

CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR
WILLIE FRANK BROWN, JR.

SUNRISE: MARCH 21, 1942 | SUNSET: JULY 26, 2018

ORDER OF SERVICE

FRIDAY, AUGUST 10, 2018 · 11:00AM
LONG BEACH POLY HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

1600 Atlantic Avenue • Long Beach, CA 90813

Officiant: *Bishop Sheridan McDaniel*
Pastor, A Place For Worship, Fullerton, CA

Public Viewing

Processional..... Clergy & Family

Scripture Readings Rev. Tony Washington
Old Testament: Psalms 90:1-9
New Testament: Revelations 22:1-6
Pastor, Church of God, Corona, CA

Prayer Rev. Tony Washington

Welcome Dr. Felton Williams
Board Member, LBUSD

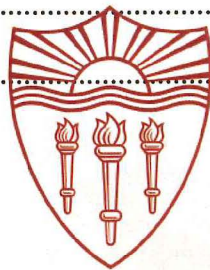
Shelton Diggs, II
Head Boys Basketball Coach, LB Poly

Praise Dance..... *'The Lord's Prayer'* Kennedy Cofield

Acknowledgement & Condolences..... Maxine Andrews

Musical Selection..... Phylcia Hill

Special Tributes..... Vice Mayor Dee Andrews
Councilmember, Sixth District



Lynn Swann
Athletic Director, USC

Dave Levy
Darnell Bing
Darrell Rideaux
Katrina Boulden

Obituary & Video Tribute *(Read Silently)*

Family Remarks Oscar Brown
Brian Brown

Musical Selection..... Phylcia Hill

Eulogy Rev. Swayne Cofield
Pastor, Rose of Sharon AME Church

Closing Prayer & Recessional *"Every Praise"* Bishop Sheridan McDaniel

Reception - Immediately following the service

OBITUARY

Willie Frank Brown, Jr. was born on March 21, 1942 to Willie Brown, Sr. and Mayola Washington in Tuscaloosa, AL. Willie, or 'Brother', as he was called by many was the eldest of three boys, and he took his leadership role seriously; what Brother said was the final word.

In 1944, the Brown family relocated from Tuscaloosa to San Pedro, CA and then to Long Beach in search of better employment and housing opportunities. The Browns united with Grant Chapel AME Church and it was there that Willie accepted the Lord and received his Christian education.

Willie, Sr., who worked long days at the LB Naval shipyard, encouraged his boys to "play outside and not just sit around the house." Brown and his two younger brothers, Ollie and Oscar, took their dad seriously and spent every hour from sunrise to sunset at the 'Rec' playing games and competing in sports with the other neighborhood kids.

Brown attended Long Beach Polytechnic High School where he served as the vice president of the student body his junior year and quickly developed a reputation as one of Southern California's best athletes.

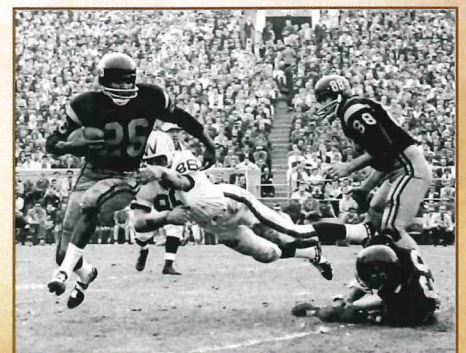
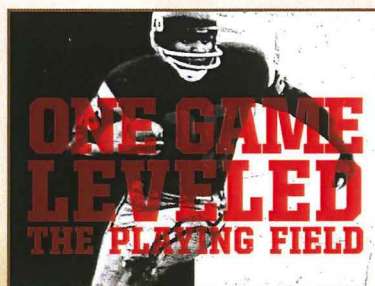
"How can you rate someone as one of the greatest athletes ever to come out of this city?" said Poly alum and longtime USC track coach Ron Allice. "But Willie was All-CIF in three sports and CIF Player of the Year in two. Think about that."

Brown shared the Poly backfield with Dee Andrews as a junior, and when Andrews went down with injury during the 1958 playoffs, Brown stepped up. He scored four touchdowns and gained 106 yards on 17 carries in the 31-19 championship game win at the L.A. Coliseum. The Jackrabbits went 22-0-1 during Brown's junior and senior seasons while winning two championships.

His senior year he had one of the best years of any SoCal athlete in the last half-century. He led Poly to a CIF title in football and won CIF Player of the Year, then led them to a basketball CIF championship and again earned CIF honors. He led Poly's baseball team that year with a .411 batting average to earn All-CIF honors. Needless to say, Willie had offers to go almost anywhere. However, only one place presented him with the opportunity to play both football and baseball for two future Hall of Fame coaches, and so Brown brought his talents to USC.

