



## Mr. Ajay Martin Jr.

April 3, 1942 - March 19, 2020

Mr. Ajay Martin, Jr., formerly of Peoria, IL age 77, entered into rest Thursday, March 19, 2020 at his home in Smyrna, TN.

Ajay was a great athlete and a tremendous coach. He set the pace for African-American coaches in Peoria, Illinois at Peoria Woodruff High School and around the nation being one of the first successful black coaches in high school. Ajay was strong, yet soft-spoken and a tremendous counsel. Many family members love and revere him in Peoria, and acknowledge their sympathies in his departure.

His legacy will live on in that he loved people. His talent was talking and counseling people. He never met a stranger or failed to turn down a friend in need. His character speaks volumes. Though we regret his departure, we rejoice that he knew Jesus.

Ajay leaves to mourn and cherish memories his wife, Betty Calhoun Martin of 55 years of marriage; two children: Crystal Martin and Ajay Thomas Martin; four grandchildren: Ian, Lemar, Keon and Chandler and one great-granddaughter, Rheagan Martin. Ajay is also survived by a brother, Ronald Martin and sisters, Karen Hill and Jackie Morgan and a host of other relatives and friends.

Private services were held on Saturday, March 21 and he was laid to rest at Fairview Cemetery in Bowling Green, KY.

Gatewood & Sons Funeral Chapel was in charge of arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the funeral home at [gatewoodandsons.com](http://gatewoodandsons.com) or mailed to c/o Lynnette Lee, P.O. Box 6277, Peoria, IL 61601.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Ajay Martin Jr.*

January 29, 2023 at 06:10 AM



“ *Mr. Ajay Martin Jr.*

January 29, 2023 at 03:12 AM

VK

“ *To the Martin Family - So sorry I'm just learning of Ajay's passing. I remember he & Ronnie well from my Taft Homes days. May the many memories you have comfort you. May God bless & keep you during your loss.*



Vickie Kingcade-King - April 19, 2020 at 07:34 PM

LA

“ *The Green Street Football Team--A Jay, Sidney Ware, Jimmy Bommer, John Henry Bell, Gregory Watson, Ronald Sanford, and don't forget Ronnie Martin just to name a few. I believe that why the grass won't grow they played just about everyday. Rest in Peace A Jay you and boys where a big part of my childhood. My love and condolences to Jackie, Ronnie, and of course his wife Betty. Loretta Ann Porch-Simpson and Gloria Jean Porch neighbors from (Robert A Taft Homes).*

Loretta A - March 30, 2020 at 11:42 AM

LS

“ *Loretta A & Charlie C Simpson lit a candle in memory of Mr. Ajay Martin Jr.*



Loretta A & Charlie C Simpson - March 30, 2020 at 11:34 AM

KN

“ *Ajay was my manager for years in the music world. He will truly be missed. My condolences to Betty and the family. Nene.*

Kathea Clark Nene - March 29, 2020 at 10:11 AM

DP

“ Sorry to learn of Ajay's death. I was on the first team he coached at Woodruff. Only have good memories of those days. I know back then he had many extra hurdles to overcome. Don Perkinson Princeville il.

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**Don Perkinson** - March 28, 2020 at 10:39 AM