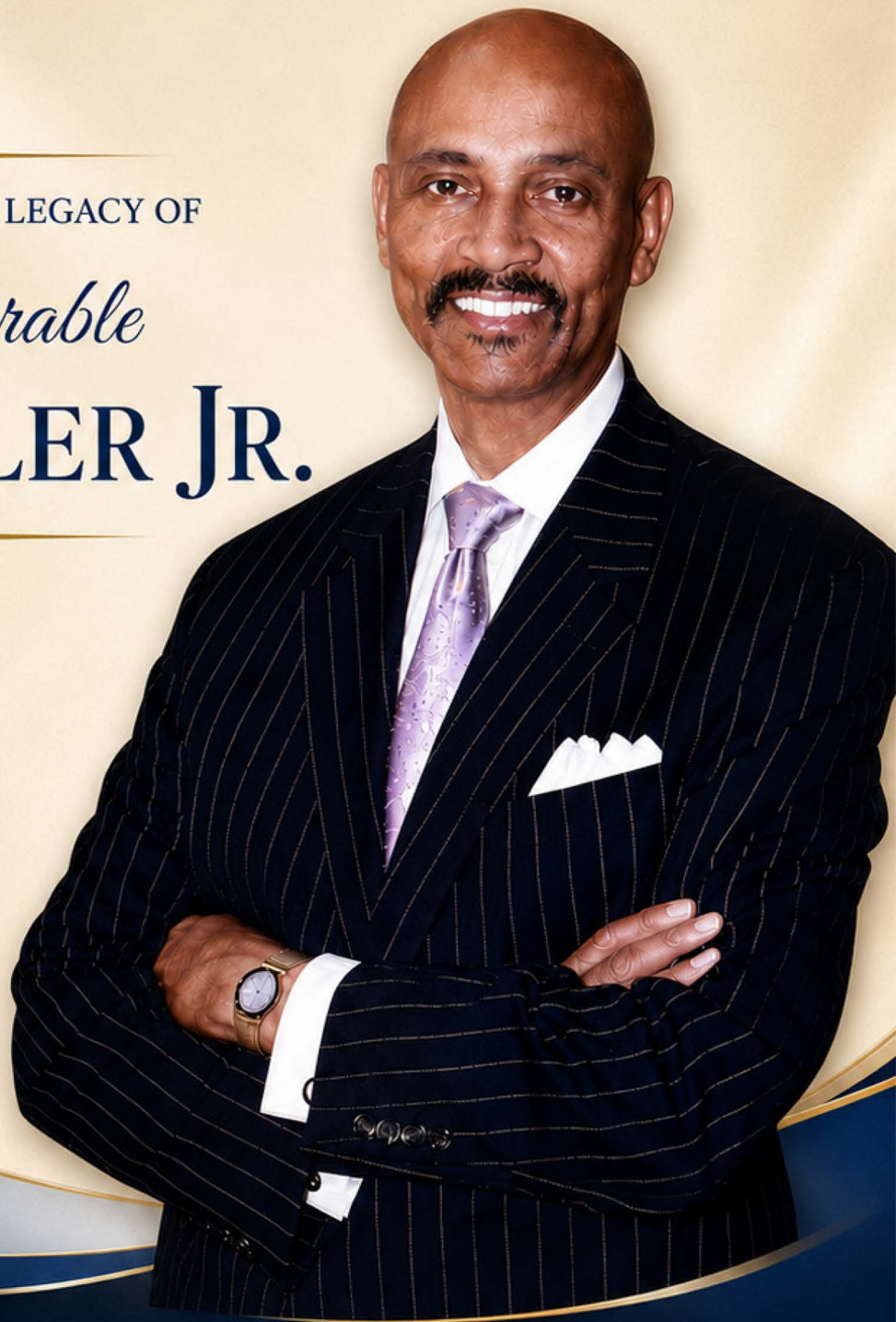


CELEBRATING THE LIFE & LEGACY OF

The Honorable
I. RAY MILLER JR.



SUNRISE
APRIL 6, 1949

SUNSET
AUGUST 28, 2026

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH

186 N 17th St, Columbus, OH 43203

◆ *Dr. Howard T. Washington* ◆

Obituary

Every life experience mattered to Inus Ray Miller Jr. Each place he lived, every person he encountered, every lesson he learned, and every opportunity he was given became part of a life devoted to faith, family, service, leadership, and the uplifting of others.

Inus Ray Miller, Jr. was born April 6, 1949, in Hampton, Virginia, to Inez and Inus Ray Miller Sr. His father's service in the United States Air Force took him and his family to several military bases across the country. Those early years gave him stories he would continue to tell throughout his life. For example, as a young boy, Ray was thrilled when he learned the family was moving to Texas. In his imagination, Texas meant one thing: real cowboys. He would later laugh as he recalled his disappointment when neither Wichita Falls nor San Antonio seemed to have the cowboys he had expected to find.

