

# Ernest H. Lampkins, PhD

April 12, 1928 – January 12, 2018



Ernest Harold Lampkins, Ph.D., (often affectionately called “Lamp” or “Doc”) age 89, native of Shreveport, loving husband, father and grandfather passed away peacefully on January 12, 2018. As he rests in the arms of his Lord and Savior, Ernest will be forever loved, remembered and missed by all who knew him.

Born to Major Abner Lampkins and Josephine Sims Lampkins on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of April, 1928, Ernest was delivered in the former Shreveport Confederate Hospital. At an early age, he accepted Christ at Little Union Baptist Church pastored by the Reverend C.A.W. Clark. In his formative years growing up in the Allendale community, Ernest attended West Shreveport Elementary School and matriculated to Central Colored High School where he graduated in the class of 1946.

Following his high school graduation, Ernest entered Fisk University in Nashville, TN—at the behest of one of his high school teachers. His parents wished for him to study medicine, but Ernest was bound for a different path. Ernest immediately auditioned for and was accepted into Fisk’s music department. His natural musical ear along with his knowledge of music landed him a spot in the choir. Although Ernest’s passion for music was deeply rooted in his ancestry—his grandfather, an emancipated slave from Kentucky mastered the violin through observing his master’s children and his father, Major Lampkins, played piano at several popular local Shreveport venues—it was through an exchange program at Yale University, where his love for music was enhanced. In 1951, Ernest graduated from Fisk University with a Bachelor of Arts in Music and the aspiration to return to Louisiana and teach high school music for the Caddo Parish school system.

As an eager, enthusiastic and inspired student, Ernest expounded upon his thirst for knowledge and earned several post-graduate degrees including a Master of Arts in Music from Columbia University, a Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology from the University of Pittsburg and degrees from several prestigious institutions including Louisiana State University, University of Michigan and Berklee College of Music.

The inception of Ernest’s performing musical career began in 1952 while he served in the United States Air Force as an Instructor/Communication Specialist. There he led vocal quartet “Harmonaires” and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the United States Air Force World Wide Talent Show, “Tops in Blue.” He continued to travel domestically and globally, allowing his bass, piano and vocal talents to take him many places while creating a myriad of friendships along the way. Ernest has shared stages with legends like Duke Ellington, Clark Terry, Roberta Flack, Sammy Davis Jr. and Nathan Davis and tickled the ears of community supporters at local venues like Ernest Supper Club and Shreveport Club.

Known throughout Louisiana for reaching children and adults through music, Ernest cherished sharing his zeal for music and exemplifying his success in non-traditional—but culturally essential—career

paths. Founding the Louisiana School of Professions, Inc.—a vocational training school—set a precedence for similar programs throughout the country.

A successful serial entrepreneur, Ernest opened the Louisiana School of Music, where he provided music instruction to veterans and Lampkins Enterprise, an educational program consultation service that assisted in creating the framework for jazz programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In 2004, his community involvement took a political route as he was elected as the city of Greenwood's first Black mayor.

Ernest had been a faithful member of First United Methodist in Shreveport for over 30 years where he sang in the choir until his health declined. Also an active member of Rotary International and The Rotary Club of Shreveport.

With a love for travel, Ernest became a licensed air pilot in 1968 and owned a 4-seater Cessna aircraft where he would often use to travel between gigs. His love for travel and family took him to Ghana, Africa where he searched for his ancestral roots. During one of his trips to the country, Ernest was crowned chief of a town in northern Ghana.

Music was weft into everything that Ernest produced and accomplished and his beautiful legacy is responsible for an everlasting impact on a multitude of people and generations to come.

After God, nothing was more important to Ernest than his family. His children and grandchildren were the light of his life. Ernest leaves to cherish his memory his loving and devoted wife of 20 years, Shirley S. Lampkins; three daughters, Roselyn L. Kirkland, MD, of St. Louis, MO, Carmen L. Hughes of Atlanta, GA and Brett E. Lampkins, of Atlanta, GA; two son-in-laws, Levi S. Kirkland, Jr., MD, and Michael H. Hughes; six grandchildren, Alana Kirkland, Levi Kirkland III, Cole Kirkland; Michael Hughes II, Maya Hughes and Maxwell Hughes.

Through his marriage with Shirley, Ernest gained two daughters and family; Rhoshunda and Clifton Carroll, granddaughter Connor; and Tonya and Judge Steven Jupiter, granddaughters Celeste and Kali.

Ernest was preceded in death by his loving mother and father, brother, Herbert J. Lampkins and former wives, Gwendolyn Coble Lampkins and Sadie Smith Lampkins.

Funeral service will be held Thursday, January 18, 2018, at 11:00am at First United Methodist Church, 500 Common Street, Shreveport, Louisiana, 71101. Family welcomes visitors in the church parlor beginning at 10:00am. Interment services to follow at 1:00pm at the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, 7970 Mike Clark Road, Keithville, Louisiana, 71047.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to the Military Family Assistance fund, an organization that aids veterans and their families in times of need. Donations can be addressed to MFA Donation in care of Dr. Ernest Lampkins at P.O. Box 94095 Baton Rouge, LA 70804.