



## Artis Wayne Cooper

November 16, 1956 - April 11, 2022

Artis Wayne Cooper was born on November 16, 1956, in Milan, Georgia. He was a lifelong member of Collins Chapel C.M.E. Church in Milan. He attended Telfair High School in McRae, Georgia, and later, the University of New Orleans, where he met his loving wife, Denise Duronslet. Wayne was selected in the inaugural class of the University of New Orleans Athletics Hall of Fame in 1988, the Louisiana Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 1992, and the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation Hall of Fame in 2000. He was voted the No. 2 basketball player in school history by a panel of New Orleans basketball experts prior to the 2019-2020 season.

Wayne was drafted by the Golden State Warriors in 1978, the beginning of a 14-season NBA playing career. He and Denise were married in New Orleans on April 11, 1980. Together they had three beautiful daughters: Courtney, Andrea and Lauren. Wayne's family was the center of his universe, and he loved family vacations at the beach and visits to extended family in Louisiana and Georgia. His favorite pastime was long phone conversations with his buddies, retelling "the same old stories".

Wayne was a quiet humanitarian and philanthropist, preferring to help those in need in a direct and meaningful way. He actively supported the local community and was generous with his time and encouragement to many. After a successful on-court career with the Utah Jazz, Dallas Mavericks, Denver Nuggets, and Portland Trailblazers, Wayne's playing career ended in 1992. At the time of his retirement, Wayne was the Denver Nuggets' all-time

blocked shots leader; today he remains third in franchise history. Following his playing career, Wayne served in the front office of the Portland Trailblazers, and later served as Vice President of Basketball Operations for the Sacramento Kings for nearly two decades. He was an integral part of the brain trust that built the Kings' late 1990s to early 2000s success. Wayne was twice named to Sports Illustrated's list of the 101 Most Influential Minorities in Sports. In 2005, he was chosen as one of the 50 Most Powerful Blacks in Sports by Black Enterprise.

Wayne Cooper passed away on Monday, April 11, 2022, exactly forty-two years after his marriage to Denise. He is preceded in death by his mother Mamie Graham Cooper; his father Artis Cooper; and his brother, Isaiah Cooper. He leaves to cherish his memories, his wife, Denise; their three daughters, Courtney (Justice), Andrea, and Lauren; his siblings, Shirley (Burney) Fluellen, Louis Carl (Isabelle) Cooper, Mary Joyce (Angus) Howard, and Alvin Cooper; along with a host of beloved nieces, nephews, cousins, in-laws, and friends.

Visitation and funeral services will be held Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Home, 4347 Flat Shoals Pkwy, Decatur, GA 30034; 404-241-5656.

Visitation will take place from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm at our South DeKalb Chapel, followed by funeral services at 3:00 pm. DUE TO COVID-19 MASKS ARE REQUIRED IN OUR CHAPELS.

Burial will be held at 3:00pm on Thursday, April 21, 2022 at the Sophia Graham Cemetery, 245 Bowen Padgett Rd, Milan, GA 31060.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in memory of Wayne Cooper to support:

The National Kidney Foundation: <https://www.kidney.org/honorwaynecooper>  
or

Emory Healthcare: <https://together.emory.edu/givetodonatetotgefundforpatientandfamilycenteredsupport>

Fund for Patient and Family Centered Support or make checks payable to “Emory” and mail to Emory Healthcare, Office of Gift Accounting, 1762 Clifton Road NE, Ste. 1400, Atlanta, GA 30322-4001.

