



Elmer T. Glover Jr.

January 21, 2021

Elmer T. Glover, Jr. aka “Dr. Glover”-

Another tall tree has fallen. Elmer T. Glover, Jr., New Orleans prominent Voodoo priest and well-known karate teacher, has gone home to God on Wednesday January 13, 2021. “Dr. Glover,” as he was known in Voodoo circles, was born on January 10, 1947 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the oldest of four children of the late Elmer T. Glover, Sr., a school principal, and the late Mildred Glover, a school teacher. He grew up in a devout Catholic family of educators and intellectuals that instilled in him discipline, pride and self-respect, a yearning for excellence in whatever he was doing, and a life-long interest in travelling and exploring different cultures and places of the world. Glover received most of his education in private Catholic institutions. From 1952 to 1958 he attended St. Francis Xavier Elementary School in Baton Rouge, from 1958 to 1962 Southern University Laboratory School in Baton Rouge, then, from 1962 to 1966, St. Gregory College and High School, a private Catholic institution of Higher Learning of the Benedictine Order, located in Shawnee, Oklahoma. At the time, there was not a single Catholic high school in Louisiana that he could attend because he was black and needed a boarding school outside of Baton Rouge. Yet, Glover never knew that until later in his life. He believed his parents chose St. Gregory’s for him because it was the best available school for him and enjoyed every day there to the fullest. Typically for Glover, he focused on the bright side of life. His glass was always half-full and never half-empty. He graduated from high

school in 1964, and, continued at St. Gregory's on the college level, completing an Associates in Arts degree in 1966. Glover had witnessed in his childhood the brutal oppression of the peaceful nonviolent Civil Rights demonstrations of the 1950s in Baton Rouge, which left a deep impression on him. He would never own or carry a weapon and keep a life-long commitment to the struggle for justice and equality. Teaching people to find self-esteem and self-respect through karate and Voodoo spiritual ways became what he considered his humble and very spiritual contribution to the Civil Rights Movement. Having escaped the oppressive and terrifying social system of the Jim Crow Deep South, Glover's stay at St. Gregory's in Oklahoma was like a breath of fresh air for him. The boarding school had a truly international character. Most of his friends and class mates were sons of foreign diplomats from anywhere on earth. One of them, a young man from Korea, introduced him to his karate teacher in Oklahoma City, Grandmaster Jack Hwang. The martial arts became instantly his passion in life.

When he returned from Oklahoma to his native Louisiana, he was an accomplished black belt karate master. He moved to New Orleans, his life-long favorite place in the world, and transferred to Xavier University. As soon as he arrived he began teaching karate at various locations throughout town including at Xavier and participated actively in the city's Black Power Movement of the 60s and 70s. By 1970, he was a full-time Martial Arts instructor and soon developed his very own karate style, "Cho Chi Zen Karate," which translates to "knowledge of power through meditation and karate." It is a very spiritual and complex two-person kata technique. Glover's excellent karate and self-defense classes soon became legendary in New Orleans. Over the years he earned the rank of seventh-degree black belt, a very advanced stage of this craft. His students included any age group from young children to seniors, men and women, and members of any ethnic, political, or social background. Glover opened up his own "dojo" or karate studio on 1926 Canal Street. It was the first Black-owned martial arts studio in

the city of New Orleans. Whole generations of African American youth took Glover's classes. He even taught the Black Panthers self-defense. Large sections of the New Orleans Police Department, male and female, black and white alike, found their way into his studio, as well as lawyers, secret service officers, taxi drivers, dancers, waiters, musicians, teachers, nurses, doctors, and politicians. Glover retired from his karate career after hurricane Katrina in 2005, when his studio was destroyed by the flood waters and his students had dispersed in all directions. He left his technique in the hands of his black-belt students. Nevertheless, until the end of his life, Glover couldn't leave the house without running into former students anywhere in town who bowed down in front of him with reverence and shouted happily "Sensei!"—meaning "teacher!"

In the 1980s, Glover discovered what he considered "his true calling in life." A life-long voracious reader and seeker of religion and spirituality, his interest in the occult and metaphysics led him to the Haitian Vodou spiritual tradition and Louisiana's conjure and rootwork practices. In 1983, he was initiated as "houngan asogwe," the highest form of priesthood in the Haitian Vodou tradition, by his godfather Pierre Paul Sully of the Société de St. Jean Baptiste (Society of St. John the Baptist) in Arcahaie, Haiti. Later Sully inducted him also into the Haitian Bizango secret society. Altogether, he went seven times to Haiti to participate in sacred rites at Sully's temple in Arcahaie. Within the Haitian Vodou spiritual tradition there is God Almighty called "bondyé" and then there is a pantheon of lesser divinities, saints and angels, that rule different aspects of life. Glover was a "son" or devotee of "Baron Samedi," the king of the spirits of the dead, and thus he had a special connection with cemeteries and the magical powers of the ancestors. He always remained in close contact with Sully's society in Arcahaie. Nevertheless, in the US, Glover considered himself mainly a modern-day practitioner of the magical traditions of Marie Laveau. He went to the tomb of the famous nineteenth-century

