



## Mr. James C. Caldwell

April 5, 2014

Mr. James C. Caldwell entered into eternal rest on April 5, 2014. Born July 16, 1929, in the remote metropolitan Pittsburgh village of Grindstone, PA to a coal-mining father Willie and a housewife mother, Mattie (Mitchell), Mr. Caldwell was the second of three surviving children born to this union.

His early education was completed at Madison Elementary and Brownsville High School, (Class of 1947) Brownsville, PA. Upon completing high school, he migrated to Toledo following his uncle James Mitchell (one of two uncles for whom he was named). Like many of others in his generation, Mr. Caldwell came to Toledo in pursuit of employment.

From 1947 to 1949 Mr. Caldwell sought employment alternately between Toledo and Detroit and eventually gained work with the City of Detroit, Public Lighting Division. He was drafted into the Army in 1951 and served for two years in the 101st Airborne Division. He later returned to Toledo after securing employment with Unit Cast, an East Toledo foundry.

Subsequent to re-establishing residency in Toledo, Mr. Caldwell joined the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church under the pastorate of the Reverend late Elijah Benton. During his affiliation with Mt. Zion and later with United Missionary Baptist Church, Mr. Caldwell held a number of leadership positions including Chairman, the Board of Trustees; Chairman, Annual Men's Day

Celebrations: Chairman, the Mt. Zion 50th Anniversary Committee; Chairman, Mt. Zion Building Committee; and organizer and advisor to the Young People's Usher Board. Throughout, his life he thoroughly enjoyed church work and was committed to the Christian journey.

Upon completing his military tour of duty, he returned to Detroit and began a college degree program at Wayne State University. He held fondest reminiscences of the times that he spent at the Old Main building at Wayne State.

Later, Mr. Caldwell returned to live in Toledo and gained employment with the City of Toledo in the Water Department. He continued his employment with the City in the Department of Health serving as a Sanitarian. In this capacity, he became the first African American to serve in an Inspector of Meat.

Mr. Caldwell was introduced to Miss Mary Jane Lawson on a blind date arranged by mutual friends in 1953. The two wed in 1954. To this union, two children were born, Kimberly Marie and James Michael.

In 1964, Mr. Caldwell graduated from the University of Toledo with a B.S. degree from the University of Toledo. Shortly thereafter he joined the Toledo Public Schools as a Social Studies teacher at Woodward High School under then principal, Mr. Virgil Sloan. He also taught summer school at Roy C. Start High School.

In 1969, Mr. Caldwell left the Toledo Public Schools for employment with the Midland Ross Corporation. There he served as a Minority Recruiter/Affirmative Action Officer. While holding this position, Mr. Caldwell facilitated employment opportunities for minority youngsters from Scott, Libbey, and Woodward High Schools

In accepting the position of Executive Director of the North Toledo Community House in 1971, Mr. Caldwell committed to revitalizing the agency to fiscal soundness and heightened social viability. To this end, he enlisted the aid of a broad base of community resources. Also, it was during his employment with the Community House he also reaffirmed his personal commitment to public service.

For twelve years, from 1974-1986, Mr. Caldwell served as both Vice-President and President of the Toledo Council for Business (TCB). The aim of this organization was to ensure that minority entrepreneurs had access to business training, funding sources and other forms of economic development.

Mr. Caldwell was the first lay and the first African American President of the Toledo Area Council of Churches (TACC). First elected in 1975 his tenure as President concluded in 1979.

Fund raising was Mr. Caldwell's special gift. He used this talent to benefit the Toledo Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), where he served as both Vice President and Chairman of the Life Membership Committee. He helped raise more than \$350,000.00 during his tenure in office. From 1979 through 1980, he worked to reactivate the local United Negro College Fund drive and worked to raise several thousand dollars to benefit both young African American scholars and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU'S).

In 1971, Mr. Caldwell was the first African American elected to the Presidency of the Board of Trustees of the Economic Opportunity Planning Association (EOPA). Elected to the board in 1967, he assumed the Vice Presidency in 1970 before moving on to the board presidency in 1971. EOPA was a part of the President Lyndon B. Johnson's national "War on Poverty" initiative.

Locally, under Mr. Caldwell's direction, millions of dollars were granted to the metropolitan Toledo area for Head Start and other programs aimed as economic uplift. Mr. Caldwell's initial stint in office concluded in 1975. He returned to serve as Board President in the late 1989.

