



## David Eugene Hairston Jr,

September 22, 1960 - July 24, 2023

David Eugene Hairston, Jr. took his rest on Monday, July 24, 2023, at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. David, also known as Gene, was born in Stokes County on September 22, 1960, to the late David Eugene Hairston and Bertha Mildred Smith Hairston of Walnut Cove, North Carolina.

David graduated from South Stokes High School with the Class of 1978 and remained lifelong friends with many of his classmates. David remained active in baseball throughout his school-age years. Those who knew him found David had a big heart, a personality filled with humor, and if he was your friend, he was a friend for life. His generous spirit was felt by those young and old.

After over 20 years of dedicated service, David retired from the Reynolds American Corporation (formerly RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company), on March 17, 2023. During his tenure, he served as a machine operator for the company.

David joined St. Mary's United Methodist Church as a child prior to his father's passing. His mother raised him in a Christian home where he learned profound lessons about dignity and freedom, which encouraged him to question his experiences and environment. He evolved into a fierce advocate

for environmental justice and social equality.

As President of the Walnut Tree Community Association, David played a significant role in petitioning the town of Walnut Cove for his childhood neighborhood to be annexed, which was finally achieved in 2018. As a result of the persistence, residents are able to participate in local elections and receive services including trash collection and snow removal. He also received grant funding and led efforts to build The Walnut Tree Community Playground, which includes equipment and a walking trail to promote physical and social wellness for all. David was currently working to build the Mildred S. Hairston Youth Mentoring Center, a nonprofit organization for academic support and programming in honor of his mother.

In addition to his commitment to the Walnut Tree Community, David was a devoted volunteer for numerous organizations in Stokes County. He was an active board member for the Walnut Cove Public Library, a mentor for Project Youth 360, an advisory board member for Hanging Rock State Park, a community partner of Lillie's Project, and a member of the Stokes County NAACP. His influence and activism extended to the state and national levels through his role as a board member for Appalachian Voices, his support of the national Poor People's Campaign, and his involvement with Residents for Coal Ash Cleanup and the National Hairston Clan Reunion.

He leaves to cherish his memory: one sister, Sandra J. Hairston, one maternal aunt, Nancy Smith Dodd (Jerry) of Walkertown, and a host of close cousins and friends. He was especially close to all of his surviving first cousins: Dr. Edward (Marian) Hairston, Barbara Ann Hairston, Donna Faye Hairston, Wanda Davis, Gwendolyn Winford, Melvin Hairston, Haywood Hairston, Perry Hairston, Lorraine Wood, Angela (Donald) Lineberger, Rev. Gregory (Debra) Hairston, Deborah Sykes, George Hairston, Jr., Pamela Hairston, Michael Hairston, Crystal Hairston, Patricia Fischer, Howard Fontaine, Dudley

Fontaine, Anthony (Patricia) Broome, Dr. Brooksie (Norlonn) Sturdivant, Jacqueline Smith, John Daniel Smith, Jr., Jennifer Smith, Sherry Forrest, Eddie Forrest, Jr., Joseph Forrest, Cheryl Smith, and Nicole (Joseph) Smith-Elliott.

Rest in peace, my funny, gregarious, loving little brother. I love you, and I will miss you every day for the rest of my life

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 30. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

St. Mary's United Methodist  
412 Brook Street  
Walnut Cove, NC

## Celebration of Life

JUL 30. 3:00 PM (ET)

St. Mary's United Methodist  
412 Brook Street  
Walnut Cove, NC

# Tribute Wall

TR

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with the David's family. I worked with David for about 15 years at Taylor Brothers. I wish he could have got to retire longer than what he did. David was our voice at work. He was never afraid to speak up when things weren't right. He was always trying to make things better for everyone. He was a great friend. It was a pleasure and a blessing to have known him. Rest in peace my friend. God bless.* ”



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**Tom Richardson** - August 02, 2023 at 11:00 AM

PC

“ *I worked at RJR with Dave RIP. Pete Carter* ”

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**Prentice K Carter** - July 30, 2023 at 10:53 AM

RF

“ *David was always trying to help in anyway he could .I had the pleasure of working with him at taylor brothers. He was always trying to make it a better place to work .He will be missed, He was a good friend. I'm sure God welcomed him home with open arm's .GOD BLESS HIM. Rick Flynn* ”

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**Rick Flynn** - July 30, 2023 at 10:50 AM

MY

“ Dear Sandra and family,

*I was very sorry to hear of Gene's passing. I always called him Gene as that's what Mildred called him. I was just thinking a week or so ago I needed to take him some tomatoes and then I heard he was gone. Gene was always a good friend and neighbor. He always had a smile on his face and a kind word whenever I would run into him. He did a lot of good things for the community and I have no doubt Mildred was very proud of him. If I can be of assistance in any way, please don't hesitate to contact me. God speed old friend!*

*Mark W. Young  
Walnut Cove, N.C.*

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**Mark W. Young** - July 29, 2023 at 09:06 PM

PC

*Yeah man met him through Naomi, C Search, Ryan all were my friends*

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**Prentice K Carter** - July 30, 2023 at 10:57 AM

PW

“ Pat And Mike Wagner lit a candle in memory of David Eugene Hairston Jr,



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**Pat and Mike Wagner** - July 29, 2023 at 02:13 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of David Eugene Hairston Jr.,*



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July 28, 2023 at 10:58 PM



“ *You started at Taylor Brothers soon after I did and we did the daily grind together. You became a great friend! When we were working 12 hour days you said since we were at work more than we were at home, I could tell my husband that you would be my work husband and look out for me and you did. From then on you were always my work husband! I miss you!!*

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**Cathy Neely** - July 28, 2023 at 07:14 PM