Voodoo Queen of New Orleans and asked her to be his spiritual godmother. While continuing to teach karate, he gained quickly a large clientèle as “Dr. Glover,” the Voodoo Doctor. He established himself not only locally but increasingly drew clients from anywhere on earth. People would say “He is the real deal!” because the efficacy of his spiritual work was nothing short of astounding. His phone kept ringing non-stop all day long for four decades until the last day of his life. While he always identified himself as a solitary Voodoo Doctor or “bokor,” which is the Haitian term for a “spiritual worker” like him, he also collaborated regularly with two local establishments: Brandi Kelley’s voodoo shop and cultural center “Voodoo Authentica” in the French Quarter and the late Felix Figueroa’s spiritual supplies store, the “F & F Candle Shop” on Broad Street. He considered them his associates. Glover’s popularity also attracted the attention of the media. He appeared in numerous television shows and documentaries, on NPR, CNN, Discovery Chanel, Al Jazeera, and others, including an appearance on the tv show 20/20 with John Stossel. Glover was invited as far as England, Germany, and Japan for Voodoo work and interviews and received speaking engagements at numerous universities to talk about his work. The two highlights of his many travels were a trip to Brazil with a delegation of New Orleans African American culture bearers and an invitation to speak at an international healers’ conference in Hawaii. For years he received offers from every major television network to star in his own reality show, but Glover persistently declined. Although he was proud of his celebrity status, he was not interested in the lime light. By nature, he was an intensely private person and professionally, he did his utmost to protect the privacy of his clients. People, who were seriously in trouble and had nowhere else to turn, would find him and would get the assistance they needed to overcome adversity and achieve their goals. Glover always insisted that Voodoo has nothing to do with witchcraft or devil worship. “That exists only in Hollywood movies,” he maintained, “True Voodoo work is God’s work!” He would hang up the phone on people who wanted to harm someone. “That’s not what I’m doing,” he would explain, “I am here to help only.”

During the last two decades of his life, Glover faced bravely a difficult struggle with diabetes that took a merciless toll on his body, turning him nearly completely blind and robbing him of his kidney functions. Nevertheless, always the indomitable optimist, he never complained about his fate, and continued his spiritual work until the end assisting his clients over the phone. In the spring of 2020, he proudly conquered Covid-19 after 5 weeks of hospitalization, miraculously beating all odds to the contrary. Thus, he was able to enjoy another seven happy months, until he left us suddenly and peacefully in his sleep two days after celebrating his 74th birthday.

He is survived by his devoted life partner of two decades, his common-law wife, former LSU professor, Dr. Ina Fandrich, who remained steadfastly by his side; his daughters Ashaki Waker with husband Christopher Waker and children Christiana and Kaci, and Anika Glover with children Jonathan, Nelcia and Harvest, the four children of his late son Elmer T. Glover, III, Catina, Christopher, Briana, and Trey; his siblings, sister Cheryl Fischer with husband Dr. Donald Fischer and their children, Douglass Fischer, Dr. Stephen Fischer, Scott Fischer, and Dr. Dawn-Elissa Fischer, and their respective families, his brother Joseph Maurice Glover, Sr. with wife Debbie and children Joseph Maurice, Jr. and J'Lynzia, and his sister Catherine Glover; his divorced wife and mother of his three children Carolyn Glover; and by thousands of karate students who adored their much-loved "sensei," thousands of Voodoo clients who loved him dearly and will always remain grateful for his services and advice, and his many friends both near and far including best friend Kevin Smith and spiritual "son" George Jacobs, and his beloved cats Mojo and Juju. Our loss is heaven's gain. We will always be indebted to our beloved "Dr. Glover." He was a wonderful human being, truly one of a kind. May he Rest in Peace!

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Celebration of Elmer Glover, Jr.'s Life had to

be pushed back into the summer. A Catholic mass for him will take place at 9 AM on July 24, 2021 at the historic St. Augustine Church in Faubourg Tremé, followed at 10:15 AM by a traditional New Orleans Jazz Procession to Congo Square, tributes from the Voodoo community and the Karate community in Congo Square, and ending at St. Louis Cemetery #1. Donations are welcome on the gofundme page "A Tribute to Dr. Glover".

Previous Events

Service

JUL **24.** 9:00 AM (CT)

St. Augustine Catholic Church
1210 Gov. Nicholls St.
New Orleans, LA 70116