

Dr. Jerry N. Woods

June 12, 1938 - May 7, 2020

Dr. Jerry Nathaniel Woods was born on June 12, 1938 in Flemington, West Virginia to Mildred Pearl (Dalton) and James Garfield Woods. On the evening of May 7, 2020, he was called to eternal peace, joining his parents and other loved ones. He was the fifth of nine children and the father of a daughter, Dr. Ericka Cherise Woods, a clinical psychologist, who, along with her fiancé Alphonso Myles lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Jerry believed wholeheartedly that the essence of a person is not what he does, but rather what he is in terms of his character. To call Jerry an educator was not to say what he did, but who he was. Jerry had a way of teaching lessons without making a person feel the slightest bit of inferiority or disrespect. He had a way of encouraging and uplifting people as well as challenging them to be and do better without condemning. From starting his education in a one-room, racially segregated schoolhouse to becoming a beloved university professor at Fayetteville State University, Jerry's journey itself only paled in comparison to the beauty and integrity of the man himself. During Jerry's childhood, the Woods family faced the many challenges of rural life in West Virginia. Without running water or indoor plumbing, they got water from a pump, a spring, a well, and/or a rain barrel placed at the side of the house. Rarely was the family able to purchase coal, the fuel used for cooking food and heating the house. It was nearly always obtained from a roadside and/or a railroad yard after it had fallen from coal trucks or railroad coal cars. For most of his early childhood, the family home was not wired for electricity,

so he and his siblings had to complete their homework by the light of oil lamps.

In 1944, Dr. Woods began his formal education at Lincoln Grade School in Rosemont, West Virginia, located approximately three miles from his home. After graduating from Lincoln in May of 1952, he entered his new school fourteen miles from his home, Kelly Miller High School, named after the black Howard University educator, in Clarksburg, West Virginia. Jerry was bussed to and from both schools. With his love of baseball, he always found it odd that the two races could play ball together but not go to school together.

Young Jerry attended Kelly Miller until the May 1954 landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling by the United States Supreme Court that determined racially segregated public schools were unconstitutional. When the school year commenced in September of 1954, Dr. Woods entered Flemington High School, a desegregated but predominantly white institution, in his hometown. He was one of fewer than a dozen black students in the school, and the only black student in his class. He graduated from Flemington High School in May 1956. During the summer of 1956, Jerry was employed as a garbage collector, working on a garbage truck, in Clarksburg. In September 1956, he enrolled in Fairmont State College in Fairmont, West Virginia, and remained in attendance until May of 1957. By November of 1957, Dr. Woods had enlisted in the United States Airforce. Working as a radar operator at radar stations, his first assignment was near Cape May, New Jersey; then, in Ontario, Canada; and finally, near Charleston, West Virginia. He received an honorable discharged in May of 1962.

Around October of 1962, Jerry moved from Flemington, West Virginia to Bay Shore, Long Island in New York State. For nearly a year and a half, he worked first as a mechanical inspector trainee in a company that produced small motors and then as a measurer and cutter of sails in a company that made sails for sail boats. Next, Jerry moved to Brooklyn, New York, where he worked in knitting mills for several years before continuing his education. In 1972, he enrolled in New York City Community College of the City

University of New York (CUNY), where he earned an Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree in 1975. Then he received a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Sociology and a Master of Science in Social Research (M.S.S.R.) from Hunter College in 1978 and 1979, respectively; and a Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) in 1982.

While pursuing his education, Jerry had worked in several positions—as a Teacher Assistant (paraprofessional) and as a substitute teacher in the New York City public schools, as an Educational Administrator for one year (1978-1979) and, then, as a consultant for a decade and a half, both in the High School Evaluation Unit of the Department of Educational Research at the New York City Board of Education, and as a teacher at several colleges and universities: Queens College, York College, and Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York.

