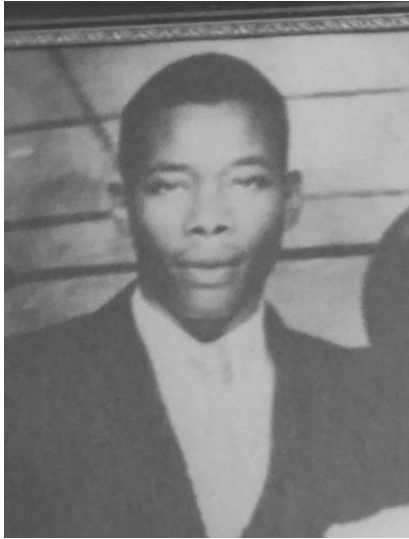


His Life

Tommy Lee Williams Sr.



Tommy Lee Williams, Sr., was born to George Caesar Williams and Josie Carter Green Williams on January 6, 1926. He attended Magnolia High School, which included the first through the sixth grades. Due to chronic illness, he was taken out of school at the sixth grade. He briefly traveled to Las Vegas in 1943 and worked in a defense plant.

In 1944, he entered the armed forces and attained the rank of T-5 Corporal in the Division of the Signal Corps as a part of the Buffalo Unit and in 1946 received an honorable discharge with numerous medals of recognition while serving in Rhineland, Eastern Europe. He then entered Alcorn College to attain his plumbing certification. On September 7, 1948, Tommy married Frances Pearline Miller. He became the first Black

independent, self-employed Licensed Master Plumber in Vicksburg, Warren County which allowed for other black plumbers to attain their apprenticeship and journeyman's training under him.

Mr. Williams led the effort to have streets paved and to bring gas and sewage to his community. He worked to have the breakfast program established in public schools, went door-to-door canvassing for school integration; sponsored a local Cub Scout troop and sponsored block parties for neighborhood children.

Tommy Lee Williams installed plumbing for the Crawford Street United States Post Office and many other facilities and prominent families about Vicksburg. Upon losing his eye sight in 1967, he traveled to Hines VA Hospital for the Blind in Hines, Illinois, to learn new skills and how to function in a sightless world.

Upon his return from Hines, he began providing emergency social services for citizens in the community and aiding other blind individuals. His humanitarian efforts began with receiving donated clothes from a closing thrift store. By 1972 Tommy conceived of the WE CARE concept and by 1975 founded We Care Community Services, Inc., and ultimately converted the old black Etta O'Neill Library to his headquarters site. Tommy Williams was an active member of the Vicksburg Chamber of Commerce, the NAACP, the VFW and the Kiwanis Club.

Through We Care Community Services Inc., he provided the GED program, the afterschool tutoring program, the summer enrichment programs for youth, job training, immunization outreach, payee services through the social security administration, housing counseling, a food pantry for the hungry, a clothes closet (free clothing), and thrift store for the needy. Workers from We Care ultimately left to establish the Good Shepherd Community Center.

Mr. Williams provided for Vista Volunteers to help repair, renovate and air condition homes in Vicksburg. He also organized the annual Thanksgiving dinners to needy families; and he established the Box Project with people from all over our nation sending items to be donated to the needy.

His civic engagement included being a member of the Concerned Citizens organization designed to ensure justice in Vicksburg and helped to stage a boycott for the betterment of our community; led voter registration drives; and was active with the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) the coalition of federated organizations engaged in civil rights activities in Mississippi.

Tommie Williams Sr. was a member of Holly Grove Missionary Baptist Church where he served as a deacon in the church.

He leaves to cherish his memories, his wife of 66 years, Frances Pearlina Miller Williams; his children: Yvonne Williams Friday (James), Dr. Adena Williams Loston, Lt. Col. Tommie Lee Williams Jr., Perla Leahrene Lemon (Tyrol), and Robert Thomas Williams (Sharon).



His recognitions

- 1944 – 1946 Honorably served as a T-5 Corporal in the Division of the Signal Corps as a member of the Buffalo Unit receiving the American Theater of Operations Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern theater of Operations Medal, Good Conduct Medal; and World War II Victory Medal and participating in battles and campaigns in Rhineland, Central Europe
- 1972 The idea of WE CARE was born and from 1972-1975 Tommie Lee Williams Sr. began collecting and distributing clothing for the needy
- 1972 **PROJECT FIND** Volunteer Service Recognition, Mrs. Richard M. Nixon
- 1975 We Care Community Services, Inc. was officially chartered by the Secretary of State of Mississippi as a non-profit charitable organization
- 1985 Community Service Award from the Fidelity Lodge No. 507 and Eureka Temple No. 737
- 1988 Outstanding Service to the Black Community, the Vicksburg Chapter of the Links Incorporated
- 1989 Certificate of Excellence to Tommie Lee Williams, Director and We Care Community Services, Inc. from the Universal Life Insurance Corporation
- 1990 invited by Governor Ray Mabus to discuss issues relevant to the State of Mississippi
- 1992 United to Serve America Diamond Award
- 1992 20 Year Visions, Boldness and Advocacy, Mayor Robert Walker
- 1994 Tommie Lee Williams was chosen to receive the Caring Award from the Caring Institute in Washington, D.C. for being one of the most caring people in America.
- 1995 Distinguished Community Service, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, South Eastern Regional Conference
- 1996 Ernestine Willis Humanitarian Award from the Vicksburg Homecoming Benevolent Club
- 1997 American Cancer Society© Annual Crusade
- 1997 Recognition from the Board of Directors of Warren-Washington-Issaquena-Sharkey Community Action Agency
- 1997 Outstanding Community Service from the 100 Men in Black
- 1998 25 Year Service Award through Omicron Rho Lambda Chapter, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.
- 1999 Recognized by Channel 12, WJTV as being a Hometown Hero; Project Find, and WAMIT
- 1999 Outstanding Leadership, Services and Dedication to Human Right, Vicksburg Branch NAACP

- 1999-2004 Dedicated Service Warren-Washington-Issaquena-Sharkey012 A County AA
- 2000 Advisory Board of Vicksburg Warren Community Health Center for invaluable contribution to the restoration of Health Care Service at Vicksburg Warren Community Health Center
- 2012 Appreciation of Valuable Service MAS-MC Conference
- 2013 Men and Women of Distinction Award from Travelers Rest Baptist Church

Tommie Lee Williams Sr. was a stalwart community civil rights activist, provided voice, leadership, mentoring, training, social services for the needy and served as a community humanitarian. He served his Community by providing a national voice to President Jimmy Carter in the White House and providing a voice at the State level in addressing matters of State with the Governor of the State of Mississippi, Ray Mabus. His service was recognized nationally, statewide and locally in Vicksburg and Warren, Washington, Issaquena, and Sharkey counties by many agencies and organizations He aided hundreds of thousands with his humanitarian efforts.

And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due
Season, we shall reap, if we faint not.
Galatians 6:9

Sunrise: January 6, 1926

Sunset: December 14, 2014