Some of Ray's most treasured childhood memories included growing up on Semple Farm Road, playing in the woods with his beloved sister Patricia, and watching his oldest sister, Olivia, hone her cooking skills alongside the women in the family. Surrounded by family, faith, hard work, and strong examples of service, Ray was being prepared—long before he knew it—for a life of servant leadership.

The Miller family eventually settled in Columbus, Ohio, the city that Ray would embrace as home and serve for decades. Ray was an immensely proud graduate of East High School. Music became one of the earliest expressions of his remarkable talent. A gifted percussionist, he performed in the East High School marching band and played timpani in the Columbus Junior Symphony Orchestra. Music was more than something Ray did. It was part of who he was. Long before people knew him as Senator Miller, Representative Miller, publisher, activist, or community leader, there was Ray—the musician. His musical gifts extended well beyond school. Ray performed with various local bands, including the Greasy Creek Band, which often played behind Columbus recording group The Four Mints. His talent as a drummer also gave him opportunities to perform with legendary artists including Gladys Knight, The O'Jays, and Al Green.

But one of the most important chapters of Ray's life began on the campus of The Ohio State University. In 1970, Ray met his best friend, Marlene (Marty), the woman who would become the love of his life. Both were students engaged in the social movements of their generation, participating in campus protests calling for the establishment of a Black Studies Department and an end to the Vietnam War. Their relationship grew from those shared values and a belief that ordinary people could help create extraordinary change.

On December 18, 1971, Ray and Marty were married at Second Baptist Church in Columbus. Their marriage became one of the great constants of Ray's life—a partnership built upon love, friendship, faith, family, sacrifice, and a shared commitment to serving others.

Second Baptist Church remained an important part of Ray's life for decades. His faith and belief in God were foundational. Through triumph, public victories and private health challenges, his faith remained a source of strength and purpose.

Ray and Marty were blessed with their son, Inus Ray Miller III, whom Ray loved deeply and of whom he was enormously proud. Then, in 2018, Ray received a new title—one that had nothing to do with elected office and quickly became among his favorites: Poppi. The birth of his granddaughter, Raegan, brought him tremendous joy. For a man who spent much of his life in public service, some of his happiest moments came simply from spending time with her. Being Raegan's Poppi gave Ray another opportunity to share the love, lessons, laughter, encouragement, and wisdom that had shaped generations of his family before him.

Ray's desire to serve led to leadership positions with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Columbus State Community College and the Columbus Chamber of Commerce. However, his true calling came after serving as Deputy Special Assistant to President Jimmy Carter when Ray became a member of the Ohio General Assembly. For approximately four decades, Ray advocated for people whose voices were too often unheard. He served sixteen years

in the Ohio House of Representatives and eight years in the Ohio Senate. Throughout his public career, Ray approached government not simply as politics, but as a vehicle for improving people's lives.

He became known as a passionate advocate for children, families, education, health, civil rights, economic opportunity, and underserved communities. His legislative work helped advance initiatives and institutions designed to create opportunities and address disparities, including efforts related to early childhood education and minority health.

Ray understood that meaningful leadership was measured not merely by the bills bearing one's name or the offices one held, but by whether people's lives were better because you had served. And he understood something else about leadership: you do not simply open a door for yourself; you hold it open for the people coming behind you.

That belief inspired Ray to invest deeply in developing future leaders. Through his leadership program, mentoring, political organizing, and countless personal conversations, he encouraged others to recognize their own ability to lead. Many people who would later serve their communities in government, business, education, nonprofit organizations, and civic life benefited from his guidance, encouragement, and willingness to share what he had learned.

Ray's public service did not end when his final term in elected office concluded. He continued using his voice through journalism and publishing, including *The Columbus African American News Journal*. Through the publication, Ray provided a platform for stories, issues, accomplishments, and perspectives important to the African American community. Its reach expanded beyond Columbus and into Dayton, allowing his voice—and the voices of many others—to reach thousands of readers throughout Ohio.

Ray never truly retired from his calling. He traveled, spoke to audiences, advised leaders, participated in political campaigns, encouraged candidates, mentored young people, and continued delivering a message centered on hope, responsibility, service, and the power each person possesses to make a difference. He was a lifetime member of the NAACP and Alpha Phi Alpha, Fraternity, Inc.

To the public, he was The Honorable Inus Ray Miller, Jr.—a legislator, political leader, activist, musician, journalist, publisher, speaker, mentor, and servant leader. To those who loved him, he was simply Ray. He was a husband who referred to Marty as “the love of my life.” He was a father who was proud of his son; a Poppi who adored his granddaughter; a brother shaped by the memories and love of his siblings.

Ray was an uncle, a colleague, a friend and a man of faith. He was a man who could command a room with his voice but also understood the importance of listening. He was a man who never forgot where he came from, even as his work carried him into rooms of influence and power. Ray believed leadership carried an obligation to reach back and help someone else move forward.

