



Mr. Michael E. Robinson

April 7, 1952 - July 10, 2023

Michael E. Robinson

04/07/52 – 07/10/23

Michael E. Robinson, attorney, professor and docent, died July 10, 2023, in Washington, DC. Michael Eugene Robinson was born April 7, 1952 to Eugene and Rita Robinson in New York City, where he grew up and was educated. Michael attended and was the first young African American man to graduate from the prestigious Dalton School in 1969. He went on to attend and graduate with honors from Yale College and received his Juris Doctor from Yale Law School in 1976, where he was an editor of the Law Journal. After graduation, Michael served as law clerk to the Hon. Judge Robert L. Carter in federal court for the Southern District of New York. Michael moved to Washington, DC in the fall of 1977 and joined the law firm of Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan.

After four years of corporate law practice, Michael transitioned to his life-long passion of public service, joining the U.S. Department of Justice in the Office of Legal Policy, where Michael co-authored the Department of Justice guide for government attorneys on the use of grand jury materials. In 1987, he joined the Civil Division as Senior Appellate Counsel, arguing cases on behalf of the government in federal circuit courts around the country. He was a frequent instructor at the Attorney General's Advocacy Institute and a frequent lecturer on the Equal Access to Justice Act. Michael also served for a time as

Chair of the Department of Justice Association of Black Attorneys.

When Michael retired from the Department of Justice in 2014, this did not end his commitment to public service. It simply found new outlets. Michael was selected for one of the highly coveted positions as a volunteer docent for the U.S. National Gallery. Michael also became an adjunct professor at Georgetown University School of Law, teaching a course in Supreme Court Practice.

Michael spoke four languages and traveled extensively to Europe, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, and throughout the U.S., but his favorite destination of all was Italy, and for a time he hoped to settle there. From as early as Michael's days in college, he was an active and sophisticated collector of fine art, and his home was adorned with exquisite paintings, lithographs and photographs. In fact, in recent years, Michael's own photography became a major outlet for his boundless creativity. Michael won and was featured in numerous photography competitions, while family and friends cherished his annual photography calendars.

Michael's greatest love, however, were his two nieces, Jennifer and Lily, and his nephew, Sean. Michael never married, but he considered Jennifer, Lily and Sean to be his own children, and they brought him immeasurable joy.

Our beloved Michael touched so many lives and will be greatly missed by a galaxy of people. Although he will be mourned by many, he will live on in the memory of his devoted family in New York, Connecticut, Washington and across the country.

Michael is survived by his mother, Rita Robinson; by his two brothers, David, and Mark (and sister-in-law, Laura); nieces, Jennifer McEachern, Lily Smith; nephew Sean Robinson; aunts, cousins and a host of other relatives and friends.

Funeral services for Michael Robinson will be held Monday evening, July 17, at J. Foster Phillips Funeral Home in Jamaica, NY, followed by interment at Maple Grove Cemetery. A memorial service for Michael Robinson will be held at his church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, at 2430 K Street, NW in

Washington, DC at a later date to be determined.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 17. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

J. Foster Phillips Funeral Home
179-24 Linden Blvd
Queens, NY 11434

Service

JUL 17. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

J. Foster Phillips Funeral Home
179-24 Linden Blvd
Queens, NY 11434

Service

JUL 18. 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

Maple Grove Cemetery
127-15 Kew Gardens Rd,
Queens, NY 11415

*Maple Grove Cemetery 127-15 Kew Gardens Road, Queens, NY 11415 Burial: Tuesday, July 18, 11:00 AM
(leaving from Foster Phillips at 10:00 AM)*

Tribute Wall



“ *I became friends with Michael when we were at Sutherland Asbill together and saw him occasionally after he left. Such a kind and witty person who often spoke lovingly about his mother. I just learned of his untimely death and I will keep him and his family in my prayers.*

sheila carpenter - March 02, 2024 at 10:16 PM



“ *Mr. Michael E. Robinson*

October 23, 2023 at 08:15 AM



“ *A Solemn Requiem Mass will be offered for Michael on Saturday, September 16, at 1:30pm, in the church where he was a devoted and much-loved parishioner, St. Paul's Episcopal, 2430 K St NW, DC. Light reception to follow. All are welcome to attend and remember the life of our dear friend.*

Elliot C - September 11, 2023 at 10:20 PM



“ While reading the Yale alumni magazine yesterday, I was shocked to learn of Michael’s death. We didn’t know each other until there, but both joined the same DOJ office within months of each other in 1983.

Several others including Debi Kant have captured Michael very well. He was a wonderful, wonderful man. You rarely encounter his combination of great intellect, grace, and gentleness of soul. We were not especially close. But I was one of his many, many admirers. He made a difference in peoples’ lives and will be sorely missed. Peter Maier

Peter Maier - September 08, 2023 at 06:55 AM



“ Dana J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Michael E. Robinson.

