaad A. Khaalid

The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square

Closing HymnKenneth Coles

In Appreciation of Our Friend HENRY EUGENE “MOON” PINKNEY

His given name was Henry, but most people in Natchez, Mississippi where we grew up addressed him by his middle name, Eugene. Some kids who didn't know him and had only heard about his exploits on the basketball court at Sadie V. Thompson High School called him “Newgene” Pinkney. He never corrected them, but just smiled in his self-effacing way, a living legend at 17.

To his friends he was “Moon,” or “Moon June,” or “Pistol,” a true original. Moon had style and substance, and it exemplified a kind of excellence that influenced the boys not only in our College Street community, but in black neighborhoods across the city. People looked up to him and wanted to be like him. That he carried himself with such grace and humility made him even more likable.

In the face of Jim Crow segregation in the most racist state in the nation, our parents and teachers and churches, and entrepreneurs still managed to create an environment that allowed us to achieve on our own terms. Moon was a spectacular example of how we saw ourselves. We were expected to do well, and we expected it of ourselves without ever really discussing it. As Freddie Johnson Jr., reminded us, eighty to eighty-five percent of our friends and neighbors, like Moon, went on to earn college degrees.

Some reflections of our friend, and what he meant to us:

CLEM JOHNSON, Thompson High Class of '67, neighbor: If you do the whole history of Natchez, you're going to see bits and pieces of us around the world that have made a mark. Eugene was a guy who set the pace. I was four years behind him and tried to follow in his footsteps. He was able to attend the University of Missouri on an athletic scholarship because he also had academics. After college, we connected again in New York. Gene didn't become Gene until he got into the corporate world. He was a guy who came out of Mississippi and did well, among giants too. I called him ‘Henri.’ At the end of the day, he was a brother.

FREDDIE JOHNSON JR., Thompson High Class of '66, neighbor: We lived next door to the Pinkneys. Eugene was a few years older and of course he was someone I wanted to emulate. Mr. Pinkney taught him and his brother how to cut hair and he taught me too. I became a junior life guard under Eugene and his brother. They were like my big brothers. We looked up to them for everything that we

did. We talk about his athletic abilities a lot, but he was also an intellectual, a very good student. In later years Gene and I stayed in contact. I visited him, he visited me. We talked about old times, things we did growing up. The last conversation I had with him ended with something he always said: "I'm good."

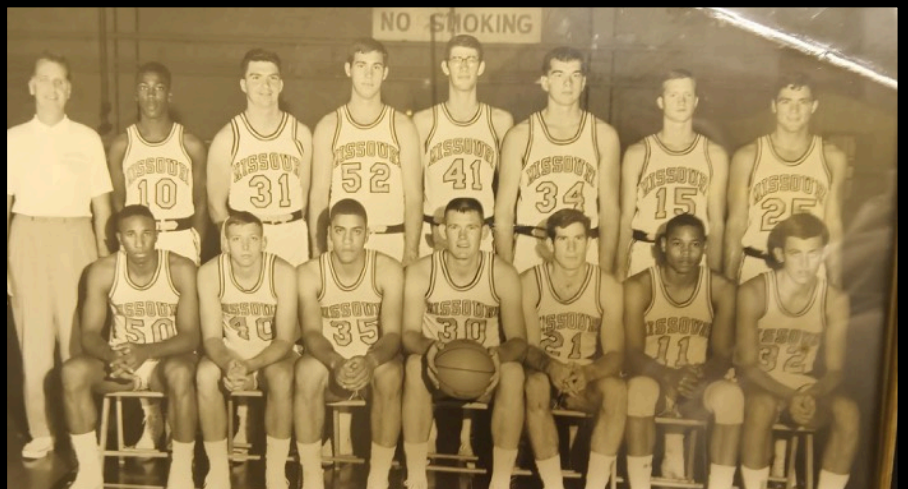
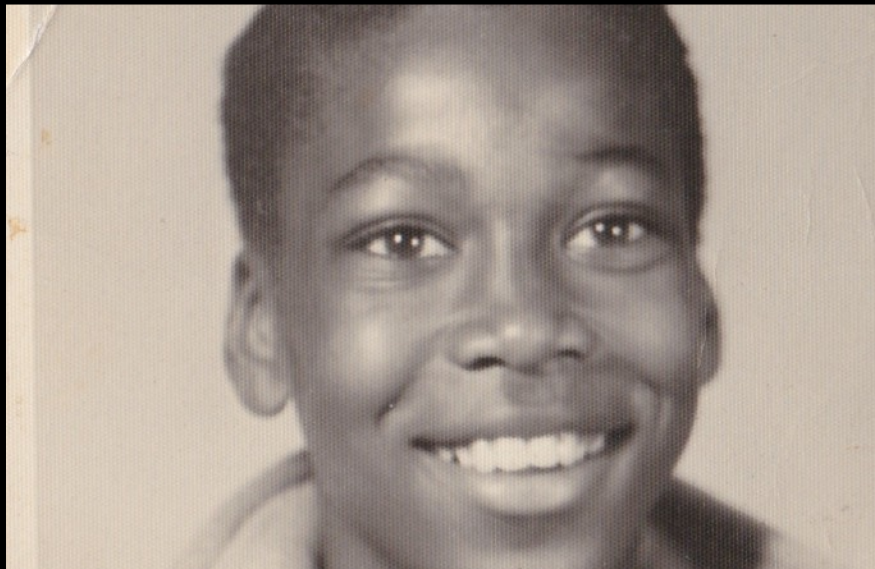
PHILLIP WEST, Thompson High Class of '64, classmate: We used to shoot marbles together. In high school he was the top person on our basketball team. He averaged over 30 points a game as a senior and scored 50 in one game. I was the team statistician and saw him in every game. It was just amazing to watch him. He was recruited by a major school, University of Missouri. One thing we haven't mentioned, he was an excellent dancer too, a smooth dancer. During one of our high school reunions years later, a guy slipped and fell. Eugene was the first to jump to his assistance. He was very attentive. I gave him the name 'Moon June.' I don't know why. He gave me the name 'Fuzz.'