"You can play as long as you can help the team," Coach McKay told me. "He didn't want me missing spring football if I was just sitting on the bench for the baseball team," he explains. "Well, I became the starting centerfielder, and we won the national championship in 1963."

Safe to say, Brown helped the baseball team, but his talents were more famously witnessed on the gridiron, as he became the first I-formation tailback in John McKay's offense and helped the Trojans to their first national championship in 23 years in 1962. That year, the junior led the team in rushing, interceptions, punt returns and kickoff returns, and was the second leading receiver.



"It was great for me," he laughs. "I got the ball all the time. Everyone loved it because we could see that the defense didn't know what to do. What John McKay did in installing that offense was revolutionary in college football. They were running me in motion and lining me up seven-yards deep. The things that he did from an innovation standpoint, other teams couldn't handle."

When football ended each season, Brown would be back out on the baseball diamond come Monday. It was something he loved, and something that he was good at, so choosing between the two sports never really became an issue until it was time to graduate from USC.

Willie met his future wife Carole Johnson when he and Dee Andrews crashed his girlfriend's tea party. According to Carole, Willie took one look at the 'girl in the yellow sweater', and the romance began. Willie and Carole married in August, 1963, and as a new husband he ultimately chose football over baseball because the NFL provided a better lifestyle for he and his wife than the busy and unglamorous grind of minor league baseball. Even still, he had options, being drafted by the Cincinnati Reds, Los Angeles Rams (NFL) and the San Diego Chargers (AFL).

The tailback had a successful three-year career with both the Rams and the Eagles before getting a phone call one day in 1968 that would bring him back home to USC.

"I was training to go back to Philadelphia when John McKay called me and offered me a job as an assistant at USC," he remembers. "It was too big of an opportunity to pass up. So I was hired as an assistant football and baseball coach. There weren't many black coaches then. I think I may have been the first or second black coach at a major university." Brown's first stint at USC as a coach was a success. He was a member of the coaching staff for the national championship football teams of 1972 and 1974, and an assistant coach for the national championship baseball team in 1968.

According to Willie, one of his greatest memories in sports was coaching in the historic 1970, groundbreaking game, between USC and the University of Alabama, in Birmingham, AL. That game -- in which the Trojans, with their all-black starting backfield, pounded Paul "Bear" Bryant's all-white Crimson Tide 42-21 -- is viewed by many sports historians as the defining moment in Southern college football history that accelerated the integration of the Alabama football program. Having been born in Tuscaloosa in 1942, within eyesight of Alabama's football stadium, Willie had never had the opportunity to even step foot on the campus. Following the airing of the documentary "Against the Tide," in which Willie was featured he said, "At the time we didn't realize how important the game was and the impact it would have on football. We just knew that we needed to get in and out of Alabama as quickly as possible. There wasn't any hanging out in the hotel lobby or loitering around after the game. We got dressed, got on the bus and headed straight to the airport."

In 1975, Coach John McKay accepted the head coaching position for the NFL expansion team the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and he asked Willie to join his coaching staff as an Assistant Coach, responsible for coaching wide receivers and running backs. When his NFL coaching days were over, Willie and Carole owned and operated seven Wendy's franchises over the course of 10 years. He enjoyed two years of semi-retirement before getting another phone call that would bring him, once again, back to USC. Mike Garrett, the athletic director at the time, wanted to utilize Brown's experience, this time, as an academic advisor.

In a 2015 interview in the USC Black History Month publication, Brown talked about how he grew up with his brothers at Long Beach parks. "We had great people working there, two or three coaches who ran the flag football teams, the basketball teams and the little league teams," Brown said. "My brothers and I would have never had the opportunity to become professional athletes down the road if it weren't for people like that, if it weren't for people giving us a chance."





It was that sense of responsibility that shaped the latter portion of Brown's life as a mentor in the university's academic services department. "That's just my job title," Brown explains. "What I really do is try and sit down with our athletes and help them when they have a problem. I try and help them avoid the mistakes I made."

"Student-athletes would go to Willie before they'd go to a coach," said Alice. "He was a real mentor, he was as good at that as he was at any sport. That's incredible. Some athletes never knew his background or who he really was, but he was still that trusted. He was the most humble person of great status I've ever been around."

According to Willie, "it isn't good enough just to be 'good' anymore. You have to be better than that. And that takes focus. "You don't get to that next level without focus and dedication and sacrifice. It's something you have to accept. You've got to want it."

