

## **Obituary of Charles Curtis Smith**

Charles Curtis Smith was born in Detroit, Michigan on March 21, 1923. Charles was the younger brother of two older sisters, Dorothy Sloan (deceased) and Jennie Hewlett. His proud parents, Arzell Dunklin Smith and Charles Isadore Smith, were originally from Greenville, Alabama. He attended Wingert Elementary, McMichael Junior High, and graduated from Northwestern High School in January 1941. In September 1941, he enrolled at Howard University in Washington, DC and was initiated into the Xi Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. At Howard, he met Evelyn Mae Allen of Chicago, Illinois whom he married on September 1, 1944 and to that union, two children, Diedrea and Charles Derek, were born.

After being drafted in the United States Army and serving in Italy, Charles was discharged in 1946 and began a forty-one year career with the City of Detroit. He was very active in church and helped found Central Congregational Church, which was led by Reverend Albert B. Cleage. In the mid 60's, the Smith family joined First Congregational Church of Detroit. At "Old First," Charles Curtis Smith served as youth director, trustee, moderator, and deacon and was on countless committees.

While as an employee in the Water and Sewage Department, "Charlie" served as president of AFSCME local 207 and was founding President of AFSCME local 2920; after retirement in 1987, he became the AFSCME Council 25 Retiree Sub Chapter president. Charles also served for a number of years as president of the Michigan AARP and a member of the Detroit Central AARP Chapter 1962. Charles was active with the National/Michigan Council of Senior Citizens, the Detroit Area Agency on Aging, the 15<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Democratic Committee, the Brush Park Senior Citizen Housing Development Corporation, and he was the longtime president of the West Pasadena Block Club.

Charles Curtis Smith participated in numerous political, civic, social and fraternal activities over the course of his life, and he truly enjoyed the activities involving Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated. From the 60s through the 80s, he held practically every position in the fraternal organization, including that of Northern Province Polemarch (President) covering Michigan and parts of Ohio and New York. In 1997 he received the Northern Province's Robert L. Gordon Achievement award and appeared on the cover of the fraternity's national magazine as co-chair of the national "conclave" which was being held in Detroit that year.

In 1999, he was given the fraternity's prestigious Elder Watson Diggs award at the conclave in Atlanta, Georgia.

Charles Curtis Smith departed this life in his sleep at his home on Sunday, January 17, 2010 and leaves to cherish his memory, an older sister, Jennie Hewlett of Detroit, Michigan; two children, Diedrea Twana Gamble of Detroit, Michigan and Charles Derek Smith of Arlington, Virginia; a beloved grand-daughter, Deta Twana Gamble of Sherman Oaks, California; numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, fraternal brothers and friends.

In lieu of flowers, donations should be made to the Kappa Detroit Foundation, P.O. Box 441275, Detroit, Michigan 48244