



Cesante Alrey

July 29, 1928 - May 31, 2021

Cesante Alrey, age 92 years young, of Holly, passed away on Memorial Day, Monday, May 31st, 2021. Cesante was born July 29, 1928, in Detroit, Michigan to Spencer James and Clara Chaney Alston.

He had four siblings, three who preceded him in death: sisters Vivian Masterson and Ora Lee Turner, brother Ernest Alston, and one surviving brother, David C. Alston.

Cesante was the loving father of Sanita Lori DeBose (Richard), Aten Cesante Alrey, and Tanisa Dori Alrey-Ward. He was the proud grandfather of Danesa, Spencer, Quincy, and Cesante Ward. He is further survived by nieces, nephews, other relatives and close friends.

Cesante graduated from Detroit's Cass Technical High School. At the young age of 17 years old, he began his service in the U.S. Army during World War II, based in Hawaii (prior to statehood), where he attended classes at the University of Hawaii and toured those native lands. Following his time in the service, he spent time "traveling the world", and resided in numerous cities throughout the U.S. A majority of this time included living in the "Windy City" of Chicago before returning to his hometown of Detroit.

Cesante was an award winning, and renowned artist during the 1950s,

turbulent 1960s, and 1970s. He found his cause of protest via his inspiring and thought-provoking works of art: primarily painting and creating their collaborative written descriptions dealing with global racial, economic, political and social injustices. As a Detroit artist he was heavily involved in contributing to the advancement of the civil rights movement, both locally and nationally by assisting in the fundraising efforts to support the Freedom Riders through donations of artwork.

In addition to the time spent with his work in the fine arts, he performed acts of magic (including sword swallowing and fire eating) to entertain family, friends and occasionally local night clubs. For many years he also enjoyed spending time at an annual get-together in Detroit with a group of long-time buddies who called themselves “The Milford Street Gang”.

While still pursuing his art career, Cesante began working for the State of Michigan. His most memorable position was as a graphic designer for the Highway Department (now the Dept. of Transportation) in Lansing, MI. In 1983, he retired as a Compliance Officer with the Secretary of State’s Offices in both the Detroit and Flint regions.

He then started to spend his time as “an artist of his land” at his longtime home in Holly, Michigan. He lived in the historic African American rural subdivision, The Great Lakes Country Club. His time in this area spanned 60 plus years, making him the longest living property owner/resident within this northern Oakland County township of Holly.

During his retirement years, Cesante started to create less of an “art on the canvas” and more “art on the landscape” of his home and property, the Chateau de Cesante sitting on top of the hill, overlooking the lake. This is where Cesante, a polymath and philosopher on life found his peace and tranquility.

Those that knew Cesante (affectionately called “Sonny” by his parents and immediate family members and called “Vino” by close friends), will forever remember him as a man that could answer all questions, as well as spend time talking of his world travels and experiences.

So Said Cesante.

Visitation will be from 12:00 - 1:00 PM, Wed. June 9th, 2021, at the Dryer Funeral Home.

Immediately following visitations, there will be a private ceremony at the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan, honoring him as a victory medal recipient and World War II veteran.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in his honor be made to: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (<https://www.stjude.org/donate/>)

Cemetery Details

Great Lakes National Cemetery

Holly, MI

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 9. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Dryer Funeral Home

101 First St.

Holly, MI 48442

<http://dryerfuneralhomeholly.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Cesante Alrey.*



June 08, 2021 at 05:05 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Cesante Alrey.*



June 08, 2021 at 03:03 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Cesante Alrey.*



June 08, 2021 at 11:20 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Cesante Alrey.*



June 07, 2021 at 02:55 PM

TF

“ *Thalia Hall and Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Cesante Alrey.*



Thalia Hall and Family - June 07, 2021 at 12:10 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Cesante Alrey.*



June 07, 2021 at 07:38 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Cesante Alrey.*



June 06, 2021 at 12:06 PM

MJ

“ *I am so sorry for your loss. I always enjoyed talking about art and painting with Cesante. He was a remarkable man.*

Marilyn Jones - June 05, 2021 at 09:47 AM

SD

“Dad clearly understood Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 (NLT)

"So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures are from the hand of God. For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him?"

God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him..."

*Love,
Sanita*

Sanita Alrey Debose - June 04, 2021 at 05:48 PM

AA

God knows what's best for his children. I will miss my uncle when I talked with him it was so nice. He always made me smile.

Love.

Angela G. Alston

Angela Gene Alston. - June 06, 2021 at 10:03 AM

LA

I had the honor and privilege of Meeting Cesante Alrey on one my michigan sojourns to meet with his son Aten, my friend and colleague of many moons. The thing that struck me about Mr. Alrey was his great sense of historical perspective pertaining to Black people's triumphs and failures while wrestling with America's constant efforts to stifle our humanity and God GIVEN HUMAN RIGHTS. His art eloquently illustrated his understanding of that reality and rose to overcome the smallness and limitations of that parochial view. Mr. Alrey was a visionary and a paragon of living history, whose passing will leave a void, but his legacy lives on through his descendants and work.

Much Respect and Regards,

Lasana Akachi

Lasana Akachi - June 07, 2021 at 07:39 PM

SS

To A.C. and your family, We are so sorry for your loss of your beloved father. Sending loving thoughts and deepest condolences, Rick and Sue Storie

Susan Storie - June 08, 2021 at 02:49 PM



To my friend AC and his family. So much I didn't know about your father and now I miss the opportunity to have gotten to know him on a personal level. A great man may have parted physically but his legacy will live on forever. Our condolences. Mark and Polly Cornwell

Mark Cornwell - June 09, 2021 at 12:08 PM

JB

*Sending our condolences to Aten & family. Your dad was a remarkable man and it was our pleasure to meet him. He was a phenomenal artist, community activist & historian. He will surely be missed by all.
Cousins Jackie & Joe Barber*

Jackie Barber - June 26, 2021 at 03:14 PM

CB

“ Although we met Cesante only a few years ago, he made a lasting impression. It felt like we had known him for years. He was engaging, funny, and ready to discuss music, culture, and any other topic that came up. The last year or two we enjoyed messages, videos, and photos from him via Sanita.

Our sense of him is he believed that life is to be lived and enjoyed; contributions to culture made; and your talents shared to benefit others.

With our sincerest sympathies,
Allison and Clara Bryant
Rockville, MD

Clara Bryant - June 04, 2021 at 01:47 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Cesante Alrey.



June 04, 2021 at 01:27 PM