

Obituary of Robert Cleveland Gerald, Jr., 1944-2019

The oldest of four children born on October 20, 1944 in Orangeburg, SC to Robert Cleveland Gerald, Sr. and Mrs. Rosa Lee Bovian Gerald, Robert was affectionately known to his wife and family as “Gerald” and “Cleve.” Robert was selflessly devoted to his God, church, family, community, and fraternity. A dedicated servant to all mankind, early Sunday morning, June 9, 2019, Robert folded his earthly cart and transitioned Home to Glory.



Robert was educated in the public schools of Darlington County. He graduated from Rosenwald High School in Society Hill, SC in 1962. Upon graduation from high school, he matriculated into Clafin College in Orangeburg, SC and graduated with a B.A. degree in Social Science in 1967. While at Clafin, Robert pledged Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Further, he earned a M.A. degree in Human Resources Management from Pepperdine University in 1978.

On June 5, 1971 Robert married the love of his life, Estelle Juanita Gelzer, from Walterboro, SC. To this union, a son and a daughter were born.

Robert taught at Darlington and Pine Middle Schools. Later, he was employed as a social worker

with the Department of Social Services in both Colleton and Florence Counties until he retired.

One of the most precious moments of Robert’s spiritual life came to fruition on September 21, 2002 when he was ordained as a deacon at St. Anne Catholic Parish. He faithfully served his church until his health declined.

Robert leaves to cherish many fond memories: his devoted and loving wife, E. Juanita Gelzer Gerald of the home; a dedicated son, Daniel B. Gerald (Dezette) of Durham, NC, and a dear daughter, Dr. Ashlei L. Gerald of Florence, SC; three grandchildren whom he dearly loved and revered; Camron Gerald and Preston Gerald of Durham, NC, and Lela Rose Currie of Florence, SC; a wonderful adopted grandson, Christopher McMillian of Chapel Hill, NC; two loving sisters, Levian Gerald (John) Raiford of Society Hill, SC, and Valecia Gerald, also of Society Hill, NC; a brother with whom he had very close ties, Philemon (Verna) Gerald of Four Oaks, NC; a sister-in-law, Lillian W. Gelzer of Tampa, FL, and a host of nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

Robert led a very quiet, simplistic life, serving God and others. He set an example to be emulated of how a man should love and be that “solid rock” for his family. Robert’s tenacity to hold on to dear life, in spite of the odds, was an inspiration to many. This genuine servant to all mankind will be dearly missed by everyone who knew and loved him.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Anne's Catholic Parish, 113 South Kemp Street, Florence, SC.