

## Letters to Daddy

Ultimately, I am me because of you and mommy. I am so grateful for your love, courage, wisdom and the benefits of all your hard work. You give me everything without a second thought. Daddy, when I have a moment of seeing the world as you do I really admire your view. I am amazed at all you have achieved and what you have helped me to accomplish. However, slowly but surely I have grown to be more like you in the very best ways. Like my work ethic, a straight shooter and a love of working with children.

I realize I have been raised in the shadow of greatness. I have walked beside an attentive giant and you have guided me through my entire life. Daddy, that is why I will look up to you.

I sometimes wonder what life would be like without your support, but I cannot imagine it at all. Thanks for being the hero I could always count on, thanks for being my Daddy\*\*\*I'm glad your mine!

I Love You Daddy  
Pam-Pam (tow-tow)  
(Written for Fathers Day years ago)



Wow, Henry Wilson Jr.! The first man I fell in love with. I've had the opportunity to watch you in the major parts of my life. You were my employer for 42 years, my pastor for over 40+ years and the most precious "My Daddy" for 67yrs. So many memories like, Barbie doll Fridays. When on Fridays you would bring me a new Barbie outfit and I'd make you sit through a fashion show of my whole case of doll clothes and Tea parties of cookies and Pepsi. You let our house become the headquarters for the Elwynne Dr, Crew, and their parents always knew where to find them. We had a pool table, ping-pong, a good stereo system and basketball hoop on the garage and big front porch. But what I didn't know until much later was that it was so you could keep your eye on me and Pam. because everything happened at our house. I will cherish our many talks about everything! When ever I was overwhelmed or unsure you became my biggest cheerleader. You know being a PK (Preacher's Kid) can be ruff on a person. Yes, we had structure and expectations, but when we made mistakes you loved us through it with understanding, advice and support. Daddy you have poured so much into me I can still hear you in my ears "Never let 'em see you sweat", "Always take the high road", and "Do your best, God will do the rest".

I like to thank you for my most precious gift from you, introducing me to Jesus Christ! That Jesus is the answer to ANY situation, circumstance or need. As you used always say, we are not perfect people, but we serve a perfect God. And He gave me the perfect Dad for me.

Every time we parted, in person or phone you always say "Hey Daddy Loves You" and I would say I loved you more. But today I say "Hey Daddy, Peggy loves you", and God says I love him more.

Thankful, Grateful, & Blessed  
Peggy

## Pallbearers

Jordan Atkins

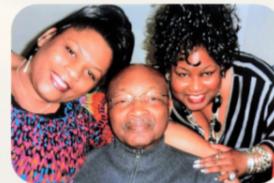
Leon Waters

Mark Brown

Andru Waters

Trenton Calloway

Ray Singer



## Acknowledgments

The Wilson Family wishes to acknowledge with deep appreciation the many expressions of love, concern, and kindness shown to us during our time of bereavement. Thank you, Sterling and Valarie Price for your love and support now and always. Thank you to Henry/Dad's Medical Team, American Mercy (Home care nurses & therapists), and Omni Transport for their care and service. Thank you to the Ministers who stood in the gap preaching the true word of God in his absence. And to our Cornerstone Family thank you for holding it down, sticking together, and showing the world that "We're small, but not tacky" :) and "We're "Cornerstone Strong" because we were taught and are standing on the promises of God. Love you and May God Bless and Keep You All.



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## Celebrating the Life and Spirit of



### Pastor Henry Wilson Jr.

November 10, 1938 - March 8, 2025

*Saturday, March 22, 2025*

Visitation: 10:00 am - Funeral Service: 12:00 pm

*Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church*

6601 Montgomery Road | Cincinnati, Ohio 45213

Minister Joseph Dawson, Officiating

# Pastor Henry Wilson Jr.

“... Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time and he walked faithfully with God” Genesis 6:9

When some of us look at his many worldly accomplishments, (too many to list here), they'd likely say that he was a self-made man – and stop there. But to really know Pastor Wilson, what he stood for, what he wanted his legacy to be, we'd have to say that he would prefer to let you know that it was all by Grace – that all he had and had done was by God. Some people don't know how they ended up where they did, whether they'd done right or enough. Others have this quiet conviction – you can tell that they know that they know.

