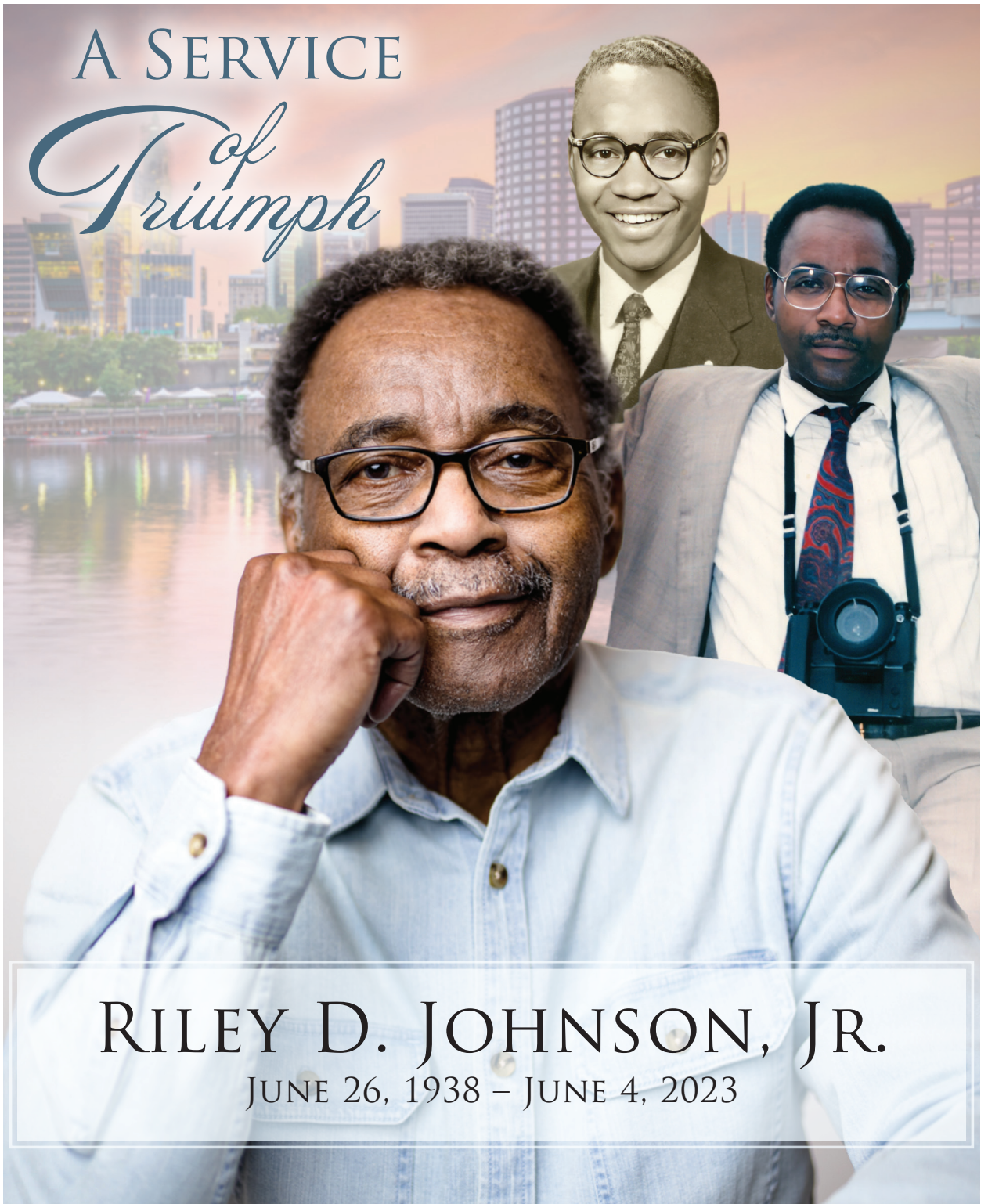


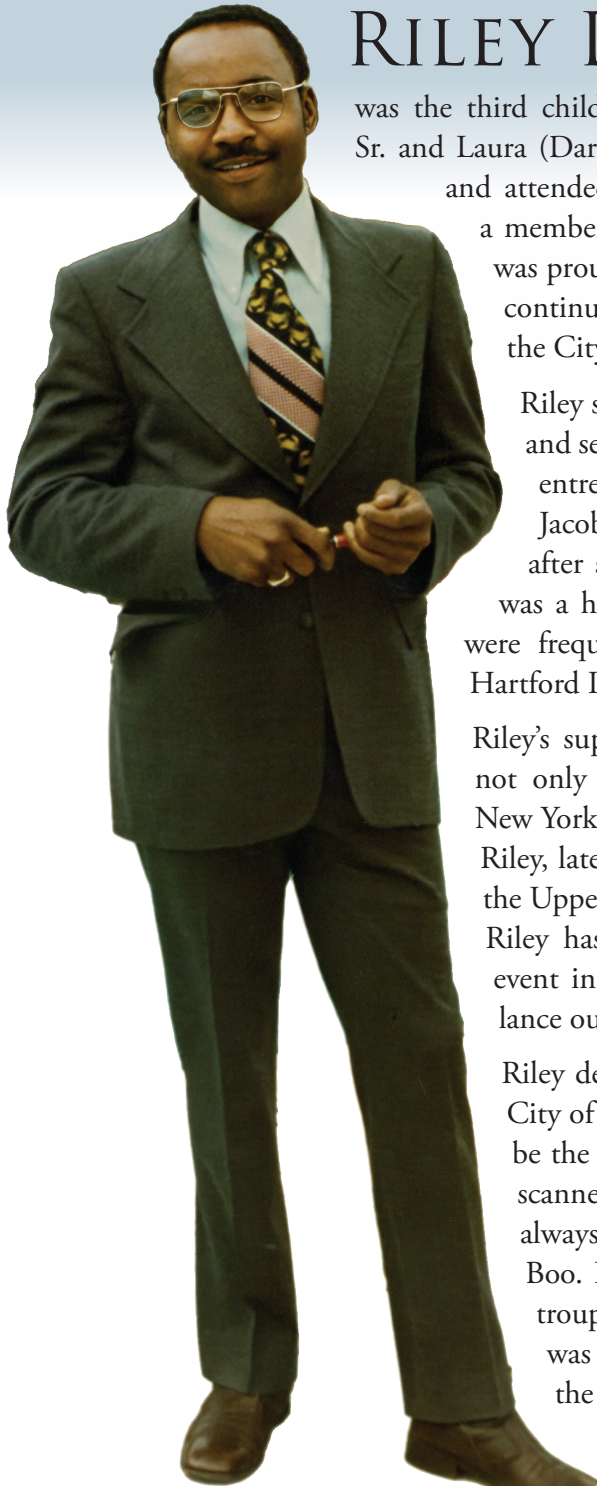
A SERVICE

*Of
Triumph*



RILEY D. JOHNSON, JR.

JUNE 26, 1938 – JUNE 4, 2023



RILEY D. JOHNSON, JR.

was the third child, and first son, of the late Riley D. Johnson, Sr. and Laura (Darden) Johnson. He was born on June 26, 1938, and attended Arsenal School, Northeast Brackett, and was a member of Weaver High School's Class of 1956. Riley was proud to say that he grew up in Bellevue Square and continued to reside in the Northend neighborhood of the City of Hartford.

Riley started his passion of photography at an early age and served as Weaver's school photographer. He was an entrepreneur and learned his business acumen from Jacob Hyman of Jake's Drug Store, where he worked after school and delivered the Hartford Times. Riley was a hustler at a young age! His copy-written photos were frequently used by the NorthEnd Agent and the Hartford Inquirer.

Riley's superb photography talent was widely acclaimed, not only in Hartford, but in California, Chicago, and New York, to name a few. He nested his studio, Photos by Riley, later known as Johnson's Studio of Photography, in the Upper Albany area where he served as the local mayor. Riley has taken pictures of almost everyone and every event in Hartford. After retiring, he continued to freelance out of his home on Clark Street.

Riley devoted many hours of community service to the City of Hartford and you could always count on him to be the neighborhood block watcher. He listened to his scanner and was often at a crime scene before HPD, and always knew the whereabouts of his favorite officer, Boo Boo. He traveled to Poland with a local school dance troupe, mentored the youth in the Upper Albany area, was an active member of his church and lodge, visited the elderly frequently, and let's not forget, attended everyone's funeral.

