

Celebrating the Life and Legacy of

Judge DeWayne Everett

CHARLESTON

June 30, 1963 – June 3, 2025



Saturday June 14, 2025 • 10:00am

Johnson-Phillip All Faiths Chapel

Prairie View A&M University

L.W. Minor St • Prairie View, TX

Rev. David Charleston, Officiating

Charles H. Lewter, IV, Dean of Chapel

His Life.....His Story

Judge DeWayne Everett Charleston, 61, entered into eternal life on Tuesday, June 3, 2025. DeWayne was born on the historic campus of Prairie View A&M University on June 30, 1963, to the late Cube and Nellie Charleston. The fifth of six children, DeWayne discovered his calling for activism and public service early in life, inspired by towering figures such as Thurgood Marshall, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and W.E.B. Du Bois.

A graduate of Waller High School in the Class of 1981, DeWayne went on to pursue higher education at North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas), where he majored in political science and minored in history. In the spring of 1982, he became a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., joining alongside his older brother, Carlen—a milestone that further solidified his commitment to leadership, scholarship, and service.

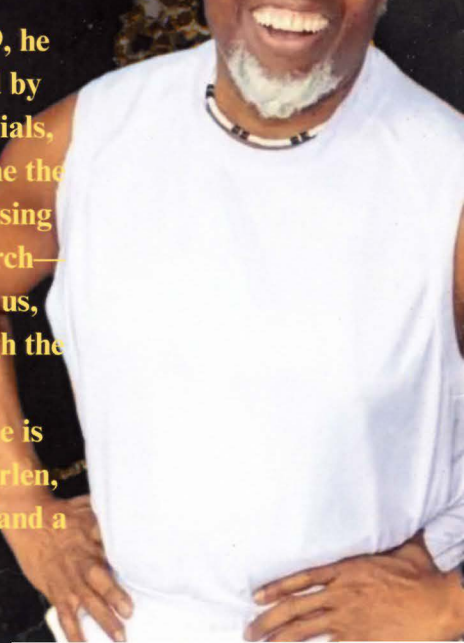
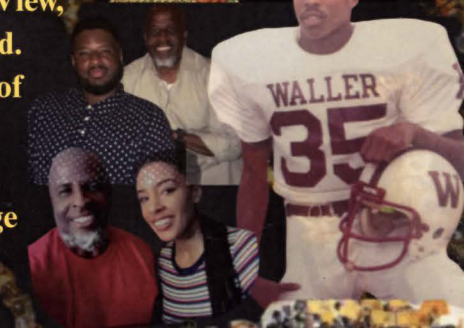
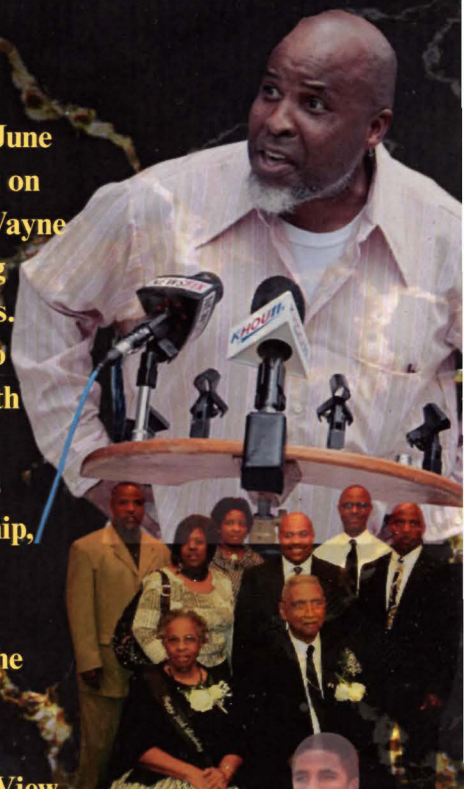
After completing his degree, DeWayne moved to Austin, Texas, to serve in the administration of Governor Ann Richards. He would later relocate to Dallas, where he deepened his spiritual journey by enrolling at Dallas Theological Seminary. In 1993, DeWayne married Amy Henderson, and from that union two children were born—Christiana DiNell and Christopher DeWayne—both of whom were raised in Prairie View, continuing the family's deep-rooted connection to the town their father so dearly loved. DeWayne seamlessly balanced fatherhood with civic leadership, serving as publisher of *Prairie View Magazine*, engaging the community as a sought-after lecturer, and mentoring youth as a dedicated Pee Wee football coach.