Dana J. - July 24, 2023 at 11:11 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mr. Michael E. Robinson.

July 17, 2023 at 09:56 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mr. Michael E. Robinson.



July 17, 2023 at 09:56 AM

DK

“Michael was the very meaning of grace and wisdom. A gentle giant. Yet, unassuming. He came into my life in 1986. Michael always knew the right thing to say at just the right time. In 1986, he inherited one of my cases in the Ninth Circuit. I had withdrawn fearing too much conservative oversight by political appointees (what was then considered conservative). At the oral argument, the panel of judges were angry at the government’s position. As described by Michael, one judge threw a book on the podium, and another swung her chair around with her back towards Michael. Michael bore it all with grace and humor. Some years later when I feared that my running career would be cut short due to plantar fasciitis, he shared with me how each physical limitation changes a piece of our self – in his case hair loss. When I had serious spine surgery decades later, Michael contacted me regularly, updated my DOJ colleagues, and visited me. One of my last memories of him was singing a poem to me at my 60th birthday party. Almost 40 years of a wonderful, shining light.

Debi Kant - July 17, 2023 at 07:53 AM

LE

“Lisa Wilson Edwards purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mr. Michael E. Robinson.



Lisa Wilson Edwards - July 16, 2023 at 05:02 PM

LE

“ Dear Robinson Family - my deepest condolences on the passing of your dear Michael. I knew Michael, as we were colleagues at the Dep't of Justice. He was so kind and extremely smart! He was instrumental in helping me when I started at the Department in the early 1990s. I was in the Civil Rights Division doing Appellate Litigation, and he was an attorney in Civil Appellate.

Michael was instrumental in guiding me and providing me helpful resources as I gained my footing as a young attorney. DOJ can be tough, but I knew that Michael had my back. He was a shining star and supportive mentor to me and others. My you find comfort and peace.

Best regards, Lisa Wilson Edwards

Lisa Wilson Edwards - July 16, 2023 at 04:56 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Mr. Michael E. Robinson.



July 16, 2023 at 02:42 PM

JL

“*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*”
Romans 8:28 (KJV)

To paraphrase Matthew (25:23): well done, my good and faithful friend and colleague, Michael. I will miss your engaging smile, quick wit, good humor, and keen intellect, as well as our untold discussions about law, life and politics over many coffees, lunches and dinners over the past 30 years.

May the Robinson family find comfort in the knowledge that Michael was esteemed and adored by many, and that we share in your grief during this most difficult time.

Jeffrica Jenkins Lee, Upper Marlboro, MD

Jeffrica Jenkins Lee - July 16, 2023 at 02:30 PM

DK

“ Michael was the very meaning of grace and wisdom. A gentle giant. Yet, unassuming. He came into my life in 1986. Michael always knew the right thing to say at just the right time. In 1986, he inherited one of my cases in the Ninth Circuit. I had withdrawn fearing too much conservative oversight by political appointees (what was then considered conservative). At the oral argument, the panel of judges were angry at the government’s position. As described by Michael, one judge threw a book on the podium, and another swung her chair around with her back towards Michael. Michael bore it all with grace and humor. Some years later when I feared that my running career would be cut short due plantar fasciitis, he shared with me how each physical limitation changes a piece of our self – in his case hair loss. When I had serious spine surgery decades later, Michael contacted me regularly, updated my DOJ colleagues, and visited me. One of my last memories of him was singing a poem to me at my 60th birthday party. Almost 40 years of a wonderful, shining light.

Debi K -- fellow friend from the DOJ and the National Gallery of Art

Debi Kant - July 16, 2023 at 10:10 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mr. Michael E. Robinson.

July 13, 2023 at 07:09 PM



“ Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Mr. Michael E. Robinson.



July 13, 2023 at 07:09 PM



“I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make. Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories.” Mr. Robinson you will be missedEddie Waddy

Edwardee "Eddie" Waddy - July 13, 2023 at 06:19 AM



I have been Michael legal assistant for many years at DOJ. We developed a good working relationship. We laughed and joked about his singing as he was snapping his fingers to his own beat. I was sadden to hear of his passing away, but I have the memories. To the family, I send my condolences, peace and strength. Michael's memories and love will live on in your hearts. Gerri Hopson

GERALDINE HOPSON - July 13, 2023 at 04:25 PM



Michael was my colleague at DOJ and he was the very embodiment of class, intellignence and elegance. The news of his passing is a shock is a tremendous loss to us all. May he rest in peace. Mark W. Pennak

Mark W. Pennak - November 09, 2023 at 12:49 PM



“ 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.

Marshall-March Funeral Homes - July 12, 2023 at 10:03 AM