



Malvin Massey Jr.

JUL 21, 1951 - OCT 29, 2022



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MEMORIAL PARK
Funeral Home & Cemetery

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On Memorial Day 2022, residents of an East Memphis neighborhood stepped into their front yards, drawn by the haunting tones of a lone saxophone. As Malvin Massey Jr. played “Taps,” his neighbors paused to reflect, the music serving as a gentle reminder of the day’s true significance.

A longtime DJ, radio personality and pillar of the Memphis jazz community, Massey spent 71 years bringing music and beauty into his city, nation and world.

With his smooth voice and natural charisma, Massey spent his career promoting an awareness of and appreciation for jazz. His grandmother taught him to play the piano, and his junior high band teacher inspired him to master the sax. In high school, he joined the Neu-tros, which played gigs in Memphis and the surrounding states.

After graduating from Hamilton High School, Massey served four years in the Air Force, a stint that took him from Great Britain and Turkey to Thailand. Later, in a nod to his aeronautical experience, Massey would assume the on-air handle “Pilot of the Jazz Jet.”

In 1974, he played in the Memphis State University Jazz Band as well as with the Eddie “Pug” Dandridge Quartet. Massey began volunteering for the university’s jazz station, WUMR, or U92, in 1988—the same year that he earned a broadcasting certificate from Columbia School of Broadcasting. He filled every role at the station—serving as volunteer DJ, music director and program director. Meanwhile, he worked at WCRV, a Christian talk radio station, where he gained expertise in recording, editing and audio software.

While volunteering at U92, he met his “co-pilot,” Phyliss, and the couple ultimately chose a wedding date that reflected the station’s call letters: 9-2-92. For decades, the Pilot of the Jazz Jet closed every show with these words: “Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift—that’s why it’s called the present. From the pilot and the copilot and Miss Ruthie (his deceased daughter), have a good day.”



Obituary

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In 2009, Massey became general manager of WUMR, one of eight 24/7 all-jazz stations in the U.S. He served as teacher, mentor and role model to scores of broadcasting and journalism students—always determined to give everyone their best chance at success.

In addition to interviewing many of the world's preeminent jazz musicians, Massey worked with industry leaders nationwide to identify and promote new and established artists. He was also a member of Germantown Performing Arts Center's Jazz Advisory Board.

Under his leadership, WUMR evolved from a tiny station with a limited scope to a nationally known resource that streamed mainstream, contemporary, fusion and new-age jazz worldwide. In his spare time, he emceed innumerable jazz shows and advised professionals throughout the national and global jazz community.

After his retirement in 2020, Massey co-hosted the Kudzukian network's "Riffin on Jazz" talk show and podcast. He also served as president of the Highland Area Renewal Corp. and discovered a talent as a gardener, nurturing plants as carefully as he had always nurtured the people around him.

Massey is survived by his wife, Phyliss; siblings, Norma Montgomery, Clifton Massey and Mark David Massey (Angela); his daughter, Kristina Massey Sullivan; grandchildren Donte Sullivan, Makiyah Brown, and Mardrell Brown Jr.; and a host of nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his parents, Malvin Massey Sr. and Sarah Franklin Massey; and his daughter, Charity Ruth Massey.

Visitation will be held Wednesday November, 2, from 5:00 until 7:00pm at Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery, 5668 Poplar Avenue, with services on Thursday November 3 at 2:00pm at Memorial Park Funeral Home. Graveside services will follow at Memorial Park. To view webcasted services please click on link below.

<http://webcast.funeralvue.com/events/viewer/80563/hash:12F6092DECD253F2>



Events


Malvin Massey Jr.

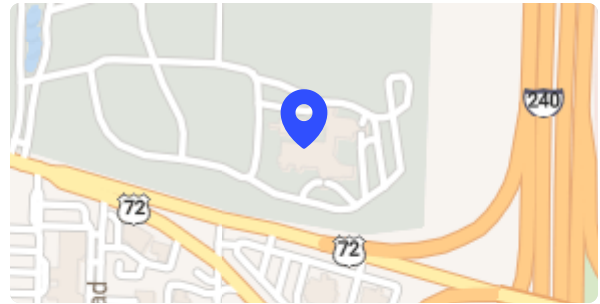
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Visitation


