



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
The Honorable
Leslie Earl Harris

MAY 23, 1948 – OCTOBER 15, 2025

Roxbury Community College Media Arts Center
1234 Columbus Avenue, Roxbury, MA • October 29, 2025 • 10:00am

Rev. Willie Bodrick, II, J.D., M.Div., Officiating • Rev. Dr. Gregory G. Groover, Sr., Eulogist

Order of Service

INVOCATION. Rev. Willie Bodrick II, J.D., M.Div.
Senior Pastor, Twelfth Baptist Church

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN “May the Work I’ve Done Speak for Me”

SCRIPTURE Bishop John M. Borders III
Senior Pastor, Morning Star Baptist Church

Old Testament Scripture | Psalms 37:23-28

New Testament Scripture | 2 Timothy 4:6-8

PRAYER OF CONSOLATION Bishop William E. Dickerson II
Pastor, Greater Love Tabernacle

SOLO “Soon It Will Be Done”
Ashley Villard

POEM. Dawn Rodriques
Goddaughter

REMARKS The Honorable Michelle Wu
Mayor of the City of Boston

The Honorable Ayanna Pressley
U.S. Representative for Massachusetts’ 7th Congressional District

The Honorable Roderick L. Ireland
Chief Justice (ret.), Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court
Distinguished Professor, Northeastern University

The Honorable Milton Wright, Jr.
Associate Justice (ret.) Boston Municipal Court
Roxbury Defenders

MUSICAL INTERLUDE “Dance with my Father” (Luther Vandross)

REMARKS Rev. Dr. Ray Hammond
Chair, Roxbury Community College Foundation Board

Hon. Susan Maze-Rothstein, ‘85
Boston College Law School Black Alumni Network

E. VeLois Bowers
Sister

Brian Harris
Son

Jason L. Harris, Sr.
Son

HYMN “It is Well with My Soul”

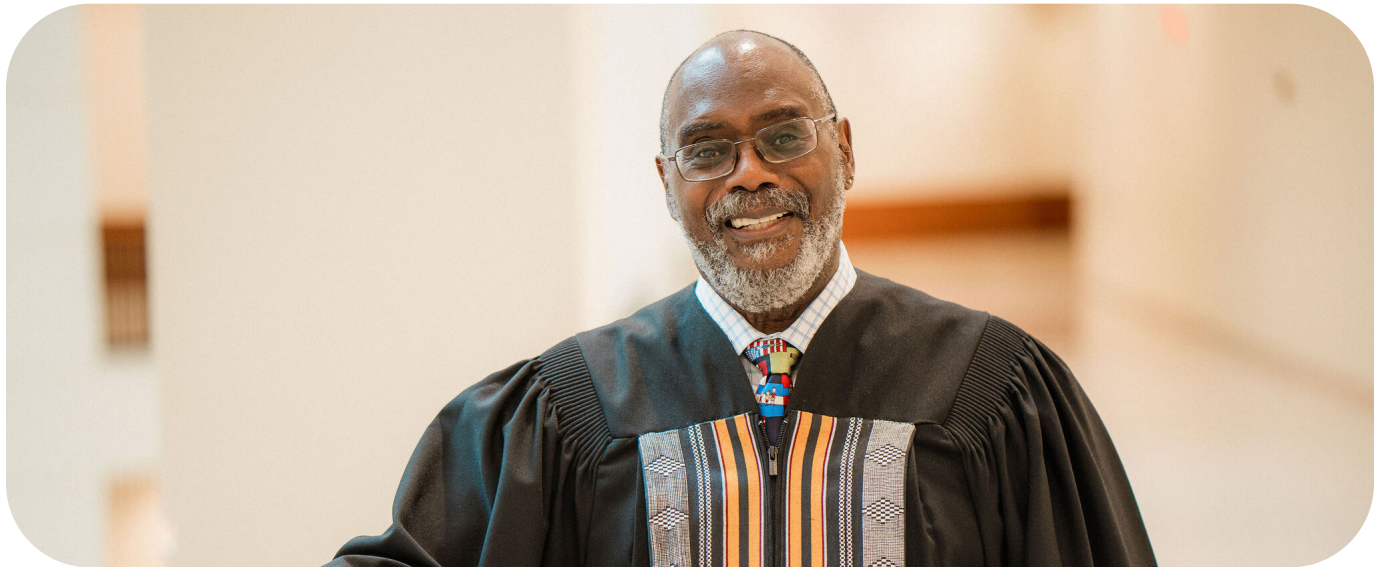
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & OBITUARY. Alisa R. Drayton, J.D., MBA, MS
Niece

