

*In Loving Memory*

JOSEPH NATHAN  
GRAHAM

DECEMBER 20, 1938 - MAY 6, 2008



Monday, May 12, 2008 at 11:00 a.m.

St. Richard Catholic Church • 1242 Lynnwood Drive • Jackson, Mississippi 39206 • Father Richard Kalinowski Presiding

# JOSEPH NATHAN GRAHAM

Joseph Nathan Graham, a loving husband, father and grandfather departed this life May 6, 2008. Born into a family that was steeped in devotion to God, Joe started his spiritual journey when he was still just a child. The values of God and family resulted in his determination, dignity and graciousness. It also instilled in him the qualities that caused him to persevere and become the man that wouldn't give up even in the face of adversity. Throughout his life, he was an achiever with high ethical standards as evidenced by his many achievements such as becoming the first African-American Firefighter. With his sights set high and a stalwart belief in God and himself, he maintained courage and dignity even as he experienced certain indignities that were somewhat common at the time. In spite of those indignities, he steadily rose through the ranks becoming an Arson Inspector, an Assistant Fire Chief for nearly five years and ultimately in 1996, Chief of the Jackson Fire Department, a position he maintained until his retirement in 1998.

The quality of his professionalism was evidenced not only by the many awards and citations he won but, also by the respect and admiration of his fellow Fire Fighters. He was also a role model and a father figure for many young people. He lived his life not only for his family but, he wanted his life to reflect the infinite possibilities available to all. During his acceptance speech on becoming Chief, he said,

*"I would like for my appointment as Fire Chief of the Jackson Fire Department to serve as an illustration of what hard work, perseverance, good moral character and a drug-free lifestyle can bring for anyone who desires to be successful."*

This statement encapsulates the essence of who he was. According to his grandson, he was *"strong with virtue, pride, selflessness, wit and was strong enough to lift anyone up."* This was Joseph Nathan Graham.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Bettye Guice Graham; devoted children: Pamela Graham Barnes (Cleveland), Jeffrey Nathaniel (LaShanda) and Alan Dexter Graham; four grandchildren: Deidre Charese, Joseph Pierre Barnes, Tracee Dionne and Jayda Nikhole; six sisters: Robbie Hill (George) of California, Annie Mae Kellum (Jim) of Georgia, Albertha McDavid (Dave), Autherine McNeil (Glen), Lillian Morris (James) and Betty Graham; three brothers: Robert (Shirley), Charles (Aileen) and Hubbard (Sandra) of Alabama. He leaves behind a host of nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

# ORDER OF SERVICE

Processional Song.....	Amazing Grace
Sprinkling of Holy Water	
Placing of the Pall and Christian Symbols	
Opening Prayer.....	Father Kalinowski
First Reading..... Wisdom 3:1-9.....	Carol Cooper
Responsorial Psalm ..... Psalm 23.....	Dorothy Ashley
Second Reading.....Romans 14:7-9 10b-12 .....	James Cooper
The Gospel.....	Deacon Sam M. Baker
Homily.....	Father Richard Kalinowski
Prayer of the Faithful.....	Deacon Sam M. Baker
Gift Bearers .....	Mrs. Bettye Graham Dexter Graham Pamela Graham Barnes
Communion Song .....	<i>"One Bread One Body"</i>
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.....	John Simpson Geraldine Barial
Meditation Song .....	Akami Graham
Remarks .....	Robert Graham Vernon Hughes Claudine McGee
Resolution	
Final Commendations.....	Father Richard Kalinowski
Recessional Song	

## Legacy of Love

A husband, a father, a grandpa too,  
This is the legacy we have from you.

You taught us love and how to fight,  
You gave us strength, you gave us might.

A stronger person would be hard to find,  
And in your heart, you were always kind.

You fought for us all and was never bothered,  
Just like you were, a great husband and father.

For all of us you gave your best,  
Now the time has come for you to rest.

So go in peace, you've earned your sleep,  
Your love in our hearts, we'll eternally keep.

