



## Arthur Naylor Robinson

October 23, 1945 - August 16, 2020

Reflection (by Barbara Robinson)

It is not easy to tell the story of a man whose essence was a paradox. Externally charismatic, he drew people to him everywhere he went; internally, he was introspective and rooted, I believe, in deep and quiet faith. Both restless and very still (see his poem elsewhere in this program), he often seemed as if he were standing on the shore of life, peering out into the universe. I think this is why he loved the ocean so much, the place in nature where the path comes to the very edge.

To begin: Arthur was born on October 23, 1945 to Lucille and Arthur Naylor Robinson in Washington DC. He was the second of Lucille Robinson (Miller's) three sons. His brother Thomas Tipton was born ten years earlier, and his younger brother Reginald Robinson was born almost ten years later. Although his parents' marriage ended in divorce, Arthur spent several childhood summers with his dad in Manassas, Virginia, until the senior Arthur Robinson's death in 1957. He remained close to his mother until her passing in 1998.

Arthur was raised mainly by his mother in a household where music, church, and community involvement were at the center of life. For his mother, for more than 40 years a well-known figure in gospel radio broadcasting, the coming

and going of pastors and musicians was a constant in the home. Her middle son was musically gifted and began singing and playing drums in church as a boy; later( in the 60's) he was part of an acapella group , performing on street corners in DC. By the time Arthur was a teenager, his older brother Tommy was already singing professionally and was an early role model.

Arthur was also inherently an athlete, eventually reaching his full height of 6'8' in adulthood. He started high school at the Mather Academy in South Carolina, where excelling in basketball (the basis of his scholarship) became his mission and devotion. He would say that he spent his first year in rigorous practice to become the phenomenon that he was expected to be. However, early in his second year, life was interrupted by tuberculosis. The path veered away from a potential career in sports to a long stay in a sanitorium before he was able to finish high school in DC and move on.

Arthur's life unfolded in a way that was characterized for many years by his following his intellectual, social, and political instincts. He traveled to Texas, to Paris, to Egypt, to Boston and many other cities in the U.S. and abroad, seizing opportunities as they arose. Washington was always his home base. Before finishing college, he was recruited & trained by the federal agency VISTA and deployed to Texas as a recruiter and a first responder during Hurricane Isabelle. His organizing skills were recognized as promising, and he was invited to do advanced training as a community organizer. He chose instead to make his first trip to Europe as part of a USIA mission that sent entertainers as ambassadors of goodwill to both European and third world countries. When in Paris, a city he loved, he often did back-up singing for jazz musicians. When back in the states, he managed jazz groups and individual singers, while enhancing his credentials (and work opportunities) with a certificate as a security specialist. For a few years, he was the host at Charlie's, the Georgetown night club. In that whirlwind life, he was known for the way he put visiting artists and political figures at ease, going beyond his

job by helping them navigate their stay in DC. Talented, gregarious and smart, he traveled in sophisticated circles, a freewheeling life full of successes and mistakes.

Doctor and writer Rachel Reman has said, (2001: My Grandfather's Blessings) that "When life is stripped down to its very essentials, . . . (f)ewer and fewer things matter and those that matter, matter a great deal more." In his fifties, in the wake of his mother's passing, Arthur turned from the glittering world of hospitality toward a life more focused on serve to those he saw as in need of help. After briefly working as the personal assistant to the Director of NIDA, the federal office of disabilities affairs, he returned to UDC for a certificate training as a Registered Addictions Counselor. In rapid succession, he went to New York to study aural acupuncture (a specific addictions treatment), then to New Hampshire to study Reiki, the Japanese healing system of bodywork. He became a full Reiki Master in 2004.

By 2002, Arthur and I, already longtime partners, were married. From then until a few years before his death in August, he practiced Reiki in an office just across the bridge from our apartment near Rock Creek Park. He also was one of an early corps of volunteers providing Reiki as palliative care for patients in GW Hospital. He still loved travel, seeing people, dining well, dressing well, listening to music of all kinds wherever it was played well. He loved dance in all its forms. He loved the powerful preaching of TD Jakes, whom he had met. In 2016, a cascade of illness began to take its toll. Unable to give reiki sessions, he began allowing himself to receive this form of healing from others. Unable to give acupuncture, he traveled regularly to receive this treatment as well. In the way that life becomes simpler, a new path opened -- the healing of self and spirit. He talked with Reggie as much as he could and was encouraged by his two brilliant and kind adult children, Niik and Tracy, to have more connection. There was more to do.

In the photo tribute of this service, three pictures at the very end show some of what Arthur saw in his last days: the golden sky and rainbow outside the window, the light coming through that same window in early dawn, and the amazing movement of clouds that always swept across our sky. He was more at peace. I may have seen it coming: this week, I discovered a poem I wrote on Christmas morning, 2002, the ending of which is:

God, thank you for this past and coming year. The rain is turning quietly to snow. My beautiful husband is in bed asleep, His breathing deep and slow. Please keep him always in your loving care.

# Previous Events

## Service

AUG **29**. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Marshall-March Funeral Homes - The District of Columbia

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Washington, DC 20011

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<https://www.marshallmarchfh.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *To View the Webcast of the Funeral for Arthur Naylor Robinson, Please Click the Link below.*



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**Marshall-March Funeral Homes** - August 26, 2020 at 11:13 PM



“ *Arthur Naylor Robinson*

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October 23, 2023 at 08:15 AM



“ *We would like to extend our condolences to the family. May you draw comfort from God as he help you to cope with the heavy weight of your loss. Thinking of you all.*

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**Evans family** - August 31, 2020 at 05:08 AM



“ *Bobbi,  
Thank you for sharing the life story of a beautiful soul and healer.  
What a meaningful service/tribute to a remarkable man. The music  
and photos were such a window into all things important.  
Sending lots of love your way ,  
Syma*

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**syma** - August 29, 2020 at 01:25 PM

YF

“ *Sending much love and light to Barbara, to Arthur's children and family, and to Arthur himself as he continues to heal into his transition. May you be at peace and may his memory be a blessing for many many years to come.*

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**Yael Flusberg** - August 29, 2020 at 09:41 AM

BH

“ *Dear Barbara,*

*Praying comfort and strength for you! Thank you being an amazing wife and partner for Uncle Arthur for so many years! I'm going to miss him, but glad he is resting well with Dad, Reggie and Grandma Lucille.*

*Love,*

*Beverly*

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**Beverly Tipton Hammond** - August 28, 2020 at 03:11 PM

SW

“ Barbara,

*All my prayers are with you as you deal with the loss of such a wise, loving, gentle husband that you were blessed to have in Arthur. No words can express the sorrow and emptiness I'm sure you are feeling but be assured, he is in Heaven for sure, and is looking down on us all, with his Heavenly Father, his brothers Tommy and Reggie, and his beloved mother Lucille. May God bless and keep you.*

Love,

*Sherri Wyatt*

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**Sherri L Wyatt** - August 27, 2020 at 04:56 PM

TW

“ Sorry For Your Loss  
Jesus Christ Loves Me  
We Love You



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**Thomas Widgeon** - August 27, 2020 at 11:04 AM



“ We the March Family and Marshall-March Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.

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**Marshall-March Funeral Homes** - August 26, 2020 at 09:28 AM