



## Jodie Christian

February 2, 1952 - February 13, 2012

"Sonny Boy" that's what his mom and dad, Jodie Elmore and Ruth Christian used to call him. He later became affectionately known "Uncle Sonny" to his many nieces and nephews.

He was born in Chicago, Illinois, February 2, 1932.

He attended the following schools: Douglas Academy, Wendell Phillips Academy, Crane, Chicago Music College and Malcolm X College and he performed at countless venues throughout the city of Chicago.

Jodie learned to play the piano at an early age and went on to travel the world over, sharing his melodious jazz sounds to many endearing audiences.

In 1952, Jodie joined and served 3 years in the United States Air Force. This phase of his life took him to Japan, where he at times had an opportunity to fill in for the well known jazz pianist, Toshiko Akiyoshi.

On July 11, 1953 Jodie married Juanita Kelly, a union going on 59 years that produced their 3 sons.

Jodie always had some joke or humorous saying, often changing people's names, to whatever would come to his mind.

At one time or another Jodie was involved in the family activities of the well known local and international jazz pianist Willie Pickens.

Throughout his life Jodie was instrumental in supporting many musical organizations, starting in high school with a singing group called the Ensemble of Rhythm where he met his future wife, Juanita, the Boys Club and culminating with his being the co-founder of the AACM (Association for the Advancement Creative Musicians) with Muhal Richard Abrams, another internationally well known musician from Chicago.

Soon thereafter, he had the privilege of playing with the renowned and multitalented Eddie Harris. They performed various countries such as France, Israel, Italy, Switzerland and Estonia and Jodie played on several of Eddie's albums. Later on with his own and other groups he continued to delight audiences in such countries as Peru, England, Belgium and Germany. He particularly enjoyed the times where he was able to take his wife, Juanita and his youngest son, Jonathan with him.

Despite his bouts with Parkinson Disease and other medical challenges, his music and the piano provided solace and kept him actively writing, composing and performing.

Without question, the most important and monumental change in his life came when he dedicated his life in service to the Grand Creator, Jehovah God and was baptized along with his wife Juanita, as one of Jehovah's Christian Witnesses, on July 16, 1971. For over 40 years he has been instrumental in helping many with an open heart and ear to know the truth about God. Many young ones in the congregation chose to get under his and Juanita's wing, as they helped to nurture them as their "spiritual children". His heart's desire was to share the same hope that he had with everyone he cared about, which

included his family and his Baseball Buddies from his youth. He also, along with his spiritual brother Tom (Tom-Tom) Washington, another well known music arranger, conductor, performer and producer from Chicago; made special effort to share their faith with their Music Mateys.

Jodie fell asleep in death Monday, February 13, 2012. We look forward to the day when Jodie will be resurrected to live in a Paradise Earth and once again share his humor and music with one and all.

Jodie was preceded in death by his parents, Jodie and Ruth Christian; his sister, Susie Redman; and his nephew, Harold Kelly.

He leaves to mourn his wife, Juanita; 3 sons, Jerome (Lillie), Jodie Jr., and Jonathan (Bequeta); 1 brother, Ronald (Paula); 7 grandchildren; 12 great grandchildren; a host of nieces, Donita Bolden (Eddie), Rosemarie Gilliean (Allen), Vanessa Stevenson (John), Ruth Eiland, Debbie Igiemetse (Peter), Sherell Redman, Kanasha Ivory and Candace Christian; nephews, Jamie Christian (Deja) and Jeffrey McGowan (Swan); loving in-laws, Myrtle & Ronald Sahara, David & Sandra Kelly, John & Lillian Kelly, Paul & Joan Kelly and Peter Kelly; his Music Mateys around the world and a village of friends especially from the Pershing and Englewood Congregations.

# Previous Events

## Service

FEB **25**. 2:00 PM (CT)

Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses (99th)  
9837 South Torrence  
Chicago, IL

# Tribute Wall



“ *Jodie Christian*

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October 04, 2023 at 06:11 PM