SOLO

EULOGY Rev. Dr. Gregory G. Groover, Sr.
Pastor, The Historic Charles Street AME Church

BENEDICTION Rev. Willie Bodrick II, J.D., M. Div.

RECESSION. “Highway to Heaven”
Hon. Milton Wright



Remembering Judge Leslie Earl Harris

The Honorable Leslie Earl Harris of Boston, Massachusetts, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, on May 23, 1948, to the late Levi and Mary Lynn Harris, Judge Harris was the second of seven children. He was a devoted husband, father, son, brother, uncle, and friend whose kindness and integrity touched everyone he met.

Judge Harris attended Wendell Phillips High School in Chicago, where he participated in ROTC and discovered his love for music, learning to play the trombone in the school band. In 1998, he was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame for his contributions to the legal field, following in the footsteps of his older brother, his hero, Samuel Harris.

He earned a Bachelor's Degree in History from Northwestern University in 1970 before moving to Boston to further his studies. He then earned a Master's Degree in History with a concentration in African American Studies from Boston University, which he completed in 1974.

On August 21, 1976, Judge Harris married the love of his life, Beverly Ann Taylor of Roxbury, Massachusetts. Together, they shared 49 years of a beautiful marriage and raised three children—Marjorie, Jason, and Brian—instilling in them the same values of education, compassion, and service that defined his life.

Judge Harris's career was marked by unwavering dedication to youth and justice. He began as an elementary school teacher at the New School for Children in Roxbury, later serving as a METCO Coordinator in Melrose and as a probation officer before earning his Juris Doctor from Boston College Law School in 1984. He joined the Committee for Public Counsel Services as a public defender, where he championed fairness for all, and was later appointed Chief of the Juvenile Division at the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office. He also served as an Assistant District Attorney under District Attorney Ralph C. Martin II, exemplifying his lifelong dedication to public service.

In 1994, Governor William F. Weld appointed him to the Suffolk Juvenile Court (now part of the Massachusetts Trial Court), where he served with distinction for decades. On the bench, Judge Harris handled some of the Commonwealth's most complex and sensitive cases, guided always by empathy and a deep belief in rehabilitation and second chances.

Among his many landmark moments, he proudly facilitated the first adoption by a same-sex couple in Massachusetts—and, years later, officiated their wedding following the legalization of marriage equality. One of his most meaningful professional achievements came in revisiting the 1989 Stuart case, helping to bring long-awaited apologies and settlements to the Swanson and Bennett families.

Beyond the courtroom, Judge Harris's heart belonged to the Roxbury community. He served on numerous boards, including the Board of Directors at Roxbury Community College, taught at local institutions such as the Museum of Afro-American History, and remained an active supporter of the METCO program and youth education initiatives.

A dedicated member of Eliot Congregational Church for more than 50 years, he lived his faith through humble service.

As a founding member of the Black Alumni Network at BC Law School, Judge Harris was a tireless advocate for diversity, equity, and mentorship. Generations of students and colleagues describe him as the person they turned to first—warm, wise, and unwavering in his support. “He didn’t just open doors,” one colleague reflected. “He held them open.”

Judge Harris was known for his humility, wit, and humanity. In his courtroom and in his community, he believed that justice should not only be applied, but felt. He treated every person before him with dignity, compassion, and respect—especially young people searching for guidance. Many credit him with changing the course of their lives.