Born in Taylor, Texas to Henry Wilson, Senior and Magnolia (Hughes), he walked right into the beginning of the Great Depression and the Great Migration that saw so many black families heading north for a better life. Settling in Cincinnati, his family found a haven in the supportive community of Walnut Hills, where many black families lived. He learned the value of an education early. His mother tasked him as a teenager to work in construction. She told his supervisor to work him as hard as possible. In fact, he worked so hard that summer that he made the firm decision to one day design buildings with a pencil – not build them with his back!

His mother, Magnolia remarried to Charles Strauss. Henry had a great relationship with his stepfather. Mr. Strauss actually built Henry his first car. Henry cherished the crucial role that his stepfather played in his life. That role planted the seeds that would eventually bloom into Henry's dedication to being a mentor himself. While on the track team at Hughes High School, he relished and excelled in his math and drafting classes. He was focused. But once he laid his eyes on young Carrie Twyman, he was stricken – so much so that he used to escort her to church choir rehearsal and wait outside for her. Pastor Maxie saw this and encouraged him to come inside instead of waiting on the steps. He joined the Corinthian Baptist Church on Wehrman Avenue, quickly becoming active in the youth choir. After graduation he and Carrie were married and to this union was born Peggy Annette and Pamela Ann Wilson.

He parlayed his drafting aptitude into his first technical job with the Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW). While working at GCWW, he took classes at the University of Cincinnati in civil engineering, gaining his bachelor's degree in 1968. With his degree in hand, he got better jobs in major firms, including Turner Construction. He performed so well that Turner asked him to go to New York City to design the then-new John F. Kennedy airport. But he was brave. Brave in a way that helped him rely on his faith in ways you or I may not have.

Despite being given this impressive opportunity, he made the pivotal decision to keep his young family in Cincinnati – and start his own design firm. There were some rough times but one of his first big contracts came at the 11th hour to fix a design problem for a new building at Withrow High School. With successive projects, his reputation became so well-regarded that his former advisor at GCWW (who, by then had been promoted to head the GCWW projects teams) commissioned him to design their new prototype water treatment plant – which still stands at Columbia Parkway and Beechmont Avenue. That's just one of many projects that his firm designed around the city.

WA, Inc. continued to prosper for 54 years, establishing a portfolio of buildings across the nation designed to follow his vision, his mission of “Impact By Design”. The diverse portfolio he created includes hospitals, schools, stadiums, churches, museums, and a breadth of commercial spaces.

His daughter Peggy describes Impact By Design as leading buildings to where the occupants find it so much easier to do their jobs. Flow between spaces is optimized and the buildings' form was heavily determined by its function. Henry understood his clients, gleaning what they wanted by listening and observing. Yet, while consideration of how people would use the space was the priority, the buildings were also recognized for their visual appeal. WA, Inc. achieved the perfect balance of function and form. Still, his work allowed him to give back. Always paying it forward, he hired and developed scores of women and minority architects – many having gone on to start their own firms. His success with this entire approach led President Ronald Reagan to recognize him as small business of the year.

During that incredibly busy time, he found space in his schedule to raise his two daughters, take an active role in the church as youth leader, help develop the city of Silverton by serving on the zoning board., assist the founding of Cincinnati's first black-owned bank, participate as a board member of the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, Cincinnati Art Museum and several others. This was part of his effort to ensure that minorities were represented in major decision-making platforms in the city, that small businesses could succeed and that his community was strong. It all ties back to the seeds planted in his teenage years to be a mentor, to give back. He was a great provider and with his true love and partner by his side, he and Carrie made it all work. He was becoming the man he imagined he'd be – but he sensed that he wasn't done, that God had more in store for him.

Among all of this hard work, he found time to enjoy the journey with fun. He loved to dance. In fact, he and his friends were known to break out into Cha-Cha moves on cue. He enjoyed playing chess, board games and golfing with wife, family and friends. He started jogging later in life and found solace in the quiet. He had style, wearing well-tailored suits and driving tasteful cars. Still, he maintained a modest lifestyle.

He was progressive – an innovator himself and unafraid to try new things that he came across. Much of that came from his tenacity, being virtually self-taught. You may think of him only as an engineer/architect, but he actually ventured into other fields. Well before we knew of places like Panera Bread, he established Henry's On The Skywalk. He went in this direction to create a path for his youngest daughter Pam's interest in starting her own business. Again, here, he could have bought into a franchise, but he decided to start something of his own. He did his own leading-edge market research, interviewing major local businesses with plenty of hungry office workers like Procter & Gamble and Chiquita Brand, seeking their preferences for lunch options. He secured a prime location and tailored the menu to meet those needs. Recognized among the city's Best of Cincinnati list, Henry's was a very popular gourmet NY-style deli. It was so successful that he was pursued by interested buyers to sell it – and he did. Still, there was something yet to be done.