Livestream: <https://vimeo.com/event/1059691>

# Tribute Wall

PA

“ Denise,  
*I am so sorry to find out that Wayne passed last year. I think of you and Lauren often. I am praying for you and your family and may God sustain and guide you with His righteous right hand. Wayne was a kind, gentle and Godly man.*  
Love,  
Teacher Patty

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**Patty Araujo** - June 01, 2023 at 02:07 PM

OW

“ Joyce,  
*I was very sorry to hear about the death of your brother, Wayne. You and the members of your family have my deepest sympathy. Now that his soul has journeyed on, take comfort in knowing that he is still here for you... and reaching down from greater heights.*  
*With Deepest Sympathy, Oliver Winkfield*



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**Oliver Winkfield** - May 08, 2022 at 08:42 PM

MM

“ Courtney,  
*Mitch & I are sending love and condolences to you and your family. Nik told us of your Dad's passing. Happy to see that you are supported by the love of friends.*  
*Kelly & Mitch Mitchell (Nkechi's other parents)*

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**Mitch & Kelly Mitchell** - April 24, 2022 at 07:07 PM

NA

“ I would like to extend my deepest condolences to the Cooper family. Courtney (Justice) you and your family are in my prayers.

Nanaesi Amoo - April 19, 2022 at 11:52 AM

PY

“ Pete Youngman purchased the Simply Elegant S pathiphyllum for the family of Artis Wayne Cooper.



Pete Youngman - April 19, 2022 at 11:22 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Artis Wayne Cooper.



April 19, 2022 at 09:50 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Artis Wayne Cooper.



April 18, 2022 at 08:27 PM



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Artis Wayne Cooper.*



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April 18, 2022 at 05:01 PM



“ *Prayers and condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, Also, schoolmates, coaches, teammates from school days thru his NBA career. We started UNO the same time. Nice guy. RIP*



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**Andrea Brisco** - April 17, 2022 at 09:53 PM

DS

“ *Denise Cooper and Daughters*

*With our sincere heart felt condolences, please accept our monetary donation to the National Kidney Foundation in the memory of Wayne Cooper. He was a gentle giant with a beautiful soul. He will be sadly missed.*

*We had the pleasure to know Wayne while Denise attended college at the University of New Orleans and welcomed him into our family. Auntie Phil and Uncle Ferd treasured the loving relationship they acquired over the years. We all looked forward to the annual family picnics in St. John the Baptist Parish where we made special family moments.*

*Philomena and the late Ferdinand J. Dinvaut III*

*Demetria & Michael Lee, Sr.*

*Danette D. Simmons & Daughter*

*Danita D. Bellaire & Sons*

*Benoit & Dr. Grace Dinvaut & Daughters*

*Dwaine & Yvette Dinvaut & Daughters*

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**Danette Dinvaut Simmons** - April 16, 2022 at 08:48 PM

RS

“ A memory deep in my heart is a knock on my door one day. There stood this ‘giant’ of a man, holding the hand of a very sick little boy named, Sam. Wayne had heard that Sam’s birthday wish was to meet Wayne Cooper, his favorite player for the Portland Trailblazers. Wayne had a tiny uniform made for Sam, with No. 42 written on the back and Wayne and Denise delivered it in person for Sam’s BD party. A few days later, Sam’s mother called to tell Wayne that Sam was in the hospital and not expected to live long. Wayne asked if he could bring Sam home to Wayne and Denise’s home for an hour or so. Mother said “yes,” and this is the memory precious little Sam took in his heart to Heaven. They stood at my door that day and Wayne said, “Sam, this is Courtney’s auntie Renee.” I will never forget those few moments, holding this child who was burning up with leukemia, and seeing his thrill in being with Wayne Cooper. . . No. 42. You have brought so much joy in your life upon earth, wonderful neighbor and friend. Our family will never forget you, Denise, and your precious daughters. You are truly a man of stature!

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**renee schilperoort** - April 16, 2022 at 08:00 PM

KL

“ my name is ken lowery. i was raised up in milan ga.with wayne cooper and his family.never would you find a more christian and umbler man than his dad artis cooper.i worked at a sawmill in milan ga and wayne would work at the mill after school or when he was not playing basketball for the telfair co trojans.you will not find a better family nowhere, and i know he will be missed. the song says it not what you take with you but what you left behind. wayne left alot and will be surely missed but never forgotten

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**ken lowery** - April 16, 2022 at 01:24 PM

SG

“ I will always remember Wayne as the Sequoia in the forest:  
Admired  
Strong and tall  
Standing out amongst the mountains  
Withstanding battles of wind and fire  
Proudly shielding saplings  
His deep roots watered by his loving family and friends.  
I am grateful to have called him my friend.

