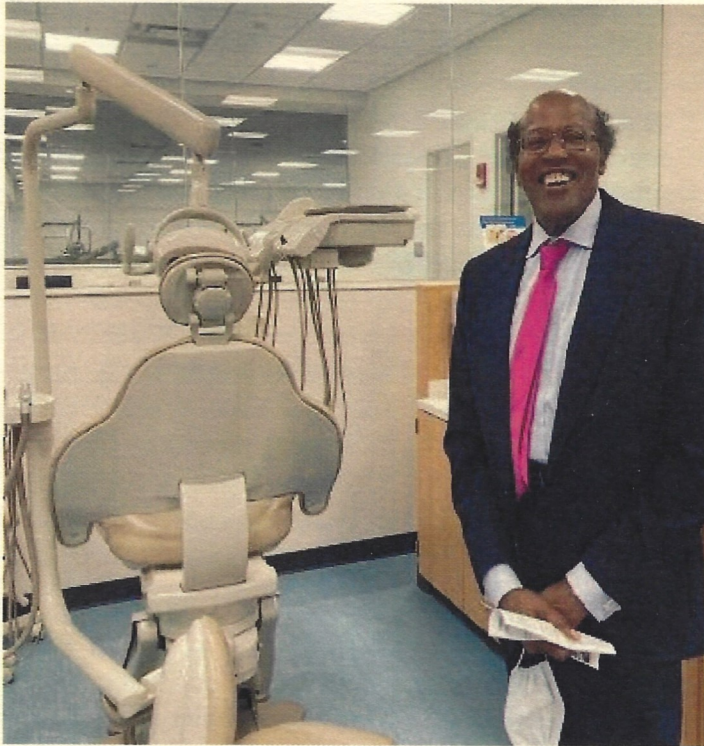


## *Celebration of Life*



*Dr. Major K. Lee 111*

*October 15, 1941 - Saturday 18, 2023*

*Funeral Service*

*Saturday, March 4, 2023*

*Wayman Chapel AME Church  
3317 Hoover Ave., Dayton, OH 45402*

*Pastor Gerald A. Cooper  
Officiant / Eulogist*

## *When Great Trees Fall*

*When great trees fall, rocks on distant hills shudder, lions hunker down in tall grasses, and even elephants lumber after safety. When great trees fall in forests, small things recoil into silence, their senses eroded beyond fear. When great souls die, the air around us become slight, rare, sterile. We breathe, briefly. Our eyes, briefly, see with a hurtful clarity. Our memory, suddenly sharpened, examines, gnaws on kind words unsaid, promised walks never taken. Great souls die and our reality, bound to them, takes leave of us. Our souls, dependent upon their nurture, now shrink, wizened. Our minds, formed and informed by their radiance,? Fall away. We are not so much maddened as reduced to the unutterable ignorance? Of dark, cold caves. And when great souls die, after a period peace blooms, slowly and always irregularly. Spaces fill with a kind of soothing electric vibration. Our senses, restored, never to be the same, whisper to us. They existed. They existed. We can be. Be and be better. For they existed.*

*Maya Angelou*

***DR. MAJOR K. LEE III DDS***

***A LIFE OF STRUGGLE, RESILIENCE, AND ACCOMPLISHMENT***

Dr. Major K. Lee III of Trotwood, Ohio, passed away on February 18. He was born at home in Ocala Florida on October 15, 1941. His father was Major Lee Jr. and his mother was Eliza Yulee. He was raised by his grandmother in Sanford, Florida and he has one surviving sister, Evelyn Stanley, in Sanford. Major attended Volusia County Community College in Daytona Beach, Florida, where he earned his Associate of Arts degree. After graduation, he set his sights on Washington, DC, entering Howard University where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology. Enrollment in the Howard University College of Dentistry followed, and, despite the absence of a strong support system, he beat the odds and achieved his dream of graduating from dental school, specializing in the field of pediatric dentistry. From humble beginnings, Dr. Lee climbed the ladder to success. He was the product of a segregated school system that was the embodiment of separate and unequal education. His grandmother was not an educated woman; however she possessed wisdom that could not be found in academia. She instilled in him self-motivation, determination, focus, and drive which led to his exemplary status as a medical professional, a father, and a husband. The road to success was full of potholes starting with a late start in primary school because he had to pick potatoes, and limited finances as he pursued higher education. By the time he arrived in Dayton to start his professional career, he only had enough money to buy a can of beans, yet he was too proud to ask anyone for a loan.

