



Eppenaw Kirk-EL

December 13, 1954 - December 24, 2018

KIRK-EL, Mr. Eppenaw - Age 64, passed away Monday December 24, 2018 at his residence. Memorial Service 1:00PM-4:00PM Friday January 4, 2019, at the Bowen Senior Citizens Center, 52 Bagley St. Family and friends will assemble at the center at 1:00PM Friday. There will be no public viewing.

On December 13, 1954, James Nathaniel Kirk Jr. (later in life known as Eppenaw) made his earth landing in Nashville, TN. He was the son of the late James Sr. and Eula Mae Spann (Williams). He had a joyful childhood in Nashville and especially loved being right under his beloved grandmother, Hattie Mae Spann. He came from a family full of uncles, aunts, and cousins who were more like brothers and sisters. It was in Nashville where he first learned the irrevocable bonds of family. James moved to Pontiac with his parents when he was around 4 years old. Many family members had already moved north, so he was still at home even in a new place. In 1960, his baby brother L. Juan Kirk was born. The family lived on Victory Drive; in the house that James and his father helped to build. As life took its twists and turns, the family dynamics changed. In his teen years James and Juan were raised by their mother. Eula was a tenacious woman who provided for and advocated for her sons. Their lives were enriched by the love of their mother. James attended Pontiac public schools. At Pontiac Northern High School he was a well-known athlete. He loved sports, especially football. He was a formidable force on the football field. His many athletic awards are evidence of his skill on

the field. After high school, he returned to Nashville to attend Tennessee State University. While there he played on the football team. After a few semesters...and maybe a few parties, he returned to Michigan and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Industrial Technology from Detroit Institute of Technology (now known as Lawrence Technical University). After college James became more socially and politically aware. He cared about issues that affected our people and began reading more about global issues. He was inspired by the apartheid struggle in South Africa.

He began his career at Detroit Edison in 1979. Edison was the perfect fit for James. He was able to use the technical skills acquired in college, and also his innate ability to befriend just about anyone. He NEVER met a stranger. Edison would be the place where he could provide for his family, but also where he gained life long friends.

In 1980, his first daughter Akosua was born. The early 80's were fun times, including his infamous jerry curl. The young family would travel to Nashville during holidays and summer breaks. In 1983, his second daughter Shaunda was born. The mid 80's would be another time of transition and growth. He embraced new beginnings with open arms. In 1991, his baby girl Sharifa was born. James loved children. After many years of not having a baby around Sharifa was the little bundle of joy that he was thrilled to cuddle.

The 1990's were an active time where James enjoyed travel. He continued to take the family to Nashville, but he also took several trips to new states out west and even abroad to the Caribbean and Ghana, West Africa. He enjoyed trying new things. Be it food, outdoor adventures, or learning about different cultures—he was always up for the journey. He was an involved parent at Aisha Shule/W.E.B DuBois Prep School, where Akosua attended elementary, middle, and high school. All the Shule family loved Baba James. He took an active role in the boys Rites-of-Passage program, C.I.B.I Science Fair, and

many other school activities. He spoke often of his appreciation and admiration for Mama Imani, the founder of Aisha Shule.

In the early 2000's James was ready for another change. He was embraced by a community of independent thinkers and sovereignty advocates. During this time he changed his name to Eppenaw Kirk-El.

By the mid 2010's, Eppenaw was ready to retire from a 30+ year career at Detroit Edison. He retired in 2013. He then had more time to focus on being with family and friends—his favorite thing to do. In 2010 after a very long time without a baby around, his first granddaughter Yalezwa was born. He didn't have to wait long for the next one. In 2013 granddaughter Ayoka was born, in 2015 granddaughter Abena was born, and in 2017 granddaughter Ananne was born. Whew! Needless to say, he was ecstatic in his new role as Pop-Pop!!

He leaves countless friends and family to remember his legacy. The path he laid will be carried on by his daughters: Afiya Zakiya Akosua Radford (Kwame), Shaunda Cecile Greer, and Jessica Louise Sharifa Alexander. By his granddaughters Yalezwa Folayan Afia Radford, Ayoka Ntozake Abena Radford, Abena Boatemaa Konima Zolani Radford, and Abenaa Ananne Kaisatmut Abaiye Nkantabisa Fahodi.

He will be remembered by surviving aunts and uncles: Elease (Charles), William-Coote (Roslynn), Thomas-Bay(Sylvia), Linda (Pete), Robert-Bobby(Lois), and Gwen-Tini. And remembered by MANY cousins.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 4. 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Bowen Senior Citizens Center
52 Bagley St.
Pontiac, MI 48341

Tribute Wall

VH

“ Vanessa Henderson lit a candle in memory of Eppenaw Kirk-EL



vanessa henderson - January 03, 2019 at 11:00 AM

AR

Thank you!

A. Akosua Radford - February 11, 2019 at 11:00 PM

MV

“ Marty And Jydy Vernier lit a candle in memory of Eppenaw Kirk-EL




Marty and Jydy Vernier - January 02, 2019 at 10:36 PM

AR

Thank you!

A. Akosua Radford - February 11, 2019 at 10:59 PM



“ You have always been my little brother, I will miss you a lot, save me a seat I'll be there soon Buddy and save me a left-handed cigarette  Love Ed Reyes

Jeni Matuja - January 02, 2019 at 02:41 PM

AR

Thank you for your love and kind words.

A. Akosua Radford - February 11, 2019 at 10:59 PM

RB

“ Rest In Peace "Jimmy"....I knew him as James Jr. God bless the family. The Kirk's were my neighbors in the Pontiac Knolls. My condolences to the family.



Renee Beckley - January 01, 2019 at 05:40 PM

AR

*Thank you for your condolences. You are welcome to join us at the memorial on Friday from 1pm-4pm at the Bowens Center.
-Akosua*

A.Akosua Radford - January 02, 2019 at 06:41 AM



“ Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Eppenaw Kirk-EL.



January 01, 2019 at 02:28 PM