

Remembering Leon Ellis Smith (September 22, 1930 – June 21, 2021)

Leon Ellis Smith was born September 22, 1930 in Rutherford County, Smyrna, Tennessee to the late Maggie Smith. At an early age, the family moved to Nashville Tennessee and united with the Bass Street Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of the late Rev. Sam Alexander. He loved serving and attending church. Leon received his early education in the Nashville public school system and graduated from Pearl High School.

After graduation, Leon joined the U.S. Army and served his tour of duty in the Korean War before being honorably discharged with the rank of Sergeant. After his discharge, he attended A&I University, which is now Tennessee State University, where he pledged April 28, 1956 Rho Psi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity . His travels brought him to Los Angeles where he was employed by the United States Postal Service and retired on September 20, 2002 after 47 years of service.

Leon lived a very exciting life and loved to travel. He was a friend to all and never met a stranger. He was a very quiet, loving, and gentle spirit. He loved fashion and was known as “Mr. GQ”. As a teenager, he loved taking pictures and that special love followed him the rest of his life. Starting with pictures of family and friends, he grew skilled in capturing beauty in wedding events and banquets, photographing public figures, celebrities, entertainers, and athletes. As a member of the NAACP, he also photographed many of their events including conventions. In his passion for photography, at the end of every year, he expressed his generosity by gifting photo albums to people he had photographed including random photos at church and church events.

He attended the 8:00 AM service every Sunday morning at Second Baptist Church of Los Angeles, California, Dr. William S. Epps, Pastor. Leon was called from labor to reward on June 21, 2021. His family that preceded him in death are his mother - Maggie Smith; Six brothers - Ferris, Isaac, James K., Dudley, Robert, and Howard Smith; three sisters - Louise Smith Finney, Eva Mai Smith, and Pauline Smith Gross.

He leaves to cherish his memory a devoted great-nephew James E. Smith and a devoted friend Henry Hill – both of Nashville Tennessee; the Pastor and members of Second Baptist Church and a host of other family members and friends.