Under Mr. Caldwell's leadership, the programs of the North Toledo Community House grew to the point that it became apparent that the physical facility would have to expand. The expansion and remodel, which included adding a gymnasium, administrative offices, restrooms and classrooms was completed on July 20, 1987. Also during this time, the interior garage facility and the second floor Otto G. Hartman room were remodeled for community outreach programs. Post expansion, the NTCH actively renewed its charge to serve the residents of North Toledo.

Throughout his career, Mr. Caldwell sought to realize his goal of establishing an organization of like-minded men and women who would foster and promote the academic and eventual financial and social success for minority youth in the Toledo. To this end, Mr. Caldwell tapped into his arsenal of community resources and in November 1983, founded the Fifty Men and Women of Toledo, Inc.

In addition to providing academic scholarships, the mission of the Fifty Men and Women of Toledo, Inc., included sponsoring educational career days, fostering personal enhancement by way of interpersonal mentor/mentee relationships and follow-up assistance for scholarship recipients that successfully completed degree programs.

Mr. Caldwell's proudest accomplishment of the Fifty Men and Women of Toledo, Inc., is its ability, with the assistance of the Toledo corporate community, to provide upwards of one million dollars in scholarship assistance to deserving minority youth in our city.

In late 1999, The North Toledo Community House was renamed the James C. Caldwell Community Center in honor of the Executive Director and his nearly 30 years of service. Additional awards include: SERTOMA (Service to Mankind Award– 1982); Ohio Council of Community Health Award (1982); Ruth S. Ide Community Mental Center Award for fifteen years of Service (1983); United Negro College Fund Silver Eagle Award; Better Business Bureau (BBB) Award (for fifteen years of service)

Mr. Caldwell was further honored when, in acknowledgement of his lifelong community service, former Mayor Jack Ford supported the renaming of Stickney Avenue at Ketcham James C. Caldwell Way. The Caldwell Center continues to serve the needs of the residents of North Toledo.

Mr. Caldwell retired from the Caldwell Center in 2004.

He leaves to cherish his memory, wife of fifty-nine years Mary Jane (Lawson); daughter, Dr. Kimberly M. and son Mr. James M. Caldwell; brother Cauley T. (Fannie), Detroit, MI.

Visitation will be Friday 5-8 p.m. Dale-Riggs Funeral Home Chapel. Wake services will be Saturday, 11 a.m. followed by funeral services at 12 noon United Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. Robert G. Bass, Officiant. Interment Toledo Memorial Park Cemetery. Memorial Donations can be made to the James C. Caldwell Community Center, Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank or the charity of the donor's choice. [www.dalefh.com](http://www.dalefh.com)

# Tribute Wall

BD

“ Our prayers go out to the family, we would like to express our condolences at this time to your family. The Bible is a great source of encouragement at times like this, the scripture I would like to share is at Revelation 21:4 "And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."

**BJ. Daniels** - May 08, 2014 at 08:20 AM

FD

Once again, this is the Brooklyn based Watchtower Society's way of using and manipulating funeral home websites to offer counterfeit comfort from their false jehovah. Their jehovah is not the Jehovah of my Bible.

**Frankie Dee** - May 10, 2014 at 06:26 PM

SB

“ Mr Caldwell taught the first African American course at Woodward High School my senior year. I am proud to have been a part of that class. If it had not been for Mr Caldwell I may not have attended college, because he personally went to the Woodward office and made them send my transcripts to BGSU to complete my application. I will always call him a mentor, he helped me in many ways.

*My heartfelt condolences to his wonderful family*

*Sheila M. Boyd-Siek  
Berea, OH*

**Sheila Boyd-Siek** - April 28, 2014 at 01:11 PM

DS

“ Jim please accept my condolences for the passing of your Father. I am sorry I can't be there Friday or Saturday due to work issues but please know you are in my thoughts Don Siemens

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**donald siemens** - April 11, 2014 at 01:20 PM

BB

“ I have to say Mr. Caldwell was the best teacher I ever had at Woodard High School. I had him for Sociology. He didn't really use the text book. He tried to teach us about real life. I remember his favorite saying was "children graduation will be here before you know it". He was a great person.

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**Brenda Phillips Brittian** - April 10, 2014 at 12:23 PM

JC

“ To Aunt Mary Jane, Kim, and Michael:

*Please know you are in our prayers. A few weeks ago at another family funeral, I said I hope when we meet again it would not be at another funeral. Again, we will meet, but know we shall always remember "Caldwell" as we called him. He was always kind and caring to James and myself. I will remember his smile and kindness to us. Love you guys so much.*

*James and Carolyn Clemons  
Grand Blanc, Michigan*

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**James and Carolyn Clemons** - April 08, 2014 at 09:19 PM