



Deacon Gilbert Bowles

January 25, 1940 - October 6, 2022

Gilbert Bowles was born on January 25, 1940, at Lincoln Hospital, The Bronx, New York to the late Malcolm Lee Bowles and Marjorie Edward Bowles. He was the eldest of seven children, 3 of which preceded him in death.

Gil, as he was affectionately known to his friends and family, was educated in the New York City Public School system and graduated from The High School of Fashion Industries in 1958. After graduation, he worked several jobs, but he wanted more. He saw a sign that said “See the World” and enlisted in the United States Airforce (USAF) July 29th, 1958.

While serving in the Air Force, Gil wanted to play the saxophone with the band, but there were no more available spots. He saw the Vibraphone (Vibes) and began to learn to play. His musical ability and improvisational skills improved as he continued his lessons at Manny’s Music in New York after discharge. Gil was very athletic and was a star player for the US Air Force’s Basketball team. He was stationed in several countries, including Germany, Korea, and France. In 1962, while at home in The Bronx on leave, he met the love of his life, Lillie Pearl Laster. He was home for 3 weeks, but before he left for France, he asked for Pearl’s hand in marriage. He knew he wanted her to be his wife. They were married October 5th, 1963 and God blessed their union with 59 years and a day. To their union, two children were born, Stephanie and Gilbert Jason. Jason preceded him in death in 2018.

In 2012, God blessed Gil with his grandson, John Callaway, III. He was given the title of “Pop- Pop, and their special bond developed. He spent every day with his grandson, and would not let him go to daycare until he was 18 months old. He taught John how to talk at 6 months old and helped develop his love for honey buns.

Gil worked several jobs before beginning his career with the United Postal Service. He started as a Clerk, and continued to advance in roles and responsibilities. Once he became the Chief Equal Opportunity Employment Officer, that role prepared him to become the 1st Black Acting Postmaster for Oyster Bay, NY. From there he continued and accepted his next assignment as Postmaster, East Islip, NY and ultimately retired as Postmaster from Bellmore, NY in 1992. He moved with his wife Pearl to Atlanta, GA in 1995.

Gil, the son of minister, was raised in Bethel Holy Church, Harlem, NY, however it was not until 1976, when he truly accepted Jesus Christ and was baptized at First Baptist Church, Bay Shore, NY by the late Pastor Albert. L. Brown. A talented musician, Gil played the Vibes and used that talent to glorify God. He was a part of an ensemble, known as “The Group”. They were a small group of singers and musicians that met at each other’s homes for rehearsals. They sang many of the contemporary artists of that day and were later renamed The A.L Brown Ensemble. In addition to playing for several churches, he was a Founding member of the group the Pslamists. The Pslamists were a frequently requested musical group and played throughout the Metro New York area. They played for any celebratory event; Church services, weddings, birthdays, or Homegoing celebrations.

His daughter Stephanie was already a member of Antioch and sang with the Barbara J. Alexander Instruments of Praise Choir. It was during one of the musical presentations that Sylvia Lester invited him to play. He brought his

Vibes and his spirit. He joined Antioch along with Pearl in 1995 under the Pastorate of the Late Rev. Dr. Cameron Madison Alexander and served faithfully in several capacities until his health began to fail.

Gil was a part of the Antioch Band and played the Vibes every Sunday. He, along with Brothers Christopher and Christian Harden were instrumental in starting the Antioch Youth Orchestra, which provided our Youth the opportunity to bring their musical talents to the Lord. He and the Hardens worked diligently with the Youth Orchestra to make a melodious sound and be included in the worship experience.

Gil taught Sunday School, and was a member of the laymen's group and the music department of the Georgia Missionary Baptist Convention. Once he began his second career as a Gwinnett County School bus driver, he then became one of the drivers for Antioch's youth, safely driving them to the various Statewide Youth conferences. He could always be counted on to keep the youth captivated with his stories and jokes.

He was ordained as a Deacon in November 2007, along with a group of dedicated men. They were admonished during their training to remain close and strengthen their bond. They kept their word and often enjoyed fellowshiping with each other and their wives.

He was not only active at church but active with several Community associations. He was President of the 369th Veteran's Association, Suffolk (NY) Chapter, and an Associate member of the Suffolk County (NY) Section, National Council of Negro Women(NCNW). Although he never officially joined the DeKalb Section of NCNW, he and his friend Lonnie Keith would often be the only men present at functions, offering their support to their wives with set up and breakdown at Section Events. He served as one of the first Presidents

of the Pebble Creek Farms Homeowner's Association in Grayson, GA and was the official neighborhood greeter, waving to passersby, as he sat in his Garage Lounge enjoying one of his Cigars.

