

## Cornelius Nelson

September 20, 1941 - February 9, 2021

“Once social change begins it cannot be reversed. You cannot un-educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.” —Caesar Chavez

Cornelius W. Nelson, better known as Neal, was born in Petersburg, Va. to Eugene L. and M. Zelmer Nelson on September 20, 1941. The third of five brothers, Neal enjoyed a childhood spent partially in Harlem, where Central Park was his playground. After returning to Richmond, he graduated Armstrong High School at the age of 15 and later joined the Air Force, traveling within the US (TX and AL) and as far as Izmir, Turkey. After a charmed tour he was honorably discharged and then enrolled in Virginia State University, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in sociology and met the love of his life, Evelyn Ernestine Lanier of McKenney, Va. They were introduced at a small diner on Route 1, were later married on March 7, 1964 and lived in Washington DC where there were more job opportunities. Their union lasted until her passing on February 15, 2009.

Neal started his career in the mailroom at IBM, and found the work environment to be ripe with a racist power structure. After that experience he

followed an entrepreneurial path, working in insurance sales with Prudential, entertainment management and ultimately opening Green Ribbon Florist and Gifts, a floral wire service. Together with his in-laws he chartered Ambassador Baptist Church on 1412 Minnesota Ave, SE.

Often he could be found reading a book, legs crossed, in deep concentration. He enjoyed playing chess and listening to rock, jazz and funk music. He loved listening to WPFW–Jazz and Justice and he regularly chatted with all the business owners on 12th Street in Brookland. As he sought his daily coffee he would exchange ideas with the owners of 7-11 and he collected the crunchiest of natural snacks and health supplements at the Glut Co-op in Mt. Rainier, Md. He never hesitated to help anyone he encountered in need.

He is survived by his daughters, Toni Nelson Clark (Julius), Jeanette Jacqueline Nelson (Dieylani); grandson, Jacquan A. Clark (Destiny), grandcat and roommate, Ephigenia “Effie” Nelson; great-grandsons, Sirius and Orion; brothers, Eugene L. Jr., Donald A. and Otis L. (Linda) Nelson; brothers-in-law, Sidney L. Jr. (Mary), Robert (Gerry) and John (Elsa) Lanier; sisters-in-law, Annie L. Tate, Jeanette Branch (Milton) and Jacqueline Arnold; and a host of nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews, cousins and friends.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 45 years, Evelyn; brother, Charles; uncle, Frank; granddaughter, Lailah Simone Clark; sisters-in law, Susie Clay, Hazel Lanier and Cora Nelson; brother-in-law, Camillo F. Lanier; and nieces, Kelly Nelson and Sharon Clay.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Pope Funeral Homes created a Webcast in memory of Cornelius Nelson*



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**Pope Funeral Homes** - May 08, 2021 at 10:26 AM



“ *Cornelius Nelson*

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January 28, 2023 at 02:13 PM



“ *Cornelius Nelson*

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January 28, 2023 at 10:26 AM



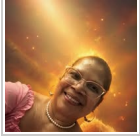
“ *I stumbled down the Google rabbit hole and found Cornelius. I never met him but there is something about him that makes me feel like I knew him. He looks like a man with great knowledge and spirit.*

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**Sherry Rea** - June 14, 2021 at 09:51 AM



“ *My Condolences to you, Jaye, and your family. Jessica White (ARHU)*

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**Jessica White** - May 10, 2021 at 09:30 AM



“ *Sending my condolences and prayers that God's grace continues to hold you and protect you. Praying you to find the peace within that will surpass all understanding.* ”



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**Lisamaya James** - April 20, 2021 at 10:39 AM



“ *3 files added to the tribute wall* ”



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**JJ** - February 23, 2021 at 08:19 PM



“ *Uncle Neal was always a kind hearted and also light hearted man who seemed to always have a smile on his face. May he Rest In Peace and know that he was very much loved by his family.* ”

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**Craig Nelson** - February 22, 2021 at 08:52 PM



“ *I will always remember how my brother assumed the position of a fatherly figure for me after dad passed; no matter what I did or was going thru he always had encouraging words and guidance. I truly enjoyed listening to his perspectives on life. I recall the countless times we'd be engaged playing chess and discussing the state of affairs of humanity. I always marveled at Neal's easy going disposition. He was a true gentleman, practical in his thinking, and always wanting the best for his family.* ”

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**Otis Nelson** - February 20, 2021 at 01:48 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories*



**Pope Funeral Homes** - February 18, 2021 at 07:48 AM

JN

*My uncle was an amazing guy and I miss him already..  
rest well uncle Neal*

**Juan Nelson(nephew)** - February 18, 2021 at 04:24 PM

C(

*Uncle Neal was a wonderful and kind man. I will never forget you and  
your words of encouragement.*

**Charles Nelson Jr (nephew)** - April 22, 2021 at 09:00 PM

JJ

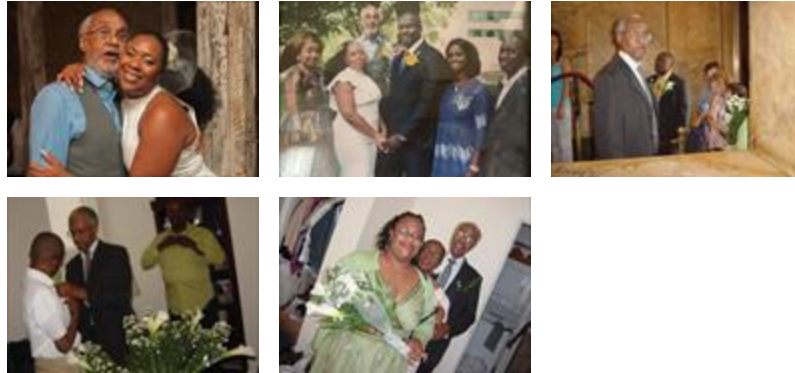
“ 27 files added to the album *Photos of Neal and Family*



**JJ** - February 17, 2021 at 11:22 PM

JJ

“ 26 files added to the tribute wall



JJ - February 17, 2021 at 11:18 PM

MW

“ Ms Wilson sent a virtual gift in memory of Cornelius Nelson



Ms Wilson - February 16, 2021 at 02:04 PM

TW

“ Sorry For Your Loss, Jesus Christ Loves Me, We Love You



Thomas Widgeon - February 13, 2021 at 06:23 PM