



James Rufus Simmons Jr.

May 12, 1948 - April 8, 2021

Distinguished Army veteran, Vallejo California native and life-long resident, James R. Simmons, Jr. passed away in Vallejo following a lengthy illness on Thursday, April, 08, 2021. James "Jimmy" R. Simmons, Jr., aka "Lil' Rock-the many names he was better known by was born to James Sr. and Vivian Smith Simmons. He grew up in Floyd Terrace, attended public schools and graduated from Vallejo Senior High School in 1966. He was a standout athlete in basketball, and track and field. He attended Solano Community College before being drafted into the U.S. Army in August of 1968. Jimmy served his country and was a decorated Vietnam Veteran, part of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry Regiment, and the 9th Infantry Division. For his service, he received an Honorable Discharge and 19 medals and citations, including a National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Air Medal and two Bronze Star Medals. In 1969, he married the late Eloise Easterling, and from this union three children were born. Nicknamed "Lil' Rock," he forged a reputation as a proud and hard worker. From his first job as a paperboy for the Vallejo Times Herald to his retirement, Jimmy excelled as a stevedore, boilermaker, and explosives operator --- with a distinguished work history at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Kaiser Steel, the Naval Weapons Stations Concord and Operation Dessert Cleanup. He loved his family, friends, a good fedora hat, baseball, boxing, fishing, sitting on the porch signifying and cracking jokes, watching western movies and the military

channel, listening to loud oldies R & B music, playing the guitar, singing, cooking, eating beans, greens, chicken and cornbread, bread pudding, strawberry cake and gumbo, which he sometimes referred to as "slumbo". He had jokes up jokes, nicknames for everybody, a huge heart and was a GIVER in every sense of the word. For 20+ years, he contributed monthly to the St. Jude Children's Cancer Research Hospital. He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers James, Peyton, Simmie, and Charles "Bo Pete" and sister Melody. He is survived by his five children, daughters Jamie Harmon and Dackeyia (Del) Sterling; and three sons, Shime (Megan), James III and Nicholas; five grandchildren, Danielle Dennis, Olivia Simmons, Taylor Sterling, Shime Simmons, II, and Kiara Simmons; one brother, Ralph Simmons; and two sisters, Barbara Simmons Lahori and Edith "Peaches" Body, and a host of beloved nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. His public viewing will be on Thursday, April 22 from 3 PM to 6 PM at Wiggins-Knipp Funeral Home. Due to COVID restrictions, a private funeral for immediate family will be held at 11 AM on Friday, April 23rd at Wiggins-Knipp, with Pastor Hanson Rogers officiating. Following the funeral, the family invites everyone to join Jimmy's Horse-Drawn waterfront recessional caravan from Wiggins-Knipp to his entombment, with military honors at Sunrise Memorial Cemetery. Arrangements and care entrusted to Wiggins-Knipp Funeral Home, 524 Capitol Street, Vallejo, CA. 94590.

Tribute Wall



“ 8 files added to the album Memories Album



Norman (Puncho) McLeod - April 23, 2021 at 11:13 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of James Rufus Simmons Jr..



April 19, 2021 at 06:01 PM