



## Earl Lee "Sonny" Ford

October 26, 2025

Earl Lee “Sonny” Ford, beloved husband, brother, uncle, and pillar of his New Orleans community, departed this life on October 26, 2025, at the age of 91. Born into a family whose history is deeply woven into the fabric of Black New Orleans, Sonny came from humble beginnings that reflected the struggle, strength, and dignity of African Americans who fought for their rightful place in society. His family lived through segregation and witnessed the transformational moment when Black citizens in New Orleans were finally able to vote freely in 1965—a moment that shaped generations. Sonny grew up during those defining years, watching his parents and community push through profound obstacles with courage and perseverance.

Those early experiences molded him into a man of quiet resilience, deep integrity, and extraordinary work ethic.

Sonny was the devoted husband of his high-school sweetheart, Jacquelyn “Jackie” Ford, who preceded him in death on November 28, 2004. Their marriage was a lifelong love story, two young hearts who grew up together, stood together, and spent decades building a life anchored in loyalty, joy, and unwavering devotion. Sonny carried her memory with tenderness for the rest of his life.

A master at his craft, Sonny spent his entire career in construction, becoming known throughout New Orleans for his skill, leadership, and dedication. He contributed to the construction of numerous buildings across the city, leaving behind a concrete legacy that generations will continue to walk through. To his

coworkers, he was a trustworthy leader; to younger workers, a patient teacher; and to the community, a man whose hands helped shape the very city he loved.

Sonny was the loving son of Hilda Caldwell and Robert Ford and the cherished brother of Tommie Ford, Eva Ford, and Jestead Ford. He loved his siblings deeply, and the bond they shared carried through their entire lives. Sonny was loved and beloved by many. His gentle spirit, humble strength, and quiet compassion left an unforgettable imprint on every life he touched. Whether with family, friends, neighbors, or the men who worked beside him on job sites, Sonny made people feel valued, respected, and truly seen. To know him was to love him—his presence brought comfort, his character earned admiration, and his love endured in every relationship he nurtured. He is preceded in death by his beloved wife Jackie, his parents, and several loved ones who went before him.

He leaves to cherish his memory his sister Eva Ford, Brian Ford, Andrea Johnson Harness, Roslyn Johnson, Harold Johnson Jr., Troy Johnson, Helena and Joe Lopez, Jacquelyn Smith, and Patricia Smith; a host of nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, and countless relatives and friends who will forever carry his legacy in their hearts.

A humble man who never sought the spotlight, Sonny's life is remembered through the buildings he helped create, the bonds he strengthened, and the love he gave generously.

Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend his Funeral Service at D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Avenue on Friday, November 21, 2025 at 10:00 am. Visitation will begin at 9:00 am. Interment: Lakelawn Metairie Cemetery. Arrangements by D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, New Orleans, LA. Please visit [www.rhodesfuneral.com](http://www.rhodesfuneral.com) to sign the guestbook and share condolences with the family.

# Cemetery Details

## Lakelawn Metairie Cemetery

5100 Pontchartrain Blvd  
New Orleans, LA 70124

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV 21. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Rhodes Funeral Home - Washington Avenue  
3933 Washington Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125  
(504) 822-7162  
<https://www.rhodesfuneral.com>

## Funeral Service

NOV 21. 10:00 AM (CT)

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New Orleans, LA 70125  
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