Dr. Lee served the greater Dayton community as a pediatric dentist for nearly 45 years. He was recruited by Dr. Dwight Pemberton to join the medical staff at Drew Health Center. The ophthalmologist at Drew arranged an introduction for Major to meet a school psychologist for the Dayton Public Schools. That introduction led to a marriage of 48 years to his wife, Valerie. Major always yearned for a private practice and successfully began one on West Third Street with the help of his uncle who arrived from Florida to renovate a single-family home and convert it into a dental office. In later years, he used the skills acquired from that same uncle and converted a barn into a dental office in Trotwood, Ohio. That was one of several structures he took pride in creating as his interest in architecture and interior design became a new hobby in his life. In service to the community, along with others, Horizons in Medicine was created. The program provided an introduction to medicine for high school juniors and seniors. Through this program, dedicated medical professionals throughout the community served as mentors for the students. Dr. Lee took other leadership roles in the community. He served on the board of the Dayton Dental Society, a position that was rarely held by African Americans. Major was also one of the founders of the Trotwood Education Foundation, established to provide resources for the students enrolled in the Trotwood Madison School District.

There were two events that left an indelible impression on his life. The Howard University Mississippi Project evolved from dialogues at Howard on the school's relevance to the African American community. He spoke highly of Dr. Joffie Pittman, who was the project director and a Howard University dentist. Howard sent much needed medical services into Quitman County, Mississippi and established a health center in Marks, the county seat. As reported in the NY Times (10/4/70), the

Mississippi State Board of Health refused to temporarily license Howard doctors to examine people in Marks even though the population of Quitman County at that time was 65% black. Eventually, the Board of Health relented, and the students were allowed to render some services to the community. Major talked with school groups and shared slides from his experiences with the project. The second event that Major frequently recalled was the opportunity he had to meet with Pat Harris, Secretary of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Major's ties to Howard helped open doors that led to the meeting. The meeting with Secretary Harris was instrumental in staving off foreclosure for the new town development known as Newfields (now Sycamore Woods).

Dr. Lee valued the pursuit of excellence, having instilled the character traits of education and commitment into his children. His daughter, Tiana, obtained a law degree from Northwestern University School of Law and a Master of Health Administration degree from The Ohio State University College of Public Health. She is Senior Counsel, Office of Counsel to the Inspector General United States Department of Health and Human Services. His son, Major K. Lee IV, completed the dual degree program at the University of Pennsylvania earning his MD and PhD degrees. He currently is an Associate Professor of Clinical Surgery and Program Director of the General Surgery Residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. His daughter-in-law works with an underserved population as a primary care physician. His son-in-law, Dr. Frederick Korley, is an Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine and Associate Chair for Research at the University of Michigan. Major and Valerie have four grandchildren; Noah, Rachel, Xavier, and Avery. Dr. Lee was a member of Wayman Chapel AME Church and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated.

#### **ORDER OF SERVICE**

MUSICAL PRELUDE..... "TILL WE MEET AGAIN" .....KIRK FRANKLIN  
 PRAYER.....THE REVEREND DR. MILA P. COOPER  
 SCRIPTURE.....THE GRANDCHILDREN  
 REMARKS.....  
 MUSICAL SELECTION.....YOLANDA BYRD  
 EULOGY.....PASTOR GERALD A.COOPER  
 PRAYER.....PASTOR GERALD A. COOPER  
 MUSICAL SELECTION.....YOLANDA BYRD  
 COMMITTAL  
 RECESSIONAL....."GOING UP YONDER" .....CLERGY, FAMILY AND FRIENDS



## **THE BRIDGE BUILDER**

BY WILL ALLEN DROMGOOLE

*An old man going a lone highway, Came, at the evening cold and gray, To a chasm vast and deep and wide. Through which was flowing a sullen tide The old man crossed in the twilight dim, The sullen stream had no fear for him; But he turned when safe on the other side And built a bridge to span the tide. "Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near, "You are wasting your strength with building here; Your journey will end with the ending day, You never again will pass this way; You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide, Why build this bridge at evening tide?" The builder lifted his old gray head; "Good friend, in the path I have come," he said, "There followed after me to-day A youth whose feet must pass this way. This chasm that has been as naught to me To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be; He, too, must cross in the twilight dim; Good friend, I am building this bridge for him!"*

*In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to the Bridge Builder Award Scholarship in support of dental hygiene students at Sinclair Community College where he served for many years on the Dental Health Sciences Advisory Board.*

Entombment at Woodland Mausoleum: Bronze Wall.

*Funeral Services Entrusted to  
Thomas Funeral Home and Crematory*

*Program Created by Teresa J. Fitts-Ardley*