In 2003, DeWayne made history by becoming the first African American judge elected in Waller County, Texas. In that role, he merged his political vision with his unwavering commitment to civil rights and grassroots organizing. His relentless advocacy against voter suppression earned him widespread recognition, most notably in 2004 when he helped organize a march of over 8,000 people in defense of voting rights—a testament to his ability to mobilize, inspire, and lead.

DeWayne played a vital and courageous role in the pursuit of justice following the death of Sandra Bland. Drawing upon his experience as both a judge and civil rights advocate, he emerged as a leading voice in demanding accountability and transparency from local authorities. His words pierced through institutional silence, offering the public a rare and unfiltered glimpse into the realities behind the scenes.

Even as he advocated for others, DeWayne waged a battle of his own. In 2009, he was diagnosed with stage IV prostate cancer and given only months to live. Anchored by unshakable faith, he underwent a series of surgeries, treatments, and experimental trials, ultimately defying every prognosis for 16 years. His remarkable survival story became the groundwork for the DeWayne Charleston Foundation, an organization devoted to raising awareness, promoting prevention, and advocating for equitable prostate cancer research—particularly in the African-American community. Though he no longer walks among us, DeWayne's legacy lives on—through his children, through his foundation, and through the many lives he touched, doors he opened, and barriers he broke.

DeWayne was preceded in death by his parents, Cube and Nellie Charleston. He is survived by his beloved children, Christopher and Christiana; his brothers, David, Carlen, and Craig; his sisters, Phyllis and Kathleen; numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins; and a host of family members and friends who will continue to honor his legacy.



Order of Service



Musical Prelude

Processional.....Clergy, Pallbearers, and Family

ALPHA PHI ALPHA OMEGA SERVICE

Scriptural Reading

Old Testament.....Dr. Clarence Talley

New Testament.....Minister Michael Moore

Prayer of Comfort.....Pastor Henry H. Batson III

Musical Selection.....Dr. Anthony McBeth

Resolutions and Acknowledgements.....Allison Cormier

Life Reflections (Two Minutes Please)

As a Co-Laborer (DeWayne Charleston Foundation).....Holley Cotton

As a Coach/Teacher.....Ross Rogers

As a Friend.....Mark Westbrook, Kim & Chrystal Dillard

As a Brother.....Lt. Col. Carlen Charleston

Pastoral Remarks.....Dr. D. Z. Cofield

Musical Selection • "I Need You Now" Dr. Anthony McBeth

Eulogy.....Minister Kea Westbrook

Recessional



To Our Dad...

It is difficult to put into words what our father means to us, because no language can truly capture how someone can leave such a beautiful and profound mark on your life. Our father taught us many things—but above all, he taught us to keep fighting. When circumstances didn't unfold as we had hoped, he reminded us to keep fighting. When life felt overwhelming, he urged us to keep fighting. When exhaustion and discouragement crept in, his voice echoed: keep fighting.

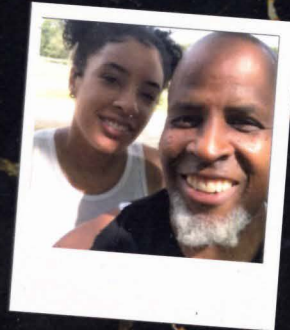
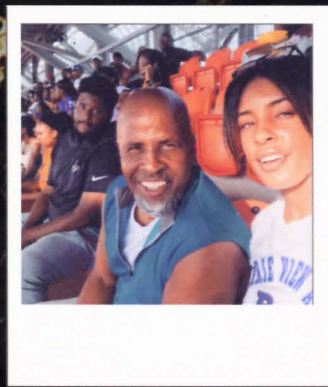
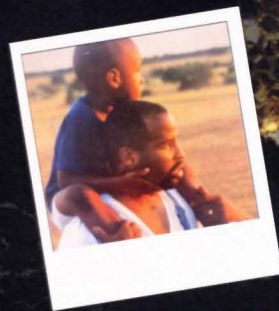
Even more powerfully, he showed us that the most meaningful battles are often not for oneself, but for others—the highest expression of leadership and love. Our father fought for others, and he fought for us. All the while, he was waging a private battle of his own—one that ultimately led us to this moment. And yet, the most beautiful truth of all is this: he did not lose his fight. He triumphed, because the spirit with which he fought was utterly unbreakable. We will always take pride in that.