Riley's achievements have been recognized by many in his community including the NAACP, the Jaycees, the Hartford Police Department, and the Urban League, just to name a few. Brother Riley Johnson, Jr. was raised to a Master Mason and faithfully served as an Honorary Past Master of Excelsior Lodge #3, Prince Hall Affiliate of Hartford, Connecticut. Two achievements that were most important to him were being acknowledged by the Artists Collective, by Jackie and Dollie McLean, and being appointed a Honorary Connecticut State Police Lieutenant.

Riley was known for his gift of gab, his no edit button, his wit, his sarcasm, his brutal honesty, his activism, being authentic, his "keeping it real" spirit, his unwavering love of community, his flamboyant socks, and let's not forget, "Not Yet!" Riley was best known for making you laugh. He was also described as the GOAT, being driven, focused, concerned, proud, and tough. Within 60 seconds of being in his presence, tears would be rolling down your cheeks from laughter.

Riley has been a mainstay in the Northend and the City of Hartford, as well as in the State of Connecticut. EVERYONE knew and loved Riley! He photographed many celebrities, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Muhammad Ali, Dionne Warwick, Presidents Clinton and Kennedy, Sammy Davis Jr., Flip Wilson, Johnnie Cochran, Jessie Jackson, and his beloved, Maya Angelou.

Lew Brown stated that "Riley had been the court jester since they were children, and his attire set the tone with class and his casual plaid pants and colorful socks. He was the keeper of the flame and created a sense of neighborhood. He is our neighborhood and our community. Your father was a mess. He could talk his way out of anything. He was always for his people, but not against anyone else."

Some recent comments of his high school classmates include, "Riley helped make Weaver a fun and friendly place to be. He deserves a statue. An icon bringing all people together with his personality. If you don't love Riley, you don't love life." – Fred Dressler.

Riley leaves to mourn, his loving wife and partner of 40 years, Cerise Johnson; children, Tracey Stanley and (his favorite son-in-love, Ulysses), Troy Johnson (Chara), Robin Talbot-Porter, Tesha Black-Patterson, Riley D. Johnson, III (Tyanna), Kurt Sincere Harrison (Elida), and Sean Harrison (Nicola).

18 grandchildren, Trey, Reba, Troy, Vaneece, Ebony, Joseph, Riley IV, Ryan, Justice, Adan, Solana, Ronin, Sean Jr., Shaiellis, Saje, Shayelis, Selina and Nicola; 9 great grandchildren Troy, Milan, Cali, Jayden, Jayla, King-Bless, Kashya, Nessiah, and Ny'lah.

Siblings, Carole Hogan, Barbara Ragland, Elnora Cook, and Howard Johnson; brother-in-love, Donald Chafin, Jr. (Brenda); and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends, including special lifelong friends, Lew Brown, Roosevelt Terry, Robert Countryman, and Lee Martin.

Riley was predeceased by his precious grandson, Andre E. James, Jr.; and son-in-law, Christopher Patterson.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Musical Selection *"I Shall Wear A Crown"* Wayne Dixon & Choir

Prayer of Invocation Rev. Cleo Graham
Pastor of Faith Congregational Church

Scripture Readings Deacon Eric W. Gray
Old Testament: Psalm 100
New Testament: John 14:1-6

The Lord's Prayer Linda Ransom

Prayer of Comfort/Words Archbishop LeRoy Bailey, Jr.
The First Cathedral

Obituary Shayelis Harrison, *Granddaughter*

Tributes Adan Harrison, *Granddaughter*
Solana Harrison, *Granddaughter*
Reba Stanley, *Granddaughter*

Musical Selection Wayne Dixon and Choir

Reflections Deacon Lee Martin
Deacon Al Strother
Winston Esson
William "Lew" Brown

Acknowledgments Robyn Talbot-Porter, *Daughter*

Musical Selection Wayne Dixon and Choir

Tributes Trey James, *Grandson*
Tracey Stanley, *Daughter*
Riley D. Johnson III, *Son*

