

From the Cradle to the Grave Our Legacy of Love and Hope

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The Rev. Alvin "Buddy Brooks" Wilkes Story

"Almost everyone around the neighborhood called him "Buddy Brooks,"" Willie Lee Jones said in sharing the memories of his father.

Jones, 67, said that other kids called his father "Uncle Buddy" that weren't even related to him.

Whether it's "Uncle Buddy" or "Buddy Brooks," Rev. Alvin Wilkes was a prideful man Jones said.

"He always helped people," Jones said.

Born June 14, 1916, in Haywood County, Tenn., Wilkes attended school in Dancyville, Tenn. Wilkes parents, Mack Wilkes and Irene Pewett lived on a farm in Tennessee. Mack Wilkes died during Pewett's pregnancy with Wilkes. Afterwards Pewett married Dallas Jones and had a daughter named Emma. Wilkes last name was considered Jones until he moved to Cleveland to get a job. His birth certificate revealed that his last name was Wilkes.

Wilkes devoted his life to God and attended Dancyville CME Church in Dancyville, Tenn. During his calling from God, Wilkes moved to Cleveland, Ohio in the late 1950s. There, Wilkes joined Cory United Methodist Church where he became a

minister. Afterwards, Wilkes joined Second Mt. Olive Baptist Church, and then attended Salvation Baptist Church serving as assistant pastor.

“My father was a minister...a calling from God,” Jones said.

Among Wilkes’ many occupations throughout his life, (part-time work in funeral homes and trucking businesses) he was most famous for being a chef and minister.

Wilkes was a chef for Skyway Lodge and the Holiday Inn, but most of all, his friends and family.

“At Christmas time everyone wanted him to bake pies and cakes. I had to fill the oven with wood,” Jones said.

“He was a great cook. He worked as a chef part-time for a long time.”

During Wilkes early years he had two children, Alvis Marie Bond and Willie Lee Jones, from a previous marriage with Orelia Archibald. Later, he married Mildred Wilkes and gained two stepchildren Anthony and Jeanette of Cleveland.

“He taught us to do what’s right and to treat people the way (we) wanted to be treated,” Jones said.

Wilkes gave Jones advice about dating women that stuck with him throughout Jones’ life. “Not to ever date a girl you don’t want to marry,” Jones said.

Jones said that he and his father became close when his father moved to Cleveland.

No one knew really knew the love and fellowship we (developed),” Jones said.

“We grew a lot closer when he’d gotten sick. It was hard to watch someone you love suffer. He never complained; he always said that he was all right,” Jones said.

Jones said that Wilkes had a positive attitude even at his sick bed.

“When he got sick he wanted to go back to Tennessee. He was so happy to visit his sister, Emma Bowles, and everyone else,” Jones said.

Wilkes died of cancer at the Cityview Nursing Home in Cleveland on Nov. 12, 1995. Wilkes was buried in Dancyville Cemetery and had funeral services at Dancyville CME Church where he had first turned his life over to God.

“He said that he was going home.”

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