



# Marnel C. Moorman

May 14, 1943 - October 14, 1994

Interred: Cavlary Cemetery Section C



Marnel C. Moorman was born May 14, 1943. He died at the age of 51 in a tragic auto accident on October 14, 1994.

Marnel's father, William Venerable, was the first black city councilman in Drakesboro, Muhlenberg County, Kentucky. Although this was an advantage for his family, Marnel did have some negative circumstances in his childhood while growing up. For example, blacks could not use the local public swimming pool as could whites. Most restaurants, department stores, and even clothing stores were off limits for blacks in Muhlenberg County as well. Black students weren't even allowed to go to the same schools as white students during Marnel's childhood. Despite all this, Marnel's family turned the negatives into positives. For example, Marnell learned to swim in a local pond. He had good friendships with others that he and his family built over time.

During Marnel's senior year of high school, he didn't know what he wanted to do with his life. Luckily, he had a friend that offered him an opportunity to go on a college visit to Western Kentucky University (WKU). When Marnell went to the visit, the administrators talked to him about the opportunities that going to college could give him and how having that college diploma



could help him in the long run of his life. Four years later, Marnell had a bachelors degree from WKU and later went on to get a masters degree from Georgetown College.

Upon graduation, Marnell was originally set to teach math and science at High Street School but got recruited by Shelbyville High School superintendent and principal, Bill McKay. During this time the Shelby County Public Schools were under the "Freedom of Choice Desegregation Plan" between 1954-1966. In 1966, when Shelbyville closed its High Street School in order to speed up integration, Marnel was asked to teach and coach basketball at Shelbyville High School. When Shelbyville High merged with Shelby County, Marnel became a

teacher and coach at Shelby County High School. He was an assistant coach during the boys' Rockets' "epic run to the 1978 Sweet Sixteen State Championship."

Marnel was married to Laura Loving. They had three daughters, Latolya, Elizabeth, and Alison, and a son, Marnel Jr. Unfortunately, Alison died in 1993 while working on her master's degree at Western University. His daughters followed in his footsteps as educators. Elizabeth is a teacher at Marnel C. Moorman Elementary. Latolya teaches at Painted Stone Elementary.

Marnel Moorman had a big impact in our community and is a name to never be forgotten. The lifestyle Marnel lived and the motto he had, especially regarding his students, was to "look at individuals not as they are, but as they can be." Marnel never forgot to encourage his students and motivate them to keep pushing through whatever they are doing. But his encouragement went well beyond his young students. A perfect example of this was in a letter to Vivian Overall. Vivian had known Marnell many years through their church, Clay Street Baptist. On the day Marnel died, Vivian went to visit Marnel's family. When she arrived, she was told that Marnel had left a letter for her on the kitchen table. In this letter, Marnel had written for her "to keep working hard and listen to her teachers." At the time Vivian was in college and was focused on getting her degree. The inside joke between Vivian and Marnel was that Vivian was older than most of her teachers.

Marnel was highly appreciated for his work as vice-president, then president of the Kentucky Education Association (KEA). He was the first African American in that role.



A Shelby County elementary school was named after Marnel to honor his legacy and impact in Shelby County and on Shelby County students. Marnell believed that "children are our most precious resource." The Marnel C. Moorman Family Life Center was also dedicated to Marnell and his lifetime of supporting youth.

References:

- *Mr. Marnell C. Moorman*. Western Kentucky University Alumni: Hall of Distinguished Alumni. <https://alumni.wku.edu/s/808/index.aspx?sid=808&gid=1&pgid=1752>
- Graham, John. “Why is Shelby County’s newest public school named for Marnel C. Moorman?”
- Shaw, Brian. “Marnel Moorman”

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