With the same background as many of the current players on the team, Willie understood how hard it was to overcome obstacles and build a foundation to succeed in the long term. But, he also knew that it was possible, and so he took every opportunity he gets to pass on his wisdom. He tried to prepare them for everything, talking to players about finances, about the importance of a degree, advising them against the perils of partying too much as an athlete and warning them about cutting off options for their futures.

Whether it was winning national championships, owning and operating successful businesses with his wife, or watching both of his younger brothers have successful careers in Major League Baseball, Willie was able to see the results of hard work his entire life.

Brown was inducted into the USC Hall of Fame in 2005 and is also a member of the Long Beach Century Club Hall of Fame and the Poly Football Hall of Fame.

Perhaps though, the accomplishment in which Willie took the most pride were his children, Brian and Kimberly. He and Carole shared a love for travel with Kim and together they traveled the world. He shared a love for sports with Brian, and Brian, and his wife Roxanne, blessed the family with two beautiful grandchildren, Nathan and Alana. Willie loved his grandchildren with a passion, and made them a priority for his time and his affection.

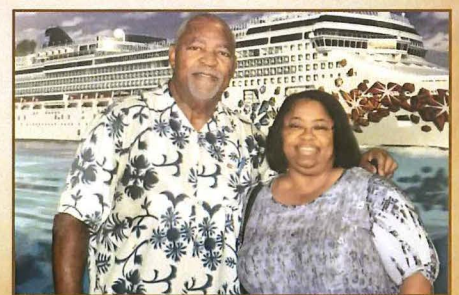
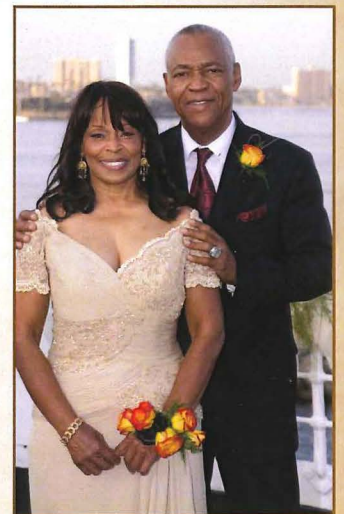
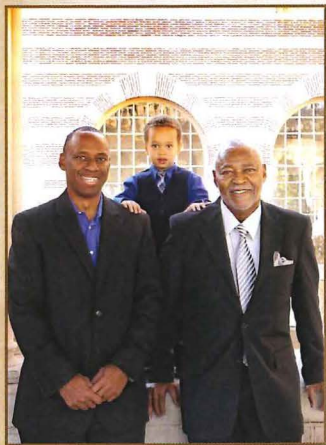
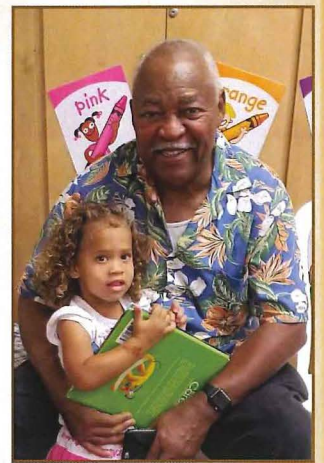
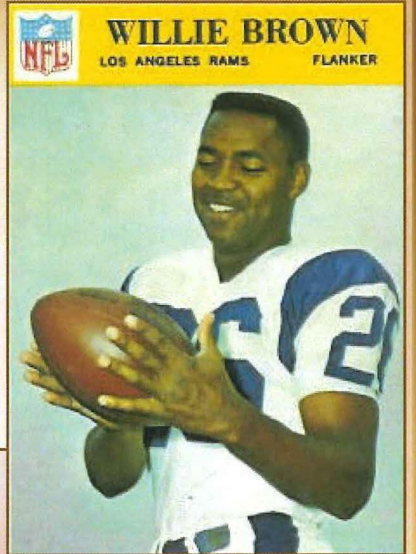
Willie was also a big influence within his larger family, he was a hero and mentor to his young cousins and he blazed a path from Long Beach to USC for his family, and a long list of Poly athletes.

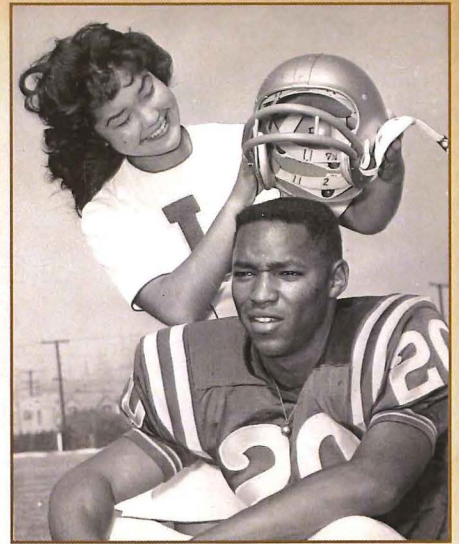
Following a brief illness, the Lord called Willie home and reunited him with his parents Willie and Mayola Brown, his brother Ollie and nephew Troy. Willie leaves to cherish his memory his loving wife Carole, son, Brian and daughter-in-law Roxanne, daughter Kimberly, his brother Oscar (Janice), sister-in-law Sandra, two grandchildren; Nathan and Alana, four nieces, five nephews, several hundred cousins, his colleagues at USC and a host of Long Beach friends.