Those of you who truly knew our father understand that he would not want today to be defined by sorrow. He would acknowledge your tears, of course—but then he would tell you to wipe them away, stand tall, and fight. That was not only his approach to parenthood, but to life itself.

So many of the accomplishments we've been blessed to achieve are rooted in our father's unwavering encouragement—his insistence that we press forward, no matter what. His perspective had a way of reframing every challenge, offering clarity, strength, and resolve.

Our father was—and remains—our guiding light. We will always feel his presence. We will always carry his love. And in honoring his legacy, we will always keep fighting.

*You are forever
in our hearts.....*



To Our Brother...

YOU TAUGHT US ALL HOW TO LIVE. To live **PASSIONATELY.** Whether it was peeling back the layers of your own existence to reveal the deeper beauty in your personal experiences or, more significantly, unearthing and exposing the beauty of other nations, ethnicities, and cultures, we saw how you prized human capital and that people were important to you, their plight more so. Taking flight across international waters to sit humbly among people whose ways and means of life were foreign to the very core of who you are, from Africa to the United Kingdom and beyond, stepping into the unknown seemed to ignite a fire in your selfless soul to empower the 'otherness' of society. And in an act of reverse reciprocity, you empowered yourself for the 16-year strenuous journey that was yours to bear.

And you lived **RADICALLY!** Verbiage to you was paltry when measured up against the power of people's actions. Indeed, your actions screamed volumes! I guess that's why you didn't utter your first words until the age of five years old! You knew it was never going to be about the 'talk' anyway! You showed us all – it was about the **WORK.**

And oh how you lived with **CONVICTION!** Pursuing causes that were not your own and from which you had everything to lose. But yours was a clear vision. The bigger picture was that humanity had everything to gain. So fearlessly – and without inhibitions – you eagerly casted off all restraints and took up causes for the progression towards a more humane and civil world.

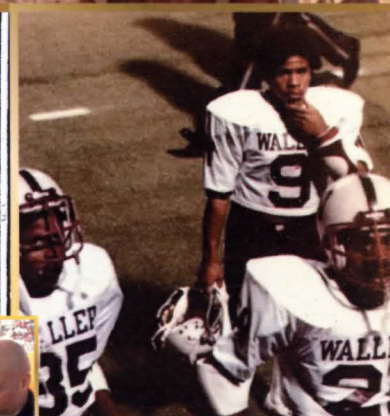
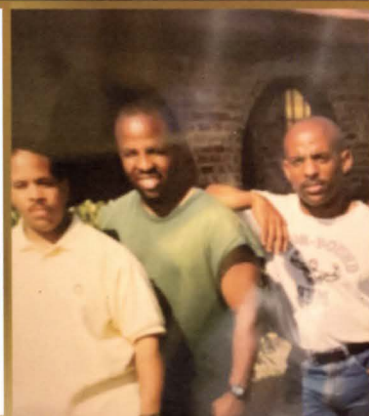
DEWAYNE, YOU LIVED WELL.

But we never thought you would teach us... so soon... how to **DIE.** You were invincible! Our superhero! But only you knew how dire the battle within you was. You were not oblivious to the gravity of your condition nor were you in denial about your mortality. So in your dying, you took up arms and became an advocate for your own cause: the fight to live. With the same energy you gave to so many other external ideals, you exerted on your own behalf. And you persisted – for 16 years. We saw you engage in countless hours of research, clinical trials, traditional and alternative therapies, gym workouts and running bleachers, astounding healthcare professionals with your will - to - live! For 16 years – with a smile. Never saying 'no' – until you knew you just shouldn't. Taking calls and meetings – until you couldn't. Yearning to "guest lecture" on college campuses – until your body wouldn't. And in your final hours, with your signature radical passion and ironclad conviction, you told your family 'I love you' with a sound that we all understood – and we saw you **DIE WELL.**