Although no one in the family believed that Gil was going to ever leave New York, Gil and Pearl enjoyed an active life in Georgia making several friends. He continued his with his model trains and would spend hours building layouts.

On Thursday, October 6th, 2022, Gilbert began playing in the heavenly band when the Lord called him home. Left to cherish his memory is his loving and devoted wife of 59 years, Lillie Pearl, his daughter, Stephanie Callaway, Loganville, GA, Grandson John Callaway, III; Special Niece and God-Daughter, N'tembi(Greg) Bodrick, Poughkeepsie, NY; Spiritual Sons and Daughters Aaron(Ave') Totten, Lawrenceville, GA, Steven(Heidi) Almeida, Grayson GA, Kathy Mobley, Duluth, GA; Sisters Sandra Cox, Queens, NY, and Pamela Seymour, Bronx, NY; Brother Rev. Warren Bowles, Bronx, NY; Friend Joe Williams, Snellville, GA; Aunts, Carrie Moore, Albany, GA , Ella Elliotte, Queens, NY, Vinnie Douglas, Snellville, GA, Nephews Darryl and Cornelius Cox, Maurice Bowles, Sean Seymour, Anthony and Jamie Laster, Joshua Bodrick; Nieces Simone McCorkle, Azaria Laster, Mone' Perkins. He will be truly missed by the members and officers of Antioch Baptist Church North, and a host of other relatives and friends.

Cemetery Details

Georgia National Cemetery

2025 Mount Carmel Church Lane
Canton, GA 30114-7670
<http://www.georgianationalcemetery.com>

Previous Events

Visitation (Mask Required)

OCT **13**. 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Gregory B. Levett and Sons - Gwinnett Chapel
914 Scenic Hwy
Lawrenceville, GA 30045

Family Hours

OCT **13**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Gregory B. Levett and Sons - Gwinnett Chapel
914 Scenic Hwy
Lawrenceville, GA 30045

Celebration of Life Service - Live Streamed

OCT **14**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Antioch Baptist Church North.
540 Cameron Madison Alexander Blvd
Atlanta, GA 30318

Burial

OCT 17. 2:00 PM (ET)

Georgia National Cemetery
1080 Scott Hudgens Dr
Canton, GA 30114

Tribute Wall



“ Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory created a Webcast in memory of Deacon Gilbert Bowles



Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory, Inc. - October 12, 2022 at 11:00 AM

BB

“ I had the pleasure of working for Gil while I worked as a casual carrier and clerk. He was such a kind and understanding man. He will be missed!

Bryan B Best - June 21, 2023 at 07:12 PM

RW

“ Sincere Condolences to Sis. L. Bowles and Family
Mrs Roberta Williams, L.I., NY

Roberta Williams - October 15, 2022 at 01:25 PM

DJ

“ Deacon Bowles will be missed. He was very warm and always pleasant .
Sending prayers to his family and friends . Job well Done ! Rest in Power
David and Adrienne Jackson

David Jackson - October 14, 2022 at 06:47 PM

MW

“ Pearl, Stephanie, and John-John, I may not have lived in Georgia in person, but my heart was always there with all of you. Yes, as Gil told Aaron the year that you all left New York, "Nell is coming one day." my heart weeps for you in Georgia today.
His great friendship will always be in the the hearts of the Wilson family. We knew Gil as a great father, husband, friend, musician, and a true God loving person. Still have some cigars Gil gave to Aaron,Sr. On behalf of my family, Aaron,Jr.,Jacque, Theresa, Racquell, and I (Minnell) We Salute You. My Dear Friends,God Be With You All Always, And Forever. Love, Minnell

Minnell Wilson - October 14, 2022 at 12:47 PM

ME

“ Deacon Bowels was an amazing Xylophone musician as well as a dedicated virtual Usher. He brought kindness and humor to so many of us.

Margaret R Edinburgh - October 14, 2022 at 10:30 AM

MC

“ To Mother Lillie Bowels, Stephanie and the Bowels family. Our hearts are so sad in the passing of Dea.Bowles. We will miss him on Sunday morning services at Antioch. Please know that you are in our prayers. For we know that God never make a mistake, Joy will come in the morning.
Our deepest condolences,
Sis. Olivia Coles and Family

Mrs.Olivia Coles - October 13, 2022 at 07:03 PM

IF

“ *Ike Heyward and Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Deacon Gilbert Bowles.*



Ike Heyward and Family - October 12, 2022 at 03:24 PM