



Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.

December 25, 1934 - May 10, 2025

Celebrating the Life of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.

Sunrise: December 25, 1934 Sunset: May 10, 2025

Horace Holmes Jr., a.k.a. “Bo”, was the eldest of 10 children born to Horace and Minnie-Bell (McDowell) Holmes of Chicago, Ill. Born on Christmas Day in 1934, at Chicago’s Cook County Hospital, Horace Jr. passed onto Glory, at age 90, in his Placerville, CA home, surrounded by family on May 10, 2025. Seven of Horace Jr’s siblings preceded him into Glory: George Holmes, Uree Tayler, Ervin (Buster) Holmes, Arnell Holmes, Eliza Phillips, Roderick Holmes, and Zelfa Smith. Siblings Dr. Richard Holmes and Torece Reneau mourn their Big Brother with us here today.

At age five, and during the height of the 1930s era depression, Horace Jr.’s impoverished parents sent him away from the gritty, turbulent and bustling streets of South-side Chicago to live with relatives back in their peaceful, slow-paced and racially segregated hometown of Starkville, MS. In Starkville, Horace Jr. was raised by his grandmother’s cousin, Eliza and her husband Richard Hunter. For several weeks during each summer of his youth, Eliza would accompany Horace Jr. to Chicago so he could reconnect with his growing family.

Horace’s K-12 education was within the Oktibbeha County Training School

(OCTS) in Starkville. Though segregated, Horace Jr. and his contemporaries often spoke highly of the quality of instruction and sense of community they felt from the all-Black faculty and staff. At OCTS, Horace Jr. met and courted his high school sweetheart, Reather M. Gillespie. They first met in the ninth grade and were married on January 2, 1953, while in the eleventh grade. On January 2, 2025, they celebrated their 72nd wedding anniversary.

A standout half-back on the OCTS Varsity football team, Horace Jr. enlisted in the Air Force soon after graduation in 1954. Upon completing basic training, Horace Jr. volunteered for training as military police because “he liked their uniforms”. A decision he came to regret when he found himself guarding strategic bombers in the middle of nowhere on one too many cold winter nights. Horace Jr. and Reather raised their three boys (Larry, DeWayne, and Reginald) while on military assignments throughout Asia, Europe, and the Continental United States. While working and raising a family with Reather, Horace Jr. went to night school for seven years before receiving his first college degree in Accounting from California State University at Fullerton. Upon attainment of his bachelor’s degree in 1968, he applied for and was accepted into Air Force Officer Training School after serving 14 years in the non-commissioned officer ranks. Horace Jr. continued his education by attaining his Master’s in Business Administration & Management from Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) near Nashville, TN in 1970. Horace Jr. retired from the Air Force in 1978, at the rank of Captain, while stationed at McClellan AFB, Sacramento, CA.

After the Air Force, Horace Jr. became a civil service employee supporting the California Department of Aging. Always a highly industrious man, Horace went on to obtain his Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) from the University of Southern California in 1985 and thereafter returned to Starkville, MS, for two years as a member of the faculty within the College of Business at Mississippi State University (MSU). Upon returning to California in the late 1980s, Horace Jr. started a tax preparation business (H-5 Business Services) and was both a

Sunday school teacher and a Deacon at Shiloh Baptist Church, South Sacramento, for more than 20 years.

Horace Jr. and Reather built their retirement home in Placerville, CA utilizing blueprints drawn up by their middle son, DeWayne, in 1985. For the next 40 years Horace Jr. and Reather lived happily, gardening and landscaping around their property, hosting family and friends in their Placerville home and traveling the world together, often.

Horace Jr. is survived by his wife, Reather, and their three sons: Larry Holmes, DeWayne Holmes and Reginald Holmes Jr.; one brother Dr. Richard Holmes, and one sister, Torece Reneau; four grandchildren: Larry, Tiffanni, Ashley and Kristin; four great grandchildren: Prince, Jamir, Dionne and Skylar.

Horace Jr. was a caring and loyal son, as well as a respected and supportive big brother to his younger siblings.

