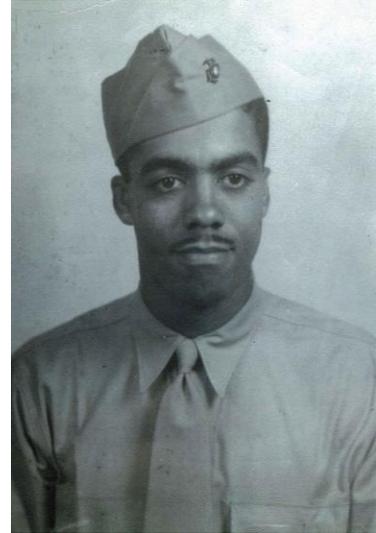


LIFE STORIES AND MEMORIES IN HONOR OF

## Alonzo A. Carmichael

He was known by many names: **Alonzo, Lonnie, Mike, Al, Michael, Daddy, and Papa** by his grandchildren... but on October 19, 1915 in Pearlinton Mississippi, his mother Elnora McKan Carmichael gave him the first name of Anatole. after his maternal Grandfather. Anatole "Chulk" McKan a well-known Captain of many schooners, transporting cargo on the Mississippi River and the Gulf. His middle name Alonzo (which he preferred and presented as his first name) was from his Father. Alonzo "Lonnie" Carmichael. "Lonnie" moved the family to Washington D.C in 1917 to become one of the first black men to work at the Smithsonian Institute. Shortly after the move. the Carmichaels were blessed with two additional sons: Lloyd Emerson and Roland Stanford. both deceased.



Alonzo acquired many monikers during his lifetime. Growing up his immediate family and close family friends called him Lonnie. As he grew older he was called Mike by his high school and Howard University friends. where he attended college for one year before World War II Alonzo was drafted into the Army but voluntarily enlisted and tested into the United States Marine Corp. He was among the second group of "Negros" to enlist and train at Montford Point Camp in North Carolina. The first African American Marines were trained at Camp Montford Point, in Jacksonville. North Carolina, from 1942 to 1949. President Barack Obama recently awarded the Montford Point Marines the Congressional Gold Medal.

Before the war. Alonzo eloped and adopted his wife's son. When he returned from the war he was asked by his wife's family to come to Virginia and help with their large tobacco farm. He truly enjoyed learning all the phases of being a Tobacco Farmer. While working the farm he also designed and built a large barn to house and cure the tobacco. The barn was Alonzo's first experience as a budding architect and construction builder that would later become his life's work. The marriage dissolved.

Among the many activities Alonzo pursued in his younger life and continued long after were. reading. reading and more reading. He also enjoyed the theatre. primarily the New York Broadway circuit where he collected close to 100 Playbills After a night of theatre he would venture up to Harlem to enjoy the music of the time. jazz! Now jazz was very much a part of his life. He enjoyed listening and seeing the greats like Billie Holiday. Cab Callaway, Lena Horne, "Fats" Waller. and comics like Moms Mabley, and Redd Foxx.

In 1947 Alonzo bought a brand new Chevrolet and drove to Hampton, VA to attend Hampton Institute, now known as Hampton University. While at Hampton, he majored in Architectural Engineering, served on the student council and met Rhoda Elizabeth Jordan, an aspiring actress and the University's professor of English and Drama. Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree, Alonzo and Rhoda married in 1951. Both were offered teaching positions in their respective fields at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. They also became the proud parents of two beautiful children, Alon Lloyd and Rhonda Jane.

Alonzo took a sabbatical from Southern University to earn his Master's Degree in City Planning at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. He was thrilled to have had the opportunity to experience studying with two outstanding Architects: Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. After receiving his Masters, Alonzo returned to teach at Southern and was commissioned by faculty and local community members to design large beautiful homes. The demand for his work was the beginning of a new chapter for Alonzo and Rhoda.

In 1957 the film **Band of Angels** starring Clark Gable was filmed near the University. Rhoda was asked to direct a group of her students in a scene. She did such a terrific job she was given a small speaking part in the movie and was encouraged to come to Hollywood!