In October of 1996, Jerry earned his Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Sociology from The Graduate School of the City University of New York, becoming “Dr. Woods.” His dissertation was entitled “African American Images of Education in the United States”. One of the members of his doctoral committee, Dr. Roscoe C. Brown, had been a Tuskegee Airman. His dissertation examines the ways that twelve African American social scientists think about education, especially the ways their views position them on different sides of the critical issues facing educational institutions and the education of African American youth. The critical issues and their different sides are: (1) race versus class, and (2) desegregation/integration versus segregation/separation. In addition to reporting what the social scientists say about an issue, his aim was to determine what influenced or accounted for the views/ideas that placed them on one side of an issue or the other.

During the 1998-1999 academic year, Dr. Woods was the John LaFarge Postdoctoral Fellow at Fordham University. With his doctoral degree, he taught a variety of courses in the colleges and universities of New York City. Among those courses were Introduction to Sociology; Introduction to Cultural Anthropology; Sociology of Education; Society, Culture and Education; Urban

Sociology; Social Problems; Deviant Behavior; Independent Study of the Theories of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim; Critical Thinking: The History of the Civil Rights Movement; and The Black Family. He also taught courses at St. John's University, the College of New Rochelle, and Fordham University.

In 2001, approximately one month before airplanes destroyed the World Trade Center, Dr. Woods moved from Queens, New York to Fayetteville, North Carolina. There he taught at four colleges and universities: the University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNC-P), Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC), Methodist College, and Fayetteville State University (FSU). At FSU, he taught Sociology of the Black Community, Race and Ethnic Relations, Marriage and Family Relations, Social Behavior and Interaction, Urban Sociology, Principle of Sociology, History of Sociological Thought, Social Stratification, and Contemporary Social Theory.

After his retirement from FSU in 2015, Dr. Woods increased his research efforts, becoming a regular face at the North Regional Library and the State Archives of NC. He became an even stronger contributing member of the Fayetteville community, advocating for community, children, and humane education while facing a dire illness in his personal life that few knew of during his latter months. He became Executive Director of the Institute for Social Awareness in collaboration with John Caldwell and Demetrius Haddock, a board member of the NC Civil War & Reconstruction History Center, a founding member of the Cape Fear Committee on African American Heritage (CFCAAH) through the Museum of the Cape Fear Foundation Board, and a member of the Community Interagency Council for Quality Education (CICQuE)..

Again, Dr. Woods, lovingly called "Doc", believed the essence of a person is not what he does, but rather what he is in terms of his character, with three of its strongest pillars being truth, love, and compassion (what Doc called TLC). With all that he challenged himself to achieve in life, Jerry rarely missed a Sunday service. He not only loved his Christian tenants, he lived by them as

well. To hear him tell it they were the “-ity” words—humanity, dignity, charity, and more—that if all embody, this world would be a glorious place.

We celebrate the life of a Truly Great Man. “Goodbye” Dr. Jerry Nathaniel Woods—in body. We will keep you ALIVE in our hearts, minds, and efforts always! He leaves to cherish his memories his loving daughter, Dr. Ericka Cherise Woods and her fiancé Alphonso Myles of Brooklyn, NY; two sisters, Lois Eileen Woods Reeves (Jesse) and Mary Jane Woods; a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends as well as two spiritual sons, John Caldwell and Demetrius Haddock.

In lieu of flower, the family asks that donations be sent to the NC Civil War & Reconstruction History Center in memory of Dr. Jerry N. Woods. May he rest in peace!

Dr. Jerry Woods Celebration of Life Memorial Service will be live-streamed on March 14, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. on Colvin Funeral Home's official Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/pg/ColvinFuneralHomeCORP/posts/?ref=page_internal.