As if all of that was not enough, he answered God's call to be a minister while a member of Corinthian Baptist Church in 1976. He developed his pastoral skills under the guidance of his father in the ministry, Pastor Wesley V. Maxie – the same pastor who brought him inside from the steps as he awaited his one true love. Eventually, he was called to be pastor of Philipian Baptist Church in Cincinnati. In 1979 he answered God's call to establish a new church they named Cornerstone Missionary Baptist. Starting with the 40-member Genesis Group in an annexed wing of his engineering offices, Cornerstone eventually grew to the point that it needed a more formal space. WA, Inc. designed this new edifice with a very unique aesthetic: the exterior was shaped to look like praying hands! Under his leadership, Cornerstone became an integral component of the Kennedy Heights neighborhood, rooted in the Word and its impact on life. One of his hallmark activities during worship was to have Pastor Wilson Time, where he brought children up front to explain the upcoming sermon in terms that children could appreciate. As pastor of Cornerstone, Pastor Wilson had found his true rhythm: a wonderful balance of faith and works.

The standards of excellence that he had maintained for himself also found a home at Cornerstone. He stressed that the congregation should embrace the lessons they learned and apply them to life – even without him reminding them. For example, the Cornerstone membership was so devoted to supporting the church that despite the financial challenges most churches faced during COVID, they never lost a beat with tithing: they were able to pay off the church's mortgage during the crisis. Some of that came from him being so practical: “don't [waste] money on making chicken dinners to sell, just give.” With Pastor Wilson, the Word was not something you just heard it must be something you live. He advocated Cornerstone to take scripture in and make it a lifestyle. He was most proud to know that Cornerstone has the spiritual base and faith tools to prosper and sustain their spiritual lives. That the membership would be accountable to each other in the church and to reflect God's Grace to all. He wanted his congregation to walk with God as he did and to know the Author of their faith. That God... Never... Fails.

His devotion to giving back has no doubt influenced hundreds of young people to lead brave, successful, spiritual lives and give back themselves. His calm demeanor set the standard for collaboration and peace.

He was preceded in death by his daughter Pamela. He is survived by his devoted Wife Carrie; loving Daughter Peggy, Sister Lynda Roberson, Cousin Ossylin Brenklin; Godchildren, Tamara Powell, Jordan Atkins, Andru Waters, Brandon Gentry, Vinnetta Byndon and Derrick Byndon, Tanisha Jackson & Godgrandbaby Cam-Cam; and many family members, friends and associates. After a long battle with health challenges, Pastor Wilson answered God's call and slept away peacefully with a smile.

# Order of Service

Musical Prelude ..... Soft Music

Parting View ..... Family

Prayer ..... Elder Earl Bray, Jr.  
Asst. Pastor, Corinthian Baptist Church

## Scripture Readings

Old Testament ..... Psalm 73:24-26  
Pastor Sheldon Rox

New Testament ..... John 14:1-6  
Min. Otis Smith

Acknowledgments ..... Clarice Titus

Remarks ..... Ministers that Stood in the Gap  
Min. LaRue Harrington, Pastor Sheldon Rox,  
Min. Otis Smith, & Elder Earl Bray, Jr.  
Three Minutes, Please.

Praise Dance ..... "For Every Mountain"

Remarks ..... Two Minutes, Please  
Richard Mellott – Vice President of WA Architects  
Dea. Kenn Tatum – Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church  
Trenton Calloway – Member of Cornerstone Missionary  
Baptist Church  
Anthony Overton – Family Friend

Obituary ..... Read Silently

Selection ..... “Walk Around Heaven all Day”  
\*\*Pastor Wilson's Favorite Song\*\*  
Carol Gentry & Wesley V. Maxie, Jr.

Eulogy ..... Pastor Dr. K Z Smith  
Pastor, Corinthian Baptist Church

Benediction ..... Pastor Dr. K Z Smith

Recessional ..... Clergy, Pallbearers, & Family  
“When We All Get To Heaven”



## Interment

Spring Grove Cemetery  
4521 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45232