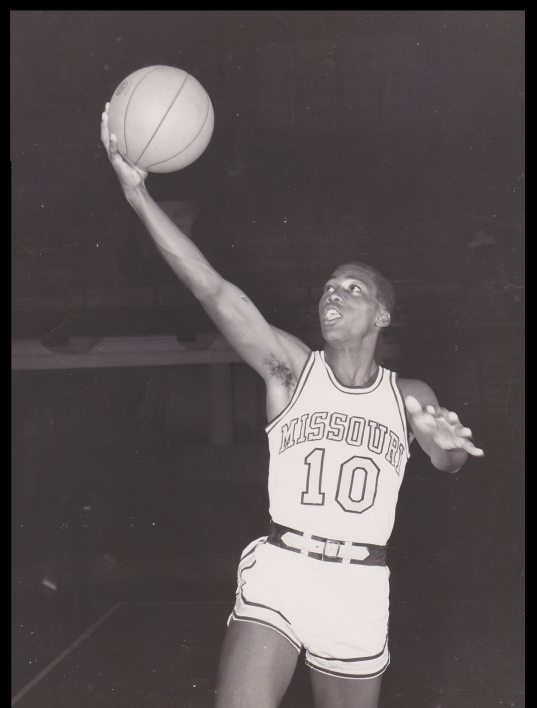
WILSON MURRAY, Thompson High Class of '64 classmate: I was in his mother's class in First Grade. I called him cerebal. He always seemed to be having some thoughts. For a guy with his physical talents-- quarterback, wide receiver, shooting guard, baseball—you wouldn't expect him to be as mild-mannered as he was. He cut my hair. To me he was like that poem "Every Man." In concert season he even played drums in the Thompson band. He was also a lifeguard at Thompson Pool. One time I was swimming across the pool, and I got tired. I went down once, and I was drowning. Henry Eugene Pinkney came and got me and saved my life. He never talked about it. I had to remind him he'd saved my life.

VERNON SMITH, Thompson High Class of '63, neighbor: We first met when the Pinkney family moved in next door to us on College Street. We were 7 or 8 years old and hit it off right away. He had a mischievous quality, loved a good joke. If a defender had his feet turned the wrong way, Moon would bounce the basketball between the guy's legs! It's hard to convey how good a ball player he was. He told me that he developed his shooting touch practicing by the streetlight on the goal his father put up on a tree. We sensed his talents had to be unusual, but he was so matter of fact about it that it inspired you. He showed us early on that there were no limits to what was possible. For all his accomplishments, he was quite modest. He was slow to anger. He loved music, discovering new artists and sharing it with us. No one ever had a better friend.---

Vern Smith, former *Newsweek* Atlanta bureau chief, author of *THE JONES MEN*.

Precious MEMORIES





"I'M FREE"

Don't grieve for me for now I'm free,
I'm following the path God laid for me
I took his hand when I heard him call,
I turned my back and left it all
I could not stay another day,
To laugh, to love, to work or play
Tasks left undone must stay that way,
I've found that peace at the close of day
If my parting has left a void,
Then fill it with remembered joy
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,
Ah yes, these things I too will miss
Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
I wish for you the sunshine of tomorrow
My life's been full, I've savored much,
Good friends, good times, my loved one's touch
If my time seemed all too brief,
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief
Lift up your heart, rejoice with me,
God wanted me now, He set me free.

Author: Anne Lindgren Davison

Acknowledgements

The family of Henry E. Pinkney wishes to express our gratitude and sincere appreciation for the many prayers and kind expressions of sympathy shown to us during this difficult time.

Special Thanks:

*The Medical Staff at Kaiser Permanente Germantown
The Medical Staff at Holy Cross Hospital Germantown
Freddie, Clem, Phillip, Vern and Wilson*

Professional Services entrusted to:

J.B. Jenkins Funeral Home, Inc.
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