On August 28, 2026, Inus Ray Miller Jr., with Marty at his side, transitioned peacefully at the age of 77 following a long and courageous personal health battle. He was preceded in death by his parents, Inez Miller Emerson and Inus Ray Miller Sr., his sisters, Patricia (Ron) Kennedy and Olivia Szekfu, and brothers, George Blaine Emerson and Jeffrey Emerson. He leaves to cherish his memory the love of his life and wife of more than five decades, Marlene “Marty” Miller; his son, Inus Ray Miller III and daughter-in-love, Maria; his beloved granddaughter, Raegan; sister Cynthia Emerson, and a host of nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends.

There are people whose lives can be measured in years. There are others whose lives are better measured by what remains after they are gone. Ray's legacy remains in the family he cherished, the laws he helped shape, the institutions he strengthened, the causes he championed, the leaders he mentored, the words he wrote, the music he played, the people he encouraged and the countless lives made better because he chose to serve.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Friday, September 4, 2026

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Omega Service.....Alpha Phi Alpha, Fraternity, Inc.
Alpha Rho Lambda Chapter

Officiant.....Dr. Keith A. Troy
Pastor - New Salem Missionary Baptist Church

Music Prelude

Family Receiving Line

Prayer of Comfort.....Dr. Keith A. Troy

Selection.....Quan Howell

Remarks

Les Brown
Motivational Speaker

Honorable Kevin Boyce
Franklin County Commissioner

Director Angela Dawson
Ohio Commission on Minority Health

Honorable Hearchel Craig
State Senator, 15th District

Anthony Obey
Nephew & Community Activist

Selection.....Q. Michelle Hairston

Tribute.....Dr. Tim Ahrens
Pastor Emeritus - First Congregational Church

Selection.....Quan Howell

Benediction

Recessional

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Saturday, September 5, 2026

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Officiant.....Dr. Howard Washington
Pastor - Second Baptist Church

Music Prelude

Family Receiving Line

Scripture Reading

Old Testament.....(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).....Erin Kennedy Shoulders

New Testament.....(Romans 8:35,37-39).....Deacon Brian Mizelle

Selection.....Second Baptist Choir

Prayer of Comfort.....Dr. Wesley E. Greenfield, Jr.
Pastor - Love Zion Baptist Church

Selection.....Rev. Ian Morgan

Acknowledgements.....Deaconess Nerma Cockrell

Remarks

Ako Kambon
Lifelong Friend

Brandi Slaughter Onowu
Family Friend

Loni Mizelle
Niece

I. Ray Miller, III
Son

Reading of the Obituary *(In Silence)*

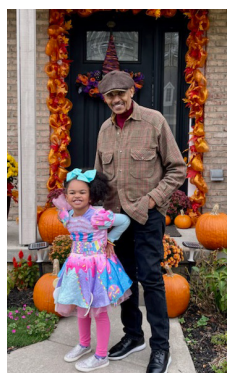
Special Remarks.....Bishop Timothy Clarke
Pastor - First Church of God

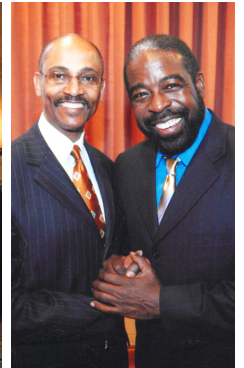
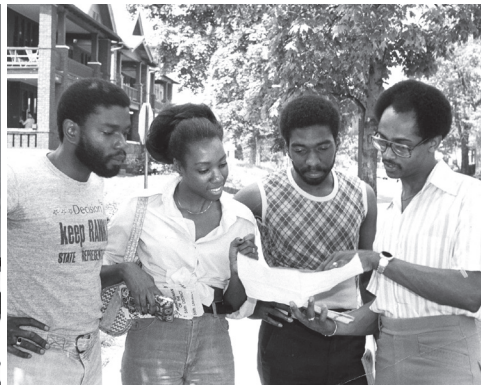
Selection.....Dr. Howard Washington

Eulogy.....Dr. Howard Washington

Benediction

Recessional





Acknowledgements

The family wishes to acknowledge with deep appreciation the many expressions of love concern and kindness to them during this difficult time.

We especially want to acknowledge the Second Baptist Church Family, the Love Zion Church Family, Dr. Paul Monk and the care team at The James Cancer Hospital, National Church Residences Physical & Occupational Therapy teams, and the Ohio Health/Compassus Hospice team.

Pallbearers

I. Ray Miller, III
Jeffery Phillips
Steven Phillips

Phillip Nowlin
Terry Bell
Jordan Rogan

Honorary Pallbearers

Ron Kennedy
Ako Kambon
Larry Price

Billy Anderson
Mike Williams
John Waddy

Internment

Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens, 5600 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43213

Private repast to follow.



Professional services entrusted to Marlan J. Gary, Funeral Home - Chapel of Peace

*In lieu of flowers, please send donations to
The James Cancer Hospital and Second Baptist Church*