 **Wednesday**, November 2, 2022

 5:00 PM CT


 **Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery**
5668 Poplar Avenue, Memphis TN 38119

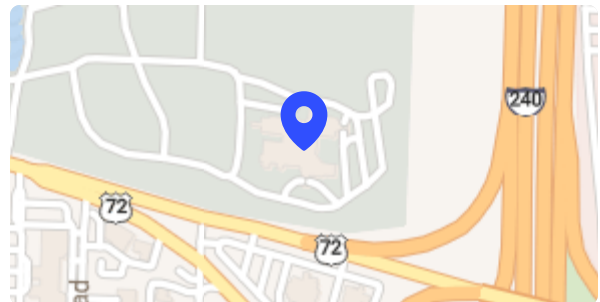


Funeral

 **Thursday**, November 3, 2022

 2:00 PM CT

 **Memorial Park Funeral Home & Cemetery**
5668 Poplar Ave, Memphis TN 38119





Tribute Wall

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Memorial Park Funeral Home And Cemetery shared a **To view webcast services, please click on link..**



November 2 at 12:40 PM



Luther King November 3 at 7:16 PM

Sorry for a great loss to Memphis and all jazz lovers



Caesar posted:

Anyone here who would know if Malvin ever played sax with the I.B. Special, the backing band for the Isley Brothers in 1965??? Write me at univibes@tiscali.it

January 3 at 1:37 PM



Michael Kerr posted:

Malvin was such a kind and patient man. I learned how to be a great DJ with his guidance at the University of Memphis from 1990-1992. I was so nervous my first day at WSMS your total Jazz Connection and he was there to comfort me. I appreciated that in him because had he been overbearing and push I would not have made it the first week. His kindness and support gave me a career and I am still going on strong because of his graciousness for the craft. I will always miss his loving spirit till we meet again. RIP Malvin. ~LOVE~Michael Ashley Kerr

October 13 at 6:53 PM



Gail Coen posted:

From Gail Coen (Terry Coen's Widow):Malvin was one of Terry's long time treasured music friends. Terry always looked forward to talking Jazz with Malvin on the phone, meeting up at events, and "doing the hang." Last time Terry and I were in Memphis, we all went out to lunch, and it was a truly memorable occasion...lots of stories, laughter and delicious Memphis dishes on the menu! We all promised we'd be together again soon, but time passed... and now they've both passed. RIP Malvin, and thank you for sharing all the great Jazz with your listeners.

November 19 at 6:18 PM



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LC

Linda Caughron posted:

I always loved hearing Melvin's unique voice on the radio, and his lighthearted and love-filled comments. I didn't know until just now, reading his obituary, that he was in the Memphis State Jazz Orchestra, and at the same time I was a music student there! I felt a deep pang of void when I heard today on the radio of his passing.

November 11 at 8:16 AM

AJ

Angela Jackson posted:

Malvin nicknamed me "Hollywood". My name is Angela Jackson. Malvin was my first introduction to being a professional radio announcer as a Communications' student at the University of Memphis. After my time at WUMR, Malvin gave me the platform, drive, support and confidence to go on to work for WLOK and iheart radio as an announcers and ABC24 as a TV traffic reporter. He taught me so much. All of the do's and don'ts. With Malvin, not only did I get him I got Phyllis too. I always felt like I was apart of his family. Malvin even called me, "Baby Sister". Malvin, Thank you for the memories and the lessons that I will forever cherish, Love "Hollywood".

November 3 at 9:43 AM

YS

Yvonne B Acey/David L. Acey, Sr. posted:

David and I are extremely grateful and honored to have Malvin and Phyllis for three decades as our most valued, loved, treasured, exceptional colleagues as a brother and sister. Malvin was a giant, talented, gifted and creative professional with an extraordinary touch, taste, love, class, sophistication, compassion, professionalism and sensitivity for jazz and music extensively embracing diverse audiences locally, regionally nationally and internationally. This was an avenue and medium to connect, collaborate, engage and showcase The University of Memphis, the UMUR Station and the Communication and Fine Arts Department with renowned recognition and respect worldwide. Sisterly with love, Yvonne B. & David L. Acey, Sr.(Assistant Professor, Communication & Fine Arts Department, The University of Memphis)

November 1 at 9:23 PM



Anonymous sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Massey family.



November 1 at 5:42 PM



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Brenda, Glenda And Vernell (Bubba) sent a Treasured Lilies Spray to the Massey family.

November 1 at 11:29 AM



Frank & Ruby Barnes / Cynthia & Chioke sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Massey family.

November 1 at 8:49 AM



Anonymous sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Massey family.

October 31 at 2:16 PM



Anonymous sent a Country Basket Blooms to the Massey family.

October 31 at 1:56 PM





Media

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November 2 at 12:40 PM



Luther King November 3 at 7:16 PM

Sorry for a great loss to Memphis and all jazz lovers



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Malvin by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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