

## **Eulogy** **Devon Beckford**

June 14, 1948 – May 5, 2010

*By Wendy Nembhard*

He was a son, husband, father, friend, and dearly loved by all. Devon Beckford. He was born on June 14<sup>th</sup> 1948 in St. Mary's Jamaica to Iona Black. When he was 7 years old he was adopted by his Aunt Irene Dooley and he moved to Kingston.

He received a scholarship and attended Vax Hall High School in Kingston and later transferred to Brampton School and Denham Town schools also in Kingston, Jamaica. While attending Denham Town School he met the lovely Sonia Allen and they became friends. When he was 16 years old he became a Christian and began attending Beeston Street Church of God in Kingston, Jamaica and was an active member of that church for many years. It was in the youth group of that church that he met many young men who became lifelong friends, many of whom are here today.

He migrated from Jamaica to Toronto, Canada in 1967 and lived with one of his dear friends from Beeston Street COG, "Frank" Nembhard. Frank's brother Jack Nembhard later joined the group to form the Three Amigos. The Three Amigos were very eligible, handsome bachelors and they had a great time together. Devon had very fond memories of their time together. During those days jobs were easy to get and sometimes they would work one week at one job, and another week at a different job if they could get 10 cents more an hour. But the bachelor days soon came to an end when one by one the Amigos each found their brides.

After years of corresponding by mail with those "blue air mail envelopes" Devon married the love of his life, Sonia Allen, on October 10, 1971 in Toronto. From that beautiful relationship, the Lord blessed them with two wonderful children, Andrew and Julia. He was a devoted father and loved his children dearly.

Devon was passionate about learning and was determined to obtain more education. He completed his high school education and received his diploma from United Institute. He loved accounting and completed a Diploma in Accounting from Ryerson Poly Technical Institute in 1985. His lifelong dream of becoming a Registered Certified Accountant was thwarted by the challenges of balancing his full-time job, family life, church activities and his studies. He chose to pursue a career in the Food Service Industry and received certifications in this area.

Devon was a hard worker and during his life he worked for several different companies. He worked for the Nelson Chocolate Factory in Toronto, NCR in Waterloo as an Accounts Receivable Clerk for 14 years and Freeport Hospital as a cook for many years. His career was unexpectedly interrupted by a shoulder injury.

Above all else, Devon dearly loved his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and faithfully served the church throughout his life. He and the other Musketeers were some of the founding members of the West Toronto Church with Pastor and Sister MacDonald. He was there when they began the church in Players Hall on Danford Avenue and when they purchased the building at 29 Halton Street. He was also a founding member of the Triumphant Church of God with Pastor Burey. After relocating to Kitchener in 1975, he was a founding member of the Kitchener Church of God. In the Kitchener COG, he served as the FTH president, Sunday School superintendent, on the Pastor's Council, Sunday school teacher, church clerk/ treasurer (for 14 years), and he drove the Sunday school bus on the side. He sang on the church choir and also sang in ensembles. He participated in courses at the church such as lay leadership, living the faith, helping people in crisis, and transforming your church into a house of prayer. He was honored as the Life Builder's President a few years ago.

In addition to everything else, he was also extremely involved in the community. He volunteered at the Village of Winston Park from 2001-2004 and assisted with the Link Magazine Organization for 2 years. Devon joined the ladies monthly to sing at the Millwood Manor in Kitchener. He was blessed with the talent of being a good listener. This made it a pleasure to visit his favourite place also known as "daddy" at the Westmount once or twice a week.

Devon was described in so many ways:

- more than a brother
- more than a friend
- an elder brother
- a surrogate father

He was a faithful friend, a wonderful cook and baker, had a great sense of humor, and was a warm, compassionate and caring person with a huge heart. Somehow Devon made each person feel special and managed to include hundreds of people in his heart.

On May 5, 2010, Devon changed his address from earth to heaven and is survived by his dear wife of 38 years, Sonia, 2 children Andrew and Julia, his granddaughter Tonnyce, his mother Ione Black, his sisters Euline Thompson, Janette Brown, Olga Black, Everlin Black and his brothers Clinton Serjue, Adolphus Black, numerous friends, his church family, and co-workers who will all miss him greatly.

Devon had a deep love of the Spanish language and he determined that he would learn to speak Spanish fluently before he died. He completed his last course last fall and since then he would strike up a conversation with whoever could speak the language. So in words from his favorite language,

Adiós amigos, Adiós familia, y adiós mi esposa