

LIFE OF JEFF A. WILLIAMS, UNSUNG HERO OF CIVIL RIGHTS, TO BE CELEBRATED AT GRACE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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A memorial service for Jefferson “Jeff” A. Williams will be held at Grace Congregational Church, 310 West 139th Street in Harlem, on Saturday, June 26th at 11:00am. His life of 91 years will be celebrated by Rev. Nigel Pearce, Pastor, family members, friends, and colleagues. Mr. Williams served as a deacon and trustee of Grace Congregational Church for over 40 years, where he and his wife of 26 years, Barbara Hunter Williams, met and married.

He was the devoted father of Jeffrey and Josanne from a former marriage, and had many other loving relatives and grandchildren.

Mr. Williams (1918-2010), known as Jeff to his friends, was born in St. Matthews, SC and grew up there during the Jim Crow era, in the community where his ancestors were slaves. He honorably served his country in the segregated Armed Forces during World War II in North Africa. In the following

years he broke new ground in the history of civil rights by becoming one of the first African Americans to own a pharmacy in Harlem and was likely the first African American to receive a reciprocal license as a pharmacist in the states of New York and South Carolina. His unpublished memoirs, “Oral History of a Black Man Who Succeeded in a White Man’s World,” is an important narrative addition to American history in the 20th century.

Mr. Williams is among many unsung heroes interviewed by journalist and Aesthetic Realism Associate Alice Bernstein for the oral history project and documentary, “The Force of Ethics in Civil Rights.” She is one of those invited to speak at the memorial about the contributions of Jeff A. Williams which made America more just.

For further information, you may call Grace Congregational Church of Harlem at **212-694-4263**.