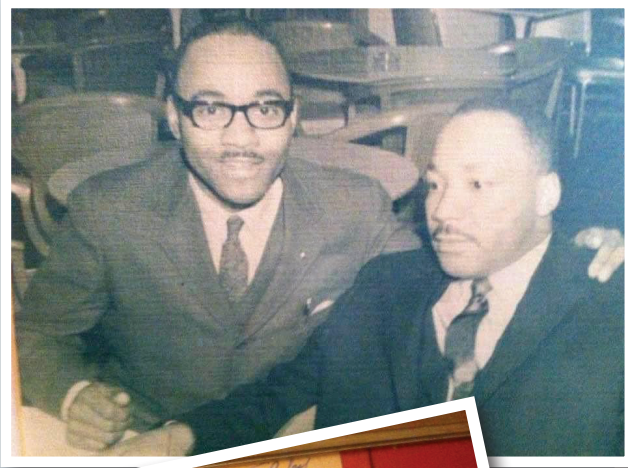
Musical Selection *"The Holy City"* Patricia Gray, *Soloist*
G. Ingrid Faniel, *Accompanist*

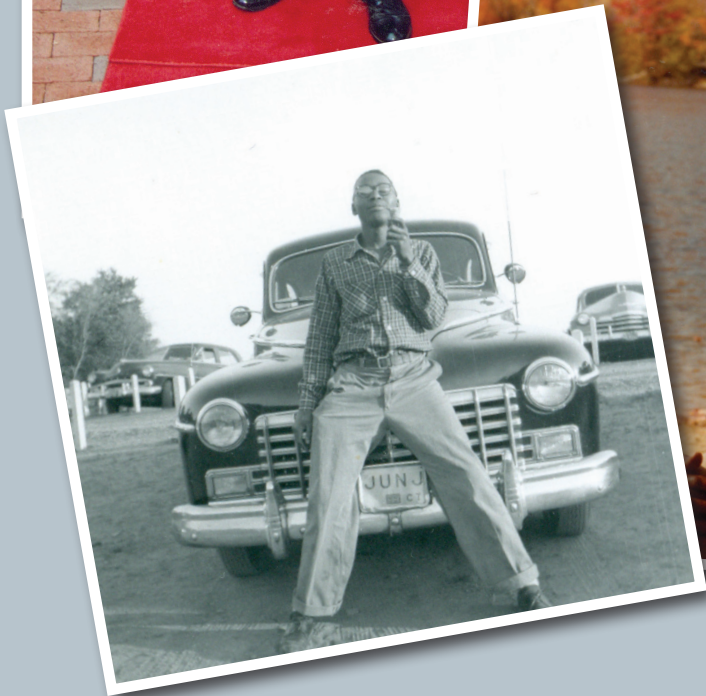
Eulogy Rev. Cleo Graham

Benediction

Recessional *"When We All Get To Heaven"*

THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND







Riley
Photos by

- Color Photography
- Weddings - Banquets
- Children
- Film and Flashbulbs

RILEY D. JOHNSON, JR.
857 ALBANY AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONN. 06112
Telephone 246-7251



PALLBEARERS

Troy Johnson, *Grandson* Trey James, *Grandson*
Justice Harrison, *Grandson* Sean Harrison, Jr., *Grandson*
Shaiellis Harrison, *Grandson* Guy Ragland, Sr., *Nephew*
Craig Cook, *Nephew* Ulysses Stanley, Jr., *Son-in-Love*

INTERMENT

Cedar Hill Cemetery
453 Fairfield Ave.
Hartford, CT 06114

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

There is not enough thanks in the world to express the gratitude we feel for all those who have embraced us during this difficult time. Please accept our sincere and heartfelt thank you for your prayers, calls, texts, cards, flowers, food, and other acts of kindness that gave us strength and inspiration during our time of bereavement. We would like to extend a very special thank you to Patricia Gray and the staff at West Hartford Rehab and to all the Hartford Hospital medical staff that cared for Riley. May God bless you and keep you.



Services entrusted to



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860.688.2200 www.carmonfuneralhome.com

Riley's Life Story can be found at
www.rileydjohnsonjr.com

Cover headshot courtesy of Keith Claytor.