"With the impact he had at USC they ought to have a statue of him there," said Alice. "How many people win national championships in two sports, and then as a coach in two sports? It's unprecedented."



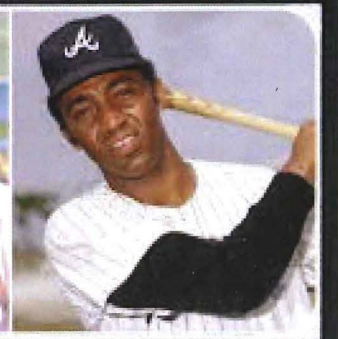
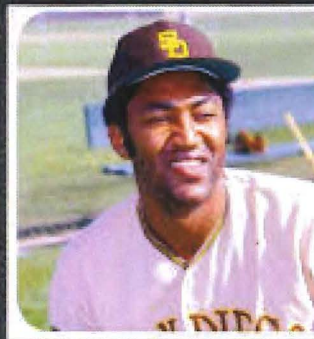
Thank you Sarah Bergstrom and Mike Guardbasco for your assistance in writing this tribute.





BASEBALL BROTHERS

OLLIE BROWN S.D. PADRES • OSCAR BROWN ATL. BRAVES





ACTIVE PALLBEARERS

Calvin Spencer	Rico Santana
Joe Croom	Stanley Croom
Rodney Croom	Michael Washington
Diamond Jones	Kraig Washington

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Dee Andrews	Ron Allice
Ronnie Bradford	Al Cowlings
Dave Levy	John Robinson
Mike Garrett	Dave 'Pops' Scott
Wayne Hughes	Bobbie Stanton
Ken Norwood	Charles Williams
Nathan Brown	Gene Washington

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

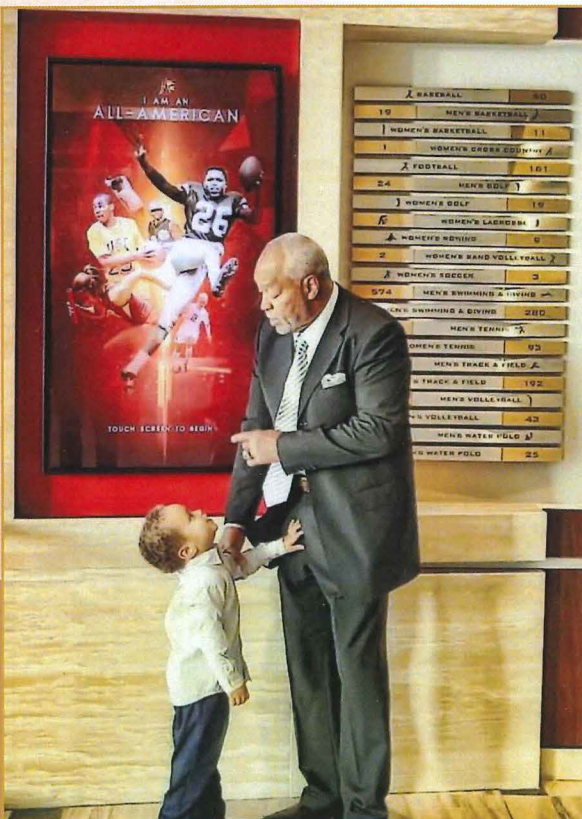
Because you cared, you came to share;
 Beautiful flowers and words of prayers
 Because you cared enough to do, words of
 comfort and cards came too.

Because you cared we were not alone,
 calls and visits reached our home.

Because you cared we are grateful indeed,
 you've been sincere in comfort,
 and attentive to our needs.

Because you cared we're praying too, for God's
 richest blessings to reach each of you

The Brown Family



SERVICES ENTRUSTED TO:
 TILLMAN RIVERSIDE MORTUARY, INC.
 2874 TENTH STREET
 RIVERSIDE, CA 92507

Interment
 ROSE HILLS MEMORIAL CEMETERY
 Private Burial Service

Program book lovingly created by Sharon (Croom) Jackson, Willie's cousin and friend.