*Sheli Gottlieb*

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**Sheli Gottlieb** - April 15, 2022 at 03:09 PM

MG

“ Courtney, you and your family have my deepest sympathy in the death of your dad. May God give all of you the strength needed during this difficult time. May your dad's soul rest in eternal peace.  
*Myrtle Gabriel, V-Neesa's mom*

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**Myrtle Gabriel** - April 15, 2022 at 01:39 AM

MC

“ Denise and Daughters,  
I am so sorry for the loss of your husband and father. Please know that I am praying for your peace and comfort. Rest In Peace, Wayne.



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**Marsha Cannon** - April 14, 2022 at 10:22 PM



“ *Care and Compassion Spray* was purchased for the family of Artis Wayne Cooper.



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April 14, 2022 at 07:24 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage* was purchased for the family of Artis Wayne Cooper.



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April 14, 2022 at 04:32 PM

LJ

“ i have had the privilege of calling Wayne Cooper my friend for 38 years. From the moment he became a Denver Nugget in 1984 and through the years, so many fun times and memories we shared. From playoff games, road trips, visits to Native American reservations, player appearances, great meals and glasses of Chardonnay. He was one of my favorites. Always has been and always will be.

No finer, kinder loving people will anyone hope to find than Wayne and Denise. My life was definitely made better by knowing them and I am forever grateful for their friendship.

Love, and blessings to you Denise. You have been his angel on earth. I sure will miss my friend but Wayne will always hold a special place in my heart.

With gratitude,

Lisa Johnson

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Lisa Johnson - April 14, 2022 at 03:39 PM

CB

Denise and daughters, I am so very sorry if the loss of your husband and dad! I shall keep you all in my prayer for love and peace! Many Blessings to you all! God Bless!

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Cynthia Brafford - April 15, 2022 at 12:12 PM

RH

From the Henley family of Eastman Georgia. High school and church friend Wayne Cooper and family. Sincere prayers and thoughts are with you may God comfort you'll during this time and years to come Ruthie Hanley 🙏🙏🙏🙏💔😭

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Ruthie L Henley - April 17, 2022 at 05:40 PM

JR

“ Jerry and Dodie Reynolds purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Artis Wayne Cooper.



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**Jerry and Dodie Reynolds** - April 14, 2022 at 03:29 PM

JR

“ Wayne was a joy to work with and never a bad day in twenty plus years . Just a wonderful person that impacted everyone positively . Truly, a terrific career and well lived life. Will be missed forever !

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**Jerry Reynolds** - April 14, 2022 at 03:16 PM

AS

“ He was a man of stature,  
Unpretentious grace,  
Who gave more than he took,  
Whose passing left a void, a disequilibrium.  
Those who knew him, loved him.  
Those who loved him, love him still.  
Wayne...Coop.  
You see one man. I see many.  
Son, Husband, Dad, Brother, Uncle, Nephew, Cousin, Friend,  
Neighbor, Role Model, Mentor, Philanthropist.  
Distinguished, yet down home.  
Confident, without arrogance.  
Accomplished, and still humble.  
A good man, a deep thinker, a trusted ally.  
We mourn your absence  
As you rejoice in God's presence.  
Rest, Wayne, for you have earned it.

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**Anna Stone** - April 14, 2022 at 03:00 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Artis Wayne Cooper.



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April 14, 2022 at 02:12 PM



“ *“The comfort of having a friend may be taken away, but not that of having had one” – Seneca.*

*Jennifer*

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**Jennifer** - April 14, 2022 at 10:57 AM