



## Mr. Curtis Owens Jr.

October 18, 1938 - December 25, 2016

Curtis Owens, a former health care executive, died on Sunday, Dec. 25, 2016. He was 78.

He was born on Oct. 18, 1938 to the late Curtis Owens and Sara Ames Owens. He became achievement-oriented at an early age. By the time he graduated from the Benjamin Franklin High School in 1957 he had lettered in four sports including baseball, football, basketball, and track and field. He earned All-Public honors in football and track and field.

In 1962, Owens received his bachelor's degree in education from Central State University and the same year earned certification in corrective therapy from the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. Commissioned as a medical administrative officer in the United States Army, Owens was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant and received an honorable discharge in 1964. He enrolled at Temple University and was awarded a master's degree in public administration in 1970.

Owens entered into the local and national health care community in 1966 with an appointment as an administrative assistant of Personnel and Purchasing at the Mercy Douglas Hospital. His career objectives lead him to accept a position as operational and research analyst at the General Electric Company where he was required to investigate, evaluate and develop unique health care delivery systems. In 1968, he was able to successfully utilize this experience by filling a number of health care management positions at Temple University's Health Science Center. In 1971, he was appointed project director

to provide community-based health care for the medically underserved. With the collaborative efforts of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (now Department of Health and Human Services) and Temple University, Owens led the development and establishment of several community-owned health care organizations, such as Comprehensive Health Management Corporation, Comprehensive Health Services Plan, and Comprehensive Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

At the point of Comprehensive Health Services Plan's greatest capacity, it offered employment to 534 Philadelphians and provided managed health care services to more than 65,000 program participants. The Comprehensive Health Service Plan became the largest minority corporation in the state of Pennsylvania.

Owing to Owens' stewardship at Comprehensive Health Services Plan, he was invited to participate in the broader health spectrum. In 1974, he became president of the National Association of Community Health Centers. In 1975, he was appointed vice president of the Health Federation of Philadelphia and member of the Philadelphia Block Grant Commission. In 1976, he became a founding member of Philadelphia Mercy Douglas Human Service Corporation. In 1980, he was appointed to the Mayor's Commission on Health for the '80s and became a recipient of the Mayor's Award in 1981. In 1982 under Owens' leadership, the Pennsylvania State Senate cited Comprehensive Health Services Plan as one of five community health centers to plan and implement innovative health care services in Philadelphia. Owens was also a recipient of Philadelphia's coveted bowl.

The energy that Owens provided as president and CEO of the Comprehensive Health Services Plan for more than 17 years marked a high point in his career in Philadelphia. It was in this role that he took an incubator grassroots community organization with a prototypical HMO format and developed it into a \$167 million business and a model that served as the template for HMOs across the country.

Owens was also president and CEO of Watts Health Foundation, Inc., which

did business as UHP Healthcare where he administered and directed the corporation toward comprehensive and quality health care management and services.

UHP Healthcare had annual revenues of approximately \$227 million with a network that consisted of approximately 100,000 memberships and more than 5,200 physicians/medical specialists, 54 medical groups and 80 affiliated hospitals. Owens appointment was made to strengthen the health care organization's operations and services within southern California's five county regions.

"Curtis Owens' work and integrity is exemplary and the Watts Health Foundation should be proud to have such a leader representing them," said the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr., founder and president of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

"Curtis had a long history in the health care field dating back to the founding of the Watts Health Foundation. His combined experience was an invaluable asset to the community."

Owens' Philadelphia deeds went beyond the health community. He discovered the late Philadelphia songstress/writer Linda Creed; served as vice chair of the Family of Leaders under the tutelage of Philadelphia's senior patriarch, Samuel L. Evans; coordinated the principle leadership and lobbying efforts on behalf of minority ownership of Philadelphia cable television; and became vice president of the Wade Cable initial franchise application.

While Owens published, consulted and served on public, private and governmental boards and commissions, the achievement that most validated his life's mission while in Philadelphia was having been chosen as a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Merit from the U.S. Congress for lifetime performance and commitment to human service. He was also noted in the first edition of Who's Who in Black America and was the recipient of the key to the city of San Francisco.

It was against this backdrop of local successes that Owens left Philadelphia to

pursue a new career in Los Angeles. A measure of how well he was received and gained the affection of Los Angelinos was manifested by his having been appointed president of the African American Unity Center and designated Committee Chair for the late Mayor Tom Bradley and his wife Ethel's foundation. As an example of the depths of his community relationships it should be noted that he was requested to participate in the eulogizing of Melvin Franklin (David English), the late bass singer of the Temptations and he served as a pall bearer for the late Sugar Ray Robinson.

Prior to being appointed as CEO and president of the Watts Health Foundation, Owens served at the behest of the Jackson Sr. as director of the Los Angeles Trade Bureau and served on a volunteer basis as chairman of Wall Street West for Rainbow/PUSH Coalition. These experiences provided an opportunity for Owens to utilize his extensive administrative, fundraising, political and technical skills in lending support and giving direction to the promotion of minorities' business partnerships with mainline corporate America. He was cited in Black Enterprise, June 2004 edition for his business accomplishments and in 2014 he was enshrined in Central State University's Hall of Fame.

Owens was a collective personality and reflected not only the legacy of his family, but that of the Afro-American experience. He derived his spiritual guidance from the Soka Gakkai International, a World Peace Advocacy Organization which has a seat on the United Nation's World Peace Council.

- He was preceded in death by his wife, Edna Anderson-Owens and his sister, Yvonne Hale, He is survived by: his son, Curtis D. Owens; grandson, Tyler; and brother, Kenneth. A memorial service will be held Jan. 28 at 11 a.m. at The Union League, 140 S. Broad St. Philadelphia, Pa.

- Attendees must RSVP for luncheon to Ann Wright [ann743us@yahoo.com](mailto:ann743us@yahoo.com) or Kenneth Owens at (267) 825-5663.

# Cemetery Details

**Private**

1661 Good Hope Rd SE  
Washington, DC 20020

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Curtis Owens Jr.*

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October 07, 2023 at 10:54 AM



“ *To the family and friends of Mr. Curtis, please accept my condolences for your loss. May you each find comfort in your fond memories, and in knowing God "is close to the brokenhearted". (Psalm 34:18)*

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**T.Charity** - December 31, 2016 at 12:20 PM