



Mr. Donald R. "Donny" Watkins

November 11, 1954 - May 22, 2022

UTICA – Mr. Donald R. “Donny” Watkins, age 67, after a brief illness, transitioned to the Lord on Sunday, May 22, 2022, while in the comfort and dignity of his home and surrounded by his loved ones.

Donny was born in Orlando, FL, on November 11, 1954, to the late Louis and Anna Mae (Simmons) Watkins. While Donny was still young, his family relocated to Utica, where he attended Roosevelt Elementary School and T.R. Proctor High School. A master of defensive play, Donny’s sports of choice were soccer and football. He furthered his pursuits with Manpower to learn the culinary arts.

At one time, Donny shared life with the late Linda (McCants) Dixon, and to that relationship came the blessing of three children. Additionally, he fathered a fourth child, Bernard, whom his soul now joins in heaven. Later, Donny shared life with the woman to whom his heart belonged: Chinarene Jackson. The couple grounded and balanced each other; theirs was a good love where each watched over the other.

Donny enjoyed a career of varied employment opportunities. From 1976 to the mid-1980s, he worked in a position with St. Elizabeth’s Hospital. He then shifted to the Sheraton Hotel, where he was a Line Cook—an opportunity he both truly enjoyed and was able to share, as he obtained a position for his twin brother Danny as well! Donny rendered his cooking talents and skills while working at Denny’s Restaurant in North Utica, a position from which he would eventually retire. He may also be remembered for his services in

various additional restaurants throughout the Utica area. He was a great chef, but it was Donny's personality that added so much to each of his workplaces. He was truly masterful.

As a dad, Donny made his children's world safe. He was always mindful of his relationship with each of them, which continued when the grandchildren entered the world. Donny was concerned over each, but when his last grandbaby, "Bulley," came, he became even more engaged. The grandkids truly could count on him for anything. As a brother, Donny was also very protective of his siblings—especially his sisters. As the old saying goes, there was a distinct common Watkins bond to these siblings; they all had the same distinctive walk! Each of their hearts will carry the memory of how much they loved each other.

The question remains for those who loved Donny: who is going to do the cooking now? He had always been the first to offer a meal, which he had done so sincerely for any occasion. His food and his witty remarks that came with it always made each gathering better. Donny was truly a man loved by his community. He had a ton of friends as he was honest, loyal, and trustworthy. Those who knew him still recall how they could see these qualities in his eyes! It was clear that he got a lot of joy out of helping others and doing good for family and friends.

Donny was known as the "life of the party!" An excellent and timely host, he would wait on his guests, encouraged everyone to have a good time, loved to dance, and that was just Donny! From his homes on Kemble St. and Thomas St. to Lincoln Ave., all were gathering spots for fun. Additionally, a nurturing man, he was the caretaker of all his loved ones' hearts. Often, too, Donny was known to be generous to a fault. He will never be forgotten for his spirited and kind ways of bringing all together.

A sportsman, he favored the Miami Dolphins. He never forgot his home state from his early days as a kid and loved to tune in to the games—especially during the era of Dan Marino! He also enjoyed fishing on Lake Moraine, and anything he caught, he cooked.

From childhood, Donny was raised in the church. Every Sunday they saw him and the family at Sunday school, followed by attending the services. He served the Lord by his kindness, but through his observation of China's love of church, he saw the light and renewed himself. It was difficult for him to let go until he knew his family was going to be okay. Donny made peace with everyone and then was able to let go, going to his rest. He attended Hope Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church.

Donny is survived by his devoted companion, Chinarene "China" Love; and his children, Leon McCants and Melissa, Sciquita and Warren Banks, Yolanda McCants and David Kittrell, Sr., and Cheryl Reed. Additionally, Donny loved as his own children: Helen Swain, Keisha Hawkins, Bobby Cooper, Hennessy Hawkins, and Eddie Richardson. He was preceded by his son, Bernard Wright, who passed in 2002. Donny will be fondly remembered by his grandchildren, Donnell Brown, Jamyra Collins, Mone' Pulluaim, Shykwana McCants, Amos Williams Jr., Jahdeed McCants, Sah'mara McCants, Curtiera McCants, Jermaine Neal Jr., David Kittrell Jr., Bernard Wright I & II, Jermaine Wright, Marissa Wright and Eddie Richardson Jr.; great-grandchildren, Ari Linen, Bernard Wright III, Donnell Brown Jr., Kyrie Brown, Keyon Brown, Kalan Brown, and his siblings, his twin brother, Daniel "Danny" and his wife Virginia Watkins, Frieda Rodgers, Louie Watkins, Jr, Felicia Shaw, William Watkins, Kim Evan, Lisa Croomes, Christine Watkins, Percilla Watkins, Bianca Watkins and Vincent Watkins all of Buffalo, NY, and Darrell Watkins of Utica, NY. He was predeceased by his sisters, Laura "Cathy" Watkins Cooper, and Sheila Watkins. He will live on in the hearts of his host of nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, and cousins. He was respected and appreciated by members of the Love Family, the King Family, and the Titus Family. Donny was blessed with a great number of wonderful friends during his life; we hope you know how special you were to him!

The family would like to extend their gratitude to all the physicians, nurses, and staff on Floor B at Albany Medical Center and at Slocum Dickson,

especially to Dr. Manzurul Sikder, who was understanding and compassionate; to Dr. Emile Wassel, who was so intricate and detailed, helping the family make good decisions. For the last several days of his life, when Don wished to come home, Hospice and Palliative Care provided comfort and reassurance.

Visitation will be held on Sunday, May 29, 2022 from 2-4 at the Eannace Funeral Home Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. "As I knew him" will begin at 3:30. Donny's Home Going Service and Celebration of Life will follow at 4:00. Interment will take place in Forest Hill Cemetery at the convenience of the family.

Previous Events

Home Going Service

MAY **29**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com
<https://www.eannacefuneralhome.com>

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Tribute Wall

IC

“ Seems I have known Donny all of my life I remember his family lived on blandina street what great memories we have to lean on. My family sends prayers and condolences 🙏
To the Watkins Family



Ida Cook - May 28, 2022 at 09:48 AM

SC

“ Cousin Donnie, we will truly miss you! Can you say “life of the party”!Im still taking in the thought that your gone but your spirit lives on. I love you so much and you will be missed!
Love TC & Rena (your cousin)Clemons

Serena & Talmadge Clemons - May 27, 2022 at 02:00 PM

DK

“ Oh Chinarene and sisterFRIEDA, SO SORRY , I JUST HEARD,_WISH I could be there, but I am still at the Grand, my heart goes out to you guys, I'll always the cookouts we used to have with Donnie cooking, always fun, RIP, Donnie, brother

Darlene Trombetta King - May 24, 2022 at 05:27 PM

CM

“ My condolences to chinarine and both families
May you all find peace and comfort

Charlene miller(House) - May 24, 2022 at 04:57 PM

CM

“ *Donnie you were always good for a laugh
You will be truly missed
Remember ohhhhh girl!
Rip Donnie*

Charlene miller(House) - May 24, 2022 at 04:54 PM



Donnie I'll always 🥹 RIP Blessings to the family 🙏🏻🥹❤️❤️🌹🌹

Earlene House - May 24, 2022 at 06:19 PM

EL

My dear cousin Donnie I'm definitely going to miss you .Edith

Edith lathan - May 26, 2022 at 11:00 AM