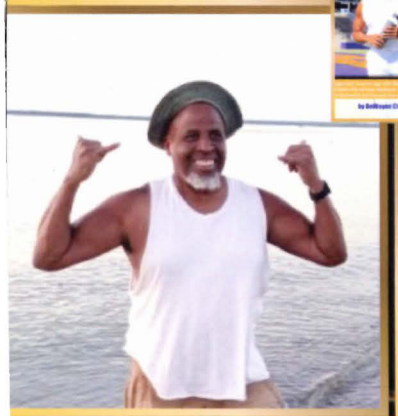
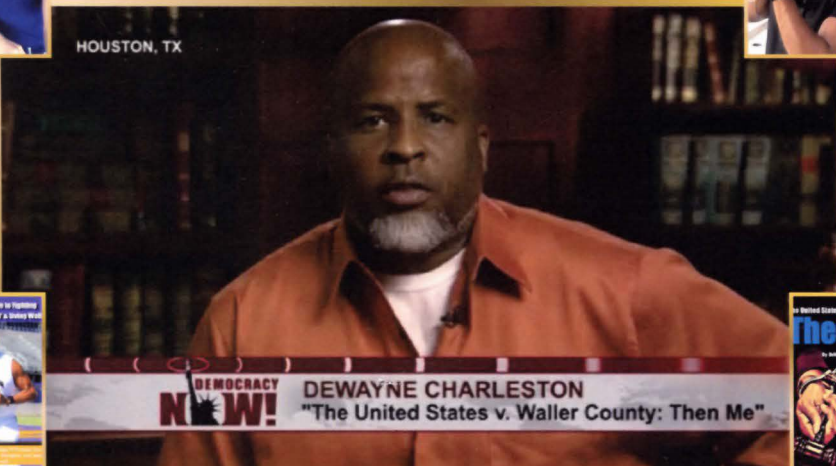
Waiting with great anticipation until we see you face to face again,
David, Phyllis, Kathleen, Carlen, and Craig



A LIFE WELL LIVED



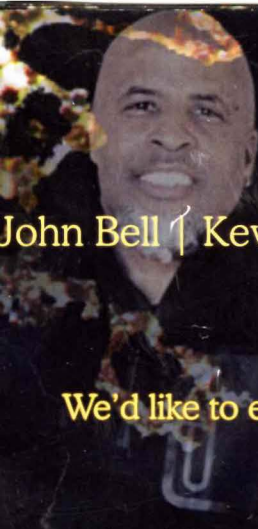
HOUSTON, TX



A LIFE WELL LIVED



NEW THIS MORNING
FAMILY BLAMES POLICE FOR SANDRA BLAND'S DEATH
LIVE



Active Pallbearers

John Bell | Kevin Carreathers | Larry Crawford | Bruce Davis | Marcus Higgs | Caleb King

FAMILY GRATITUDE

We'd like to extend our sincere gratitude to each one of you for the calls, prayers, text and words of strength during this difficult time.

SPECIAL THANKS

Paul G. Corn, MD, PhD: Your willingness to truly listen to our father and craft a treatment plan that respected his voice meant more than words can express. Your professionalism and compassion never went unnoticed. We are deeply grateful for the care you provided.

Constable Herschel Smith: Your unwavering loyalty to our father has always been evident. You stood by him through every challenge, ready to fight at his side. Your friendship is something we will forever honor.

Christiana Charleston: You stepped forward without hesitation in dad's greatest hour of need. The strength, love, and dignity with which you supported him is something we will always remember and respect. You earned a badge of honor that will never fade.

Keith Crawford: You generously offered both professional insight and personal support when it mattered most. Our father deeply valued your perspective and thoughtful guidance. So do we.

Tom Brennan: Our father held you in the highest regard—as a friend, colleague, and mentor. Your support during his final months made a profound impact on him and on us. We will always be grateful.

Trish Lavine: Thank you for being a steady, caring presence in our father's life. He cherished your friendship and confided in you often. Your kindness meant the world to him—and to us.

Carol Higginbotham, RN: Your gentle spirit and compassionate care brought comfort to our father in his final weeks. You made a difficult time more bearable for our family, and we are sincerely thankful.

Jenny Freeman, CNA: Your dedication to our father's comfort and dignity was extraordinary. You were exactly who he needed in those final days, and we will always remember the grace and strength with which you served him. Thank you.

Final Resting Place
Prairie View Memorial Cemetary

REPAST

St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church // 204 Dooley St, Prairie View, TX 77446

Final Arrangements Entrusted to :
Singleton & Sons Funeral Home
627 New Orleans Street Hempstead, TX 77445