Tribute Wall



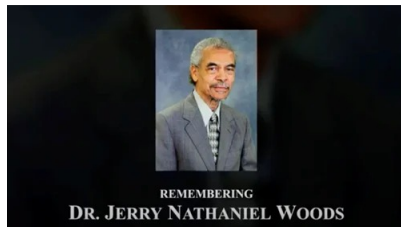
“ Colvin Funeral Homes & Cremations created a A Video Tribute Honoring the Life of Dr. Jerry Woods. in memory of Dr. Jerry N. Woods



H. M. Colvin Funeral Home - May 14, 2020 at 12:00 PM



“ Colvin Funeral Homes & Cremations created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Jerry N. Woods



H. M. Colvin Funeral Home - May 13, 2020 at 04:24 PM

GA

“ Thank you to the family for inviting me to the homegoing service for Dr. Woods. A light in Cumberland County has been diminished by his passing. Praying for the family

Glenn Adams - May 21, 2020 at 12:41 PM

WW

“*Legacy is not leaving something for people. It's leaving something in people.*” —Peter Strople

Rest in peace Dr. Woods!

Umoja Group Inc.

Wanda Wesley - May 17, 2020 at 11:06 AM

DW

“*My favorite memory is that he would always call us on New Years Day...every year to say, "Happy New Year and I just wanted to let you know that I am thinking about you." We looked forward to that special phone call every year.*



The last time we talked on the telephone, we talked for over 3 hours. It was after my mother passed away and he called to check on me. We talked about everything from our personal family to Black History to everything else we could think of...he always encouraged me to continue my education...both inside and outside the classroom.

His clothes were always perfect, never a spot or wrinkle. He could eat anything, including Bar-B-Q and never get a drop on him. He always looked as fresh and clean at the end of the day as he did at the beginning of the day.

Yes, precious memories, how they linger. He is gone, but will never be forgotten. Rest in peace dear uncle until we meet again.

Debora Waugh - May 14, 2020 at 02:40 PM

KG

“ It was my pleasure to know Dr. Woods over these last few years We are indebted to his work to get the Africana studies major at FSU. He was humble and unassuming. He will be greatly and deeply missed.

Kelisha Graves - May 14, 2020 at 10:39 AM

ZB

“ To Dr. Ericka Woods and the Woods Family: May God continue to bless and comfort you and your family during this season. My prayers and condolences are with you. Peace and Blessings,
Zandra Brockman, Brooklyn, NY

Zandra Brockman - May 13, 2020 at 10:44 PM

RL

“ To Ericka C. Woods & Family.. Sending heartfelt condolences during this challenging time, please know that your family is in our prayers & thoughts.

Sincerely In His Love,

The Diamond Leadership & Collective of St. Paul Community Baptist Church, Brooklyn, NY

Roxanne Bess - Diamond Leadership - May 13, 2020 at 05:54 PM

JP

“ In this sorrowful time, I would like to extend my heartfelt condolences. May our Lord comfort you, Dr. Ericka Woods, and your loved ones.



Jay L. Choi, Ph.D. - May 13, 2020 at 02:39 PM

KG

“ One of my favorite professors at Fayetteville State University. I am so saddened to hear about his passing. Praying for his family!

Kelli G - May 13, 2020 at 11:43 AM

SW

“ My heartfelt sympathy goes out to the family of Dr. Jerry Woods during this most difficult time. Please accept my most sincere condolences and may God ease the pain of your loss.

Sheriff Burnis Wilkins - May 12, 2020 at 11:12 AM

TS

“ Dearest Family,

I share the sorrow of Dr. Woods' passing. Dr. Woods was my Sociology Professor and conscientious mentor. No other educator spoke to me and asked my opinion with such interest. I was fortunate to have taken 3 courses with Dr. Woods, each one as intriguing the next because of the knowledge and care Dr. Woods presented our historical information. I believe the "Reconstruction Period" was Dr. Woods' most desired point in history that he loved to discuss with me.

We have lost a man of integrity, heart for education, knowledge and truth... A Friend.

Terri K. Walker West, M. S. - May 12, 2020 at 07:50 AM