

Memorial Resolution - LaMarr Billups

The world lost a lifelong fighter for economic and social justice when LaMarr Q. Billups died on November 11, 2011, after collapsing at his home in Falls Church, VA.

LaMarr believed in the inherent dignity of all human beings, from whatever walks of life, and these core values informed and guided all aspects of his personal, professional, and community life. He had an indefatigable optimism and a genuine smile that came from his heart, gladly giving of his time, wisdom, intellect, good judgment, and considerable talents to improve others' lives. He took great pleasure in mentoring people, especially students and others just starting out in life.

His career reflected his values, focusing on work in government and higher education. Highlights include service as Senior Legislative Assistant to U.S. Senator Russ Feingold from 1993 through 1995, where he helped develop legislation in areas such as education, and employment and training. From 1996 to 2007, he served as Special Assistant to two chancellors at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (David Ward and John Wiley). At his death, he was Assistant Vice President for Business Planning Policy at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., another position that let him live out his social justice values.

LaMarr was born October 28, 1952, in Chicago, Illinois, where he graduated from Cathedral High School in 1970. He was a proud graduate of Loyola University of Chicago, where he received his BA in sociology and education in 1974, and he received a MA in public policy-criminal justice, from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1977.

LaMarr called Madison, WI, home for almost 30 years, where he was an active member of many organizations and their boards, including the Urban League, the Overture Center for the Arts, 100 Black Men of Madison, and Edgewood College.

LaMarr loved sports, some as a player and some as a spectator. He especially loved playing golf, even in the early years when it took him 10 shots (or more) to make a hole, and he was a spectator without equal of both basketball and football. His employment with a Big Ten school (the University of Wisconsin-Madison) and a Big East school (Georgetown University) gave him many opportunities to cheer on outstanding teams.

He is survived and profoundly missed by his wife, Sheryl Billups; daughter, Rachel Montgomery; father, LaMarr Billups, Jr.; brother, Bernard Maston; niece, Lavonne Maston-Fisher and her daughter LeChe Maston, her husband, Corgy Fisher, and his sons,

Cory and Cary Fisher; life-long friend/sister Gale Spencer and son, Alex; second cousin, Alberta Williams; stepson, Mitchell Head and his wife, Lisa Branic; his extended family of nieces, nephews and cousins throughout the Chicago area and Muscatine, Iowa, too numerous to list; his sisters- and brothers-in-law Amy and Bob Dolan and Donna and Alex LaMarche and their families in Colorado and Texas respectively. He will also be missed by his long time friends from his Chicago youth; his Omega Psi Phi fraternity brothers; his golfing buddies; and his extensive network of friends and colleagues from his personal life, his work, and his community involvements across the country.

He was preceded in death and is now in the loving and protective embrace of his beloved mother, Margie Billups; his brothers, Jerome and Jimmy Maston; and his mother-in-law, Lillian Smith.