Your Best Friend,  
Bettye

Well dad, you've left me some pretty big shoes to fill. After you, it's all uphill. You taught me things all men should know. Like hammering nailing and laying carpet just so. You taught me to fish when I was a kid. Never dreaming that it would be a sport that I lived. I tore up everything I ever borrowed from you. You fussed, cussed and bought more, brand new. And now that you're gone, I must become as you, a man so simple, a man so true. So how do you say goodbye to a man so great. You don't, you just try to emulate. They say as I've gotten older with the grey beard, that I look just like you I hear. Now I want to make you proud of me, by being the man you'd want me to be.

Your Son,  
Dex

## The Last Wave

As I sit here today, Daddy, I think of

**The Last Wave**

That Sunday plays back in my mind so vividly, over and over again

**The Last Wave**

Quality time spent while having breakfast, which by the way you still owe me for

**The Last Wave**

Telling you, "*good bye*", expecting you to return after Sunday evening errands

**The Last Wave**

If I'd known the last time I saw you pull in as I pulled out would be, "*the last time*"

The Last Wave would have been a hug of like no other, thanking you for being the wonderful father that you've been, holding you close as if I were saying, "*Don't go just yet Daddy, it's too soon*"

The Last Wave would have been a long stare into your eyes reflecting on the happy times we've shared.

The Last Wave would have been an "*I Love You Daddy*" and a "*I thank God for choosing ME to be your daughter!*"

The Last Wave would have been, "*Hold my hand daddy, let's walk and talk for a while.*"

*Prepare me for what is about to come and reassure me with your encouraging words that everything will be alright.*"

The reality of it all is that The Last Wave was not a hug, stare, I love you, I thank you or a hold my hand.

It was a reminder that the next time I raise my hand to you it will be to caress your face and say

***"Daddy, I love you!"***

Your Daughter,  
Pam

## Daddy,

These words stand in ill comparison to the man you were to me and the man that you've taught me to become. You were the epitome of what every son desires to be: the best daddy, the best husband, the best friend, the best fireman/fire chief and the best example of what a real man truly is. As I reminisce over all the best you've portrayed for me in my life, I pride myself in knowing that I am a good daddy because I had the best daddy in the world. Each time Jayda says "Daddy," I am reminded of the man who showed me how to be a daddy. I am a good husband because you taught me what it means to love your wife unconditionally till death do you part. I am a good friend because daddy you were my best friend.

You embody Matthew 22:39 , "...*Love your neighbor as yourself.*" I embrace friendship wholeheartedly because of you. I am a good fireman because you were the best Jackson, Mississippi had to offer. Even though you were a fireman and a fire chief, I only saw you as daddy. You made history in our family, but you saw past your status. You were a true service man that defined your hard work ethic each and every day, in and out of work.

I am a good man because daddy, you were the best example of manhood a son could have. I am the man I am today because of you. You taught me everything! You taught me how to face life head on regardless of adversity and trials. You taught me how to live each day, never forsaking the people who mattered most - FAMILY. You taught me to stand up and be counted. You taught me to always handle business first, have fun after the work is done. Daddy you didn't tell me how to live, you lived and let me watch you do it. Thank you for being the very best of everything to me- my hero and most of all my best friend!

Love eternally,  
Jeffrey

Remembering Papa Joe is not hard to do. How can I forget all the crazy things he would do. I can remember on Christmas ay carrying around a present he had given me. I thought it was something good, I ripped it open and there lay a brick I knew he had gotten from the side of the house. The good thing about it, there was a fifty dollar bill inside. I can remember him telling me to, "*Take it to the Field!*" when I burped aloud at the dinner table one Thanksgiving. I am surely going to miss him calling the house impersonating Saddam Hussein and President Clinton when all he really wanted to do is talk to my dad. How could I ever forget my Papa Joe. I loved him so much and I will miss you Papa Joe dearly. Rest Papa Joe you need it. You were the hardest working man in Jackson.