He loved and supported his wife and children, enjoyed a good laugh, cherished his collection of jazz music, and the game of golf. He was a hardworking and intuitive man for whom the status quo was rarely enough. Husband, father, career military officer, career civil servant, college professor, business owner, and church deacon. Horace Jr. tried his damn best to get all he could out of this life - we believe he succeeded. Though we mourn his passing, we honor, cherish, and celebrate the life he lived.
Pops, you Rock! With all our love, RIP.

Cemetery Details

Odd Fellows Cemetery

202 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive W
Starkville, MS 39759

Previous Events

Public Viewing

MAY 23. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Hairston & Hairston Funeral Homes - Starkville
112 Earnest H Jones Jr Dr
Starkville, MS 39759
(662) 323-5854

Celebration of Life

MAY 24 (CT)

Second Baptist Church
314 Yeates Street
Starkville, MS 39759

Tribute Wall

SH

“ Rest in Peace Uncle Horace. It was always a wonderful time seeing you and the family at the golf tournament and I remember your calm, steady demeanor. Seeing you and my grandpa talk gave me a glimpse into both of you I hadn't seen before. I wish we got to talk and know each other better but I hope ur resting easy and playing golf in Heaven 💜

Su-jin Kim Holmes - May 24, 2025 at 04:11 PM

DH

“ Rest in Peace, Uncle Horace. It was always a treat playing golf with you during the MBH tourneys and seeing you and my grandpa talk smack. It always made me laugh and it's definitely something I'll remember forever.

Devan Holmes - May 24, 2025 at 01:37 AM

DS

“ Dr. Willie Earl & Carrie Thomas, Sr. sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.



Dr. Willie Earl & Carrie Thomas, Sr. - May 23, 2025 at 03:33 PM

RH

“ Rest in peace, Horace, my fellow bean counter!
You always showed a gentle and calm presence whenever the family got together. I'll miss you greatly! Love, Ranae

Ranae Holmes - May 22, 2025 at 06:49 PM

NH

“ I remember the first day I met my brother in law, Horace and his family. He was so nice to me. I thought I really lucked out on a brother in law. He was "open to me" and lived up to that little smile on his face.

Funny I could partner with Horace in cards and we could win. With Doc I-most often lost. Then Horace would talk "smack"!😂

We played golf and had some discussions while we played. "Horace I am a better putter."😏

I will miss you until we see each other in heaven . You were a gift to me and my family's lives.

I will See you later. Love you, God bless you always. Norreen

Norreen Petersen Holmes - May 21, 2025 at 06:42 PM

CH

“ My favorite memories of Uncle Horace are during the Minnie Bell Holmes golf tournaments. The banter, smack talking, and “signifying” between him and my father Dr. George E Holmes was priceless. Now they can rest with Jesus in Peace and Love. I will miss you Uncle Horace, you are deeply loved! ❤️🙏🕊️

Chip Holmes - May 21, 2025 at 05:57 PM

LG

“ Lenue and Barbara Gilchrist purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr..



Lenue and Barbara Gilchrist - May 21, 2025 at 03:53 PM

RC

“ Rhonda Conner sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.



Rhonda Conner - May 20, 2025 at 02:31 PM

RC

“ My prayers & thoughts are with you all, as you navigate through this pain of sorrow. With Sincere Sympathy 🕊️,
~Rhonda 🙏.

Rhonda Conner - May 20, 2025 at 02:30 PM

BH

“ BARBARA WILLIAMS HILL sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.



BARBARA WILLIAMS HILL - May 20, 2025 at 09:52 AM

CR

“ Cynthia Robinson sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.



Cynthia Robinson - May 20, 2025 at 08:33 AM

GR

“ Glenda Roberts sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.



Glenda roberts - May 20, 2025 at 08:02 AM

MR

“ Mrs Torece E. Holmes Reneau sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.



Mrs Torece E. Holmes Reneau - May 20, 2025 at 01:33 AM

MR

“ Mrs Torece E. Holmes Reneau sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.



Mrs Torece E. Holmes Reneau - May 20, 2025 at 01:21 AM

MR

“ Mrs Torece E. Reneau sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.



Mrs Torece E. Reneau - May 20, 2025 at 01:06 AM

MR

“ *Mrs Torece E. Reneau sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Horace Holmes Jr.*



Mrs Torece E. Reneau - May 20, 2025 at 01:03 AM