

To Rest with Ancestors

"To Rest with Ancestors"
The twilight calls, a gentle hand,
To join the circle, the ancient land.
Where whispers weave through time's soft breeze,
And souls find solace, hearts at ease.
Beneath the earth, where roots entwine,
With those who walked before, now mine.
Their stories echo, a guiding light,
As I step forward, into the night.
No fear of darkness, no need to grieve,
For in this slumber, I shall believe,
That life's a journey, a flowing stream,
And death is just another dream.
The echoes of laughter, the songs of old,
A tapestry woven; stories untold.
I'll join the chorus, my voice will rise,

Pallbearers

Roderick Brathwaite Silvonei DaSilva Frank Farrow
Penn Loh Marvin Martin Dwayne Watts

Honorary Pall Bearer

Raymond Franklin-Vaughn

Celebrating the Life of
Robert L. Terrell
June 29, 1951 ~ January 29, 2025



Thursday, February 13, 2025
Funeral Service 11:00 AM

SAINT AUGUSTINE & SAINT MARTIN CHURCH
31 LENOX STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



Life's Reflections



Robert L. Terrell, III, 73, of Roxbury, MA, departed this life on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. Bob (as he was called by family and friends) was born on June 12, 1951, in the South End of Boston, MA to Robert L. Terrell, II and Mildred A. Terrell.

Bob graduated from Boston Latin School and earned a BA in Government and Sociology, with a Minor in History, from Bowdoin College. Later in life he studied at Tufts University, earning a Masters in Public Policy, and was a part-time lecturer in the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning.

His last position before his passing was his appointment with Mayor Michelle Wu as Executive Director of Boston’s Office of Fair Housing and Equity. This was a fitting culmination to Robert’s decades long passion and commitment to fighting discrimination in housing and transportation in Boston and ensuring equitable access to both.

Prior to this, Bob served as the Fair Housing, Equity, and Inclusion Officer for the Boston Housing Authority’s Office of Civil Rights. In this position he helped develop the BHA’s Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative. He also supported their Expanding Choice in Housing Opportunities Program that created a framework which is central to how Boston removes barriers to fair housing today. In 2020, Bob was the architect of the first-in-the-nation fair housing zoning ordinance in the City of Boston.

Bob’s care and concern for his community was demonstrated in the numerous leadership positions he held in local organizations. The Roxbury Neighborhood Council (formerly the Greater Roxbury Neighborhood Authority), the Madison Park Development Corporation Board of Directors, the Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), Action for Equity’s Housing Committee, Executive Director/Chairman of the Washington Street Corridor Coalition, MBTA Riders Oversight Committee, and the Boston Branch of the NAACP are just a few.

Bob’s passion for public service was inspired by his mother, Mildred and he focused his work in the areas of the environment, housing and transportation. He viewed his civil rights and fair housing work as a “sacred trust.” This showed in the quality of his work and the residents of the City of Boston have benefited immensely from his dedication.

The awards and honors he has received for his exemplary service are too numerous to list. A few recent ones include CHAPA’s 2021 annual Public Policy Award for the member who represents leadership in ending housing discrimination and ensuring people have meaningful choice in where they live. In 2023 Bob was the recipient of Tufts’ Graduate Alumni Outstanding Career Achievement Award.

Bob was an avid reader of books and newspapers, often traveling to Harvard Square’s Out of Town News to get the Financial Times. He loved jazz, especially great artists such as Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis.

Bob had a heart for people, and he would go out of his way to lend a hand. He will live on in the multitude of people he has helped, counseled, mentored, supported, and invested himself in over his seven decades of life. That Bob will be missed couldn’t be more of an understatement.

In addition to a host of friends, colleagues and a grateful community Robert leaves to cherish his memory the family he acquired in later life; his “mom”, Roberta Hoke of Boston, MA; three sisters, Roxanne Hoke-Chandler, of Boston, MA , Michelle Da Silva of Stoughton, MA, and Robyn Franklin-Vaughn, of Bowie, MD; brothers-in-law, Raymond Franklin-Vaughn of Bowie, MD and Roderick Brathwaite of Boston, MA and Silvonei DaSilva of Stoughton, MA ; two nieces, Faith and Ebony Joy Chandler of Boston, MA; a nephew Michael Nelson DaSilva of Stoughton, MA and a host of others with whom he shared a familial bond. His memory is also cherished by our great city and the indelible mark he has left on it.

Order of Service

Organ Prelude		Adam Littlejohn
Entrance Rite		Psalm 133
Invocation		Rev. Robyn Franklin-Vaughn
Reflections		Penn Loh Tufts University, Urban & Environmental Policy & Planning Frank Farrow Office of Black Male Advancement
Solo	“Everything must Change”	Adam Littlejohn
Reflections		Sheila Hubbard Friend Roxanne Hoke-Chandler
Obituary	Read Silently	
Scripture Reading	Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	Michelle DaSilva
Words of Comfort		Rev. Robyn Franklin-Vaughn
Benediction		Rev. Robyn Franklin-Vaughn
Recession	“Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing”	Adam Littlejohn



Interment
St. Michael Cemetery
500 Canterbury St.,