

## Long, James L.

The Honorable Judge James L. Long, known by everyone as "Jimmy" once said, "I hope to be remembered as a person who did more right than wrong, and who did more good than bad." True to his words he earned a reputation as a respected leader, fair under the law, on both sides, a mentor, a colleague, and the epitome of a true friend.



James was born on December 7, 1937, in Wintergarden, Florida, to Susie Ward and James Joshua Long. As a youth his family moved to Sacramento, CA and settled in the Oak Park area. The second of three children, he is survived by his sister, June LaVerne Long, Esq. (Ret.); and was predeceased by his parents, and sibling Elton Ward Long. He attended Christian Brothers High School in Sacramento, CA, and graduated in 1955. He attended Sacramento City College and not only did he dream of becoming a baseball player, but according to lifetime friend Attorney William Barnaby, "When we were nine years old, Jim had a difficult time hitting that curve ball." Jimmy agreed and when approached by a Major League Baseball scout he still had that problem and thought law school was a better option.

He enlisted into the United States Army Reserve Corps in 1961 and served for 8 years at the rank of Second Lieutenant. After an honorable discharge he enrolled at San Jose State University and later attended Howard University Law School. He received his Juris Doctorate degree in 1967 and was admitted to practice in the state of California in January of 1970.

While in Washington, D.C. "Jimmy" worked for a research assistant for a constitutional lawyer, Herbert O. Reid, Sr., whose landmark case desegregated schools in the D.C. area; also working for professor Jeanus B. Parks, Jr. L.L.M. After graduation from law school, "Jimmy" worked for the Legal Aid Society of Sacramento and for the California State Legislative Counsel Bureau. He also served as an assistant professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at California State University, Sacramento. He went on to serve as a special legal counsel for the (NAACP) Western Region.

(California) Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, an organization that prides itself on giving back to the community; and one he was proud to be a member of. He was also an award recipient and member of the Wiley W. Manuel bar association, (formerly the Sacramento Association of Black Attorneys (SABA)), an organization whose mission is to promote the administration of justice; and to make use of legal tools and Legal discipline for the advancement of the economic, political, educational, and social interest of Sacramento, especially the Black community.

Jimmy was a co-author for a book entitled American Minorities: The Justice Issue. He faithfully served the people of Sacramento County and the state of California for almost 30 years; earning numerous awards, including Judge of the Year in 1998, 2001, and 2007. He was a mentor and counselor to all who sought his advice; and he guided many aspiring "to be" judges to successful judicial appointments. Although he was stern in his courtroom, he was a gentle, caring, and loving person. He was a father figure to many and a friend to many more. He will be remembered for his ferocious laugh and his infectious smile.

Jimmy flew against the wind, knocking down barriers and obstacles and accomplishing what many could only dream about. But sadly, on June 30th, 2020, our beloved Jimmy succumbed to a long battle with lung disease. But fret not, for it is not the ending, but the beginning, and that mighty wind is at his back. So spread your glorious wings Jimmy Long, and fly on home to heaven, and know that you take pieces of our hearts with you for all eternity.

Prior to being appointed to the bench by former Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. on February 1, 1982, "Jimmy" opened a law office in his Oak Park neighborhood on Broadway. As a private practitioner, among his various clients were the Black Panthers and the exoneration of the high-profile case; (The Oak Park Four), earning him the title of the People's Lawyer.

He was sworn-in as a judicial officer of the Sacramento County, Superior Court on February 24, 1982, where he served until his retirement in March 2011. He presided over many complex criminal and civil trials, including several death penalty cases, which prompted him to once say, "Only God should judge between life and death." In one civil matter involving General Motors, co-counsel agreed that the plaintiff's unclaimed class action funds should be distributed as the Court deemed appropriate. Never forgetting his roots, "Jimmy" distributed the funds to three organizations; St. Hope Academy, The Mustard Seed School, and Legal Aid Society of Sacramento.

On December 15, 2005 "Jimmy" was initiated into the Roseville

"We have loved him in life; let us not forget him in death". (St Ambrose)

People around the world will cherish fond memories of the honorable Judge James L. Long, not limited to the host of cousins, great nieces, and nephews, Dawn Silva, devoted love of his life, his nephews, Dimone and Andre Long; his sister June Long, Justin Silva, Sandra, Niesha, Hannah and Sienna; and special friends, Joe Barrington, Booker T. Cook, John Virga, Donald H. Heller, Robert and Kwanna Buccola, The Barnaby's, Jeanie and Billy, The Coopers, Loren, Ingrid, and Austin, Renee Carter, Georgella-Burnette Ellis, Kathy Klemencic, Denise Lashley, Randy Wilson, Dale McKinney, Michael Kraft, Ollie Mack, Sam Jackson, Troy Nunley, and Merrell Wilson.

Public viewing is at St Ignatius Loyola Parish 3235 Arden Way Friday July 10th from 11am - 1pm. The church is covid-19 prepared.

Due to Covid-19, burial arrangements at St Mary's Cemetery are invitational only. A celebration of his life will be announced at a later date.