

Norwood Horace Allen, Jr. burst on the scene May 6, 1943, as the first child of Norwood Horace Allen, Sr. and Fenton (Garnett) Allen. Often called “Wood” by friends and family. He began elementary school in Moorestown, was in the first group of students that graduated from Ben Franklin Elementary School in Pennsauken, where he was one of two Black students, and received his high school diploma from Woodrow Wilson (East Side) in Camden. Wood was a lifelong learner, earning many different certificates.

Norwood was continuously employed and worked in sales at GEX and Lit Brothers. He shared many stories about the time spent working with good friends like Sam Ross, Jr., while working at the Campbell Soup Plant. After the plant closed and at a time when Local craftsman unions journeyman positions were generally unavailable to African Americans, Norwood was allowed to take the required test and training to become a steel metal worker with Local 19. He left 20 years later after an injury.

A man of many talents, Norwood was able to transition to a new field. He took the required courses and training to earn an Associate Degree at Camden County College and became a Certified Drug and Alcohol Abuse Counselor. He became a Supervisor at the Camden County Health Department. Norwood was in a unique position to help those with addictions since he had both the formal training and personal experience making him an excellent counselor. Counseling was by far his favorite work. Norwood credited his recovery to God and to Narcotics Anonymous. He took both seriously. He devoted much of his post recovery life helping others leave addictions and serving in his church.

Norwood joined State St. United Methodist Church where he was immersed in baptism by the Pastor, Rev. Joseph Scott. (He commented on Rev. Scott’s ability to hold him.) Much later he joined St. Matthew’s United Methodist Church under the leadership of Rev. Dr. John Randall. At St. Matthew’s he served in various positions over the years. He was a member and president of the Men’s Choir, member of Gospel Choir, the president of the United Methodist Men’s group, and a member of the Trustee Board. He could be counted on to boldly share his ideas and opinions at Administrative Counsel meetings. He faithfully served as Food Bank Distribution Coordinator providing food for the underserved population even during Covid.

Though clean from addiction for many years, Norwood continued to attend meetings and support NA activities. Often his phone rang at odd hours with calls from those needing help.

Various people came to him for help to get or stay clean. He never refused to help if he could. He met many good friends and formed lasting relationships through NA. He spoke openly about his past and shared information at drug awareness programs.

As a volunteer for the Emmanuel Cancer Fountain, he delivered boxes of food to cancer patients. Norwood served on many boards. At (LACADA) Local Advisory Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse, he served as Chairman of the Board and also a member.

Norwood was a faithful member of The Federation of Men Churches of Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, Cumberland and Salem Counties. He appreciated the camaraderie of Christian men and the Christ focused activities. He served as Assistant General Secretary and was the current Vice President. Norwood was also the Liaison to the Scholarship Committee. The committee awards scholarships to high school seniors.

He spent 58 years with, 48 of them married to the love of his life Ida Mary Zeigler. They raised a wonderful family, Christopher, Anthony Sr. (Tony), Mikala, and Norwood 3rd (Woody). Their children include Jessica Allen and Leon Chandler

Norwood had a unique relationship with food. A true "foodie" before it was a term. A good cook, who enjoyed eating and sharing food with others. A great host, most people entering his home were invited to dine. He also spent time cooking for the church and for others. For years he helped to organize and host the family "A to Z Productions" cookouts. He made special dishes for people including some "Ida don't touch these ribs" for his niece Heather. Noted for his great fried fish, which he fried outdoors, he and his equipment traveled to help ensure the success of others at their outdoor gatherings. He also owned his own general store, however only a limited number of people were allowed to shop there. It was a favorite of his daughter Mikala, whom he affectionally called "Baby Girl" and her college friends. There were plenty of different items and everything was free. The store was secretly located in his basement.

Not afraid of having fun, he loved to sing and dance especially with his niece Michelle. He enjoyed different genres of music and knew many song lyrics. He hosted a nephew's first birthday party and joined the kids in the blowup kiddy pool. Norwood always had a joke to tell and a quick remark to make. He enjoyed playing word games. He learned to play Scrabble with his mother and it remained one of his favorites.

Norwood was a world traveler. He and Ida visited many different countries. He enjoyed learning about the cultures of other people. Proud of his African American heritage, he always strove to learn and share his knowledge. Most recently he planned to visit Ghana with his Ghanian family, the Sarpongs.

Being able to speak Spanish came in handy for Norwood when traveling. In fact, he spoke Spanish, not English when he first woke up from a stroke three years ago.

His dedication to his family was shown throughout the generations. When he learned his granddaughter had been accepted at Rutgers in Newark, he took the train with her to Rutgers to ensure she could travel there safely.

We would like to name his best friend but will not because we do not want any fights to break out in the church.

We were blessed to learn many valuable lessons from Norwood during his 80 years, among them: we should speak out, share, give, laugh, learn, grow, and love the Lord.

When Norwood left early in the morning on August 28, 2023, his sons Tony and Woody were waiting to greet him at Heaven's gate. Left with pleasant memories and broken hearts are his wife Ida, sons Christopher (Lori), Leon (Tunisia), daughters Mikala Green (Keith), and Jessica. Sister Terri Allen, Brother-in-law Charles Zeigler, Sr., Sister-in-laws Patricia Douglas, Isabelle Ross (Horace), Grandchildren Anthony Jr, Maurice, and Dontay Allen; Joshua, Rebekah and Zion Green; Nia-Symone, Naysa and Nhamiza Chandler, five great-grandchildren, numerous nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends.

I'm free
Praise the Lord, I'm free
No longer bound
No more chains holding me
Soul is resting
And it's just another blessing
Praise the Lord!
Hallelujah, I'm free