



## Dr. J. Ranaldo Lawson

September 13, 1943 - August 23, 2018

James Ranaldo Lawson was born September 13, 1943, in Cleveland, Ohio, to James and Cora (Parries) Lawson. He departed this life, Tuesday, August 23, 2018, at Duke University Hospital with his loving wife by his side.

Ranaldo received his childhood education in the Cleveland Public Schools and graduated from East High School. He received his undergraduate degree in Social Science from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio in 1965; his master's degree in History from North Carolina Central University in 1969; and his PhD degree from Kent State University in Student Personnel Administration in Higher Education in 1976. While at Ohio University he joined Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

Following receipt of his undergraduate degree, Ranaldo taught history, government and English for the Cleveland, Ohio, Board of Education until 1967. From 1968 to 1970, he was Director of Career Planning and Placement at Elizabeth City State University. He then matriculated towards his PhD degree at Kent State University where he also served as Coordinator of Developmental Assistance and Counselor. Ranaldo then held a variety of administrative positions at Cuyahoga Community College and Case-Western Reserve University, both in Cleveland, Ohio.

In 1981, Dr. Lawson joined North Carolina Central University as an Assistant Professor of History and directed student teaching in the social sciences. As a

member of the History Department, he was active in teaching African American History, U.S. Military, and U. S. History, and was greatly loved by his students. He was a member of the Faculty Senate, Teacher Education Council, Recruitment and Orientation Task Force, Faculty Advising Center, Minority Presence Committee, and the Faculty Newsletter Committee. He retired from North Carolina Central University in 2008.

A Fifty-Year Active Member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Ranaldo was a truly dedicated Omega Man. He always looked forward to frat meetings and other Omega gatherings and was there all decked out in his purple and gold. He sincerely loved Omega Psi Phi and served the Fraternity in several leadership capacities over the years, including Faculty Advisor to the Tau Psi Chapter at NCCU. Because of his dedication to his fraternity, the Beta Phi Chapter is planning an annual golf tournament in his honor beginning this fall. As a part of this event, a scholarship will be established in Ranaldo's honor.

While at North Carolina Central University, Ranaldo met Davesene Wiggins Spellman, and they were married in 1984. He subsequently joined Davesene as a member of Holy Cross, and along with her, became an enthusiastically active member of the church. He became an usher and was always eager to serve as a lead usher. He considered it his duty to groom young men in the ways of being a responsible usher and took pride in identifying parishioners to present the offertory. Ranaldo was a member of The Holy Cross Men's Club and the renowned Holy Cross Rib Joint where he tirelessly offered his services. Additionally, he was a Lector, he served on the Parish Council, and was a 4th-degree, Honorary Life-time member of the Knights of Columbus.

Professionally, Ranaldo was known for his outstanding historical presentations at Holy Cross and within the local community. Indeed, he was an excellent keeper of historical facts, especially as they related to African American History.

Ranaldo is survived by his devoted wife of 34 years, Davesene Lawson; three sons, Curtis (Tawanda), Derrick, and Daryl; one daughter, Querida; three grandsons, Darius, Tory, and Curtis, Jr.; one sister, Constance Davis; two brothers-in-law, David Wiggins, Jr. (Dorothy) and Withro Wiggins (Sandra); and a host of other relatives and friends.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the scholarship in Ranaldo's honor. Checks should be made to: NCCU Foundation for The J. Ranaldo Lawson Endowment

# Cemetery Details

## Beechwood Cemetery

3300 Fayetteville St  
Durham, NC 27707  
(919) 560-4154

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 31. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Holy Cross Catholic Church  
2438 S Alston Ave.  
Durham, NC 27713

## Celebration of Life

AUG 31. 11:00 AM (ET)

Holy Cross Catholic Church  
2438 S Alston Ave.  
Durham, NC 27713

# Tribute Wall



“ *My condolences to your family. Dr. Lawson was my professor for many classes in the History department at NCCU. I have a lot of fond memories working with him in the department. RIH*

Yolanda - July 16, 2024 at 11:23 AM



“ *Dr. J. Rinaldo Lawson*

October 05, 2023 at 11:31 AM



“ *Davesene:  
Today and always, may the loving memories of your husband bring you peace, comfort, and strength.  
Prayerfully,*

*Fannie Meadows-Harper, Tucson, Arizona  
Lafranm@gmail.com*

Fannie Meadows-Harper - September 11, 2018 at 11:11 AM



“ *May the tender love of ALMIGHTY GOD bring peace and comfort in a special way to your hearts. I thank HIM for blessing Dr. Lawson with an exceptional legacy. He will be missed. My deepest condolences and sympathy to Curtis and his family.  
Edith Lee*



Edith Lee - September 05, 2018 at 04:29 PM

AM

“ God bless the Lawson family. Our heartfelt sympathy to Davesene and family. Ranaldo was an incredibly kind and generous individual. I enjoyed immensely our time on the golf course where he was truly talented. He leaves a wonderful legacy for us all to cherish.  
*Allen and Deirdre Mask*

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**Allen Mask** - September 01, 2018 at 07:58 AM

CM

“ *Cassandra Madden lit a candle in memory of Dr. J. Ranaldo Lawson*



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**Cassandra Madden** - August 31, 2018 at 10:00 AM

FF

“ *the Lawson Family,*

*May God watch over you and please accept our sincere condolences in the home going of Bro. Lawson. Brother Lawson is an inspiration to many including his Fraternity Brothers, former students and colleagues as well. May he rest in peace in his eternal resting place.*

*Respectfully,*

*The Fitts Family  
Maxine, David and David, Jr.*



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**Fitts Family** - August 30, 2018 at 09:56 AM

FF

“ *To the Lawson Family,*

*May God watch over you and please accept our sincere condolences in your Lawson. Brother Lawson is an inspiration to many including his Fraternity Brothers, former students and colleagues as well. May he rest in peace in his eternal resting place.*



*Respectfully,*

*The Fitts Family  
Maxine, David and David, Jr.*

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**Fitts Family** - August 30, 2018 at 09:54 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. J. Rinaldo Lawson.*



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August 29, 2018 at 03:31 PM

VC

“ *Saddened to hear that my Ohio University Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. "Line Brother" from 1963 has transitioned. With heartfelt sympathy and caring prayers to the entire family. Blessings!*  
*Vernon & Bonnie Cornelison (Chicago)*

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**Vernon L. Cornelison** - August 29, 2018 at 12:26 PM

DW

“ My deepest sorry to you Davesene and all of the family. May you find peace in your sorrow.

*Dr. Barnetta McGhee White*

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**Dr. Barnetta McGhee White** - August 29, 2018 at 12:05 PM



“ I'd like to express my deepest condolences to your family. I used to rent cars to Mr. Lawson when I worked at Enterprise. He was such a nice man. I pray for his family's comfort during this time. May Mr. Lawson rest in power.

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**Jimissa McLean** - August 28, 2018 at 01:40 PM

YD

“ Your Baltimore cousins Larry, Margaret and Deborah purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Dr. J. Ranaldo Lawson.



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**Your Baltimore cousins Larry, Margaret and Deborah** -  
August 27, 2018 at 12:57 PM

DC

“ Davesene & Family, my sincere condolences on your loss. Please know that my thoughts and prayers are with you during this life changing experience. Be blessed.

*Delores Cloyd-Goldstein*  
*NCCU Class of 1960*

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**Delores Cloyd-Goldstein** - August 27, 2018 at 08:04 AM