Until We Meet Again, I Love You,  
Dee, First grand born

What makes a man great? This question so direct, so blunt and yet so interpretive. Some say a man with wealth is great because you can buy your happiness. My grandfather was rich, not in material wealth, but in character, morals and integrity, all things that made him happy. His memory will live on in all that knew him.

Your Grandson Joseph

## My Dear Papa Joe

You were my dear Papa Joe  
The impact you had on me, you'll never know  
You'd call me "Queenie" and say, "Now you rule the home!"  
It will be different now, roaming your castle alone  
It's going to be hard to accept that you're no longer here  
But as long as I have my memories, my heart will keep you near  
My dear Papa Joe, forever with love  
I know that you are looking down on us from heaven above

Love,  
Tracee'

### Joe Joe,

All of the other grandchildren called you Papa Joe, but my special name for you was "Joe Joe"! As a matter of fact, you were often referred to as "Joe Joe"! Even though our time here was short, I enjoyed every minute I shared with you. I could do no wrong in your eyes. You always made sure that I was taken care of. Joe Joe, I'm going to miss talking to you on the phone, you spoiling me rotten and you making me feel so special every time I saw you, but thank you for giving me my daddy because I know he will take up the slack. I will always love you.

Your youngest granddaughter,  
Jayda

## A Tribute to Joe from his Sisters and Brothers

To our dearest brother Joe. You were our fortress, our strong tower, our patriarch. You were our go-to when there was a crisis or a need. We looked up to you because of your integrity and your strength. We will remember your good humor. We have all needed your help at one time or another, in one way or another and you provided it without hesitation. Of course, we always had to come to you because you didn't like to do a whole lot of visiting. But that's ok brother because when it was all said and done, you were always there for us. So rest in peace our brother. We don't know if we can ever live up to your standards, but we love you and we promise you - we got your back now!

Albertha, Lillian, Autherine, Hubbard, Robert, Charles, Robbie, Annie and Bettie

### Mr. Graham,

You were truly a blessing to my life. When I lost my own father, you stepped up to the plate and became a father figure for me. You were so much more than a father-in-law; you had such a genuine concern regarding my well being. No matter what turn of events tried to beset me, you always wanted to make sure that I was alright in every way and you did just that. For that I say thank you. My fondest memories of you were the times you would join my family for dinner at Jeff's and my house. We always had such a good time together, full of love laughter and lots of jokes. You would always say that I was the only one who could get Mrs. Graham to cook. The last conversation we shared, you told me to make sure that Mrs. Graham made that peach cobbler once a month. I'll be sure to hold her to it. You've got my word! Mr. Graham, I would also like to thank you for sharing your son with me. He has enriched my life and I know it's because he followed in your footsteps. May God's peace be with you till we meet again.

Your daughter-in-law,  
LaShanda



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*The Family of Joseph Graham wishes to thank everyone for their prayers, calls, and expressions of sympathy during our time of bereavement.*

## HONORARY PALLBEARERS

*Charles Graham  
Bernard Anderson*

*Robert Graham  
Hubbard Graham*

## ACTIVE PALLBEARERS

*City of Jackson Fire Department*

*Keith Simpson  
Raymond McNulty  
Chief Vernon Hughes  
Willie Owens*

*Kevin Tate  
James McDonald  
Michael Sterling  
Mike Hines*

## USHERS

*Holy Ghost Catholic Church*

## EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

*John Simpson  
Geraldine Barial*

## ALTAR SERVER

*Douglas Lindsey*

## PIANIST

*Earnestine Ross*

## COMMITTAL INTERMENT

*Garden Memorial  
Highway 49 North  
Jackson, Mississippi*

## REPAST

*Jackson Police Training Academy  
3000 St. Charles Street  
Jackson, Mississippi*

### SERVICES ENTRUSTED TO

#### **Jackson Memorial Funeral Services**

922 W Woodrow Wilson Drive  
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Damian Murriel/Funeral Director

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