A true Renaissance man, Judge Harris found joy in life's simple pleasures. He was an avid gardener who crafted his own wine from grapevines in his yard, pickled his signature hot peppers, and lovingly tended to his koi pond—a peaceful reflection of the life he built and the harmony he brought to others.

Judge Harris is survived by his beloved wife, Beverly Harris; his children: Marjorie Ann and her husband John, Jason Sr. and his wife Channa, and Brian and his wife Danielle; his grandchildren: Johnathan, Justin, Jason Jr., Jaylen, Syanna, Ta'veren, Anthony, Jayce, and Bryson; and his great-grandchildren: Milo, Vance, and Chance.

He is also survived by his siblings Beverly Ann, Dwayne and his wife Isabella, and Elsie VeLois and her husband Bennie, along with a host of nieces, nephews, extended family, and cherished friends.

He was predeceased by his parents, Levi and Mary Lynn Harris, and his brothers Samuel, Bernard, and Ed'Mond.

Judge Harris will be remembered for his intellect, fairness, and deep compassion; for his mentorship and leadership; and for his boundless devotion to his family, faith, and community.

May his legacy continue to inspire us to honor humanity, live with integrity, serve joyfully, and invest generously in our youth.

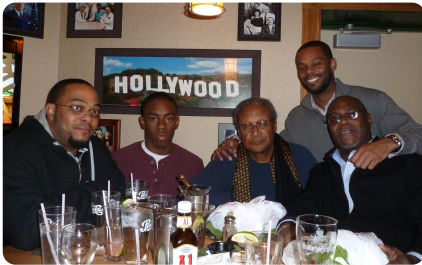
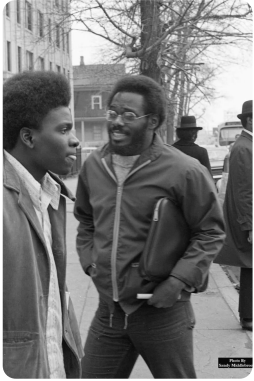
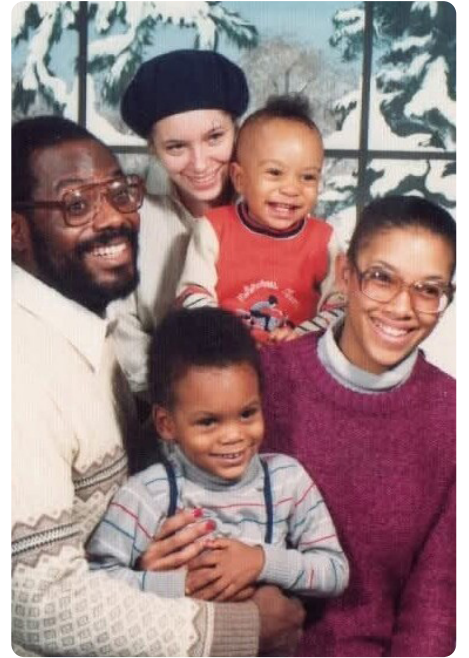




Success

To laugh often and much;
to win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children;
to earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends;
to appreciate beauty;
to find the best in others;
to leave the world a bit better
whether by a healthy child,
a garden patch,
or a redeemed social condition;
to know even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



Pallbearers

Jason L. Harris, Sr.	Justin Perez
Brian Harris	Jaylen Lark
Dwayne Harris	Arthur Collins
Johnathan Bowers	Mitchell Hercule
Johnathan Perez	



Family Acknowledgments

The family of the Honorable Leslie Earl Harris would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all who have offered your love, support, and kindness during this time. Your prayers, comforting messages, and presence have been a great source of strength.



Interment

Forest Hills Cemetery
95 Forest Hills Avenue
Jamaica Plain, MA

Repast

*Following the burial, friends are invited to join
the family for a time of fellowship at:*

Prince Hall Grand Lodge
24 Washington Street, Dorchester, MA

