# WHEN GREAT TREES FALL

*When great trees fall, rocks on distant hills shudder,*
*lions hunker down in tall grasses,*
*and even elephants lumber after safety.*
*When great trees fall in forests,*
*small things recoil into silence,*
*their senses eroded beyond fear.*
*When great souls die,*
*the air around us becomes light, rare, sterile.*
*We breathe, briefly. Our eyes, briefly, see with a hurtful clarity.*
*Our memory, suddenly sharpened, examines,*
*gnaws on kind words unsaid, promised walks never taken.*
*Great souls die and our reality, bound to them, takes leave of us.*
*Our souls, dependent upon their nurture, now shrink, wizened.*
*Our minds, formed and informed by their radiance, fall away.*
*We are not so much maddened*
*as reduced to the unutterable ignorance of dark, cold caves.*
*And when great souls die, after a period peace blooms,*
*slowly and always irregularly.*
*Spaces fill with a kind of soothing electric vibration.*
*Our senses, restored, never to be the same, whisper to us.*
*They existed. They existed.*
*We can be. Be and be better.*
*For they existed*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our family wishes to extend our profound and sincere gratitude for the outpouring of love, support, and prayers during this difficult time. Through our cherished memories, **Newman** will live on in our hearts forever. May we continue to celebrate his life by living freely and with gratitude every single day that we have the ability to take a breath.

## ARRANGEMENTS ENTRUSTED TO:

BENTA'S
Funeral Home, Inc.

630 St. Nicholas Avenue
New York, NY 10030
Phone: (212) 281-8850
Fax: (212) 234-3600

## A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE



# NEWMAN LESLIE EPPS JR.

Sunrise: February 22, 1946 - Sunset: November 11, 2026

## FUNERAL SERVICE

Monday, November 23, 2026 • 11:00 A.M.

**BENTA'S FUNERAL HOME**

630 Saint Nicholas Avenue • New York, NY 10030

**Pastor Victor Wynn J.D., M.Div.,** *Officiating*

## INTERMENT

Tuesday, November 24, 2026

**PINELAWN MEMORIAL PARK**

Farmingdale, New York

# ORDER OF SERVICE

**Praise & Worship**

**Opening Hymn:** "Blessed Assurance" . . . . . Congregation

**Opening Prayer**

**Scripture Reading** . . . . . Dawn Strobert
Old Testament . . . . . Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8
New Testament . . . . . John 14: 1-3

**Reading of the Obituary** . . . . . Norm Jones

**Eulogy** . . . . . Justin Epps

**Solo:** "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" . . . . . Cornelius Johnson, III

**Closing Prayer**

**Closing Hymn:** "Because He Lives" . . . . . Congregation

**Benediction**

## REPAST:

Immediately Following the Service At:

**MELBA'S RESTAURANT**
300 West 114th Street
New York, NY 10026

# OBITUARY

**Newman Leslie Epps Jr.,** a designer, a craftsman of beautiful spaces, and a husband, father, and grandfather, passed away peacefully on November 11, 2026, in Henderson, NV at the age of 80.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, on February 22, 1946, to Newman Sr. and Mildred Epps, he moved with his family to St. Albans, Queens, by the age of eight. Newman Jr. or "Butch" as many knew him, attended Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia, North Carolina for high school, then studied at North Carolina Central University before earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in interior design from the New York Institute of Technology. His passion for community service led Newman to eventually fulfill his desire to become a member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity.

While launching his design career, Newman worked in his parents' dry-cleaning business. One of his most notable early projects was designing the interiors of the Concord Nursing Home in Brooklyn, developed by the Concord Baptist Church of Christ. Newman, along with his brother-in-law helped to open and run Epps Brothers, a "package store" in the Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn. As Newman continued designing homes and operating Epps Brothers in the evenings, he also began a lengthy career in liquor distribution, creating eye-catching window displays throughout the New York tristate area. In 2013, he retired and moved to Henderson, Nevada.

Newman was a creative and a perfectionist at heart, with a keen eye for color and a vision for creating "something from nothing". He also had an inclination for music and was able to play piano "by ear", a talent he displayed the evening he met Wanda, his eventual bride.

Newman was preceded in death by his parents and his sister Demetta. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Wanda Grant Epps, whom he married in April 1970; his son, Justin Epps; his daughter-in-law, Michelle Lane Epps; his granddaughter, Jordan Epps; his niece Dawn Strobert (Daryl); his cousin Leticia Epps-Clarke (Horace) as well as a host of other relatives and friends.