



Dr Maurice M Martinez Jr

September 12, 2022

Dr. Maurice M. Martinez, Jr., Professor Emeritus at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, son of Mildred and Maurice Martinez Sr., founders of the Martinez Kindergarten School in the 7th Ward of New Orleans, passed peacefully in the arms of his family on Monday, September 12, 2022 at 3:33pm. He was a fighter for social justice, a renaissance man, poet, educator, musician, writer, documentarian, husband, father and grandfather. He breathed life into every room he entered. He loved to build camaraderie through stories, wit and humor. His personality was magnetic and his passion, inspiring. He touched everyone he met in a way that left them brighter. With his passing, Dr. Martinez joins our African ancestors, and will be ever present in our lives and memories; there to assist when called upon in times of tribulation and moments of joy. Dr. Martinez' legacy will carry on through his wife, Marjorie Lu Martinez, children, Maurice Miles Martinez and Torin Joseph Martinez, grandchildren, Javier Dabrio, Maurice Lu-Mutzai Kashta Dabrio-Martinez and Miles Lu-Mosiah Selassie Dabrio-Martinez, his sister, Josepha Weston and her husband, Ron, Marjorie Martinez's sisters Nancy Walls and husband, Wayne, Betty Leach, Karen Lu and brother, Casey Lu and wife, Leah; daughter-in-law Beverly Dabrio; nieces and nephews, Arlee Mesler, Brooke Lai and husband, Eugene, Taran Lu and wife, Zoë, Quinten Lu, Dalton Walls, Virginia and Delta Buck, Ashley Leach, Andrew Leach and wife, Eve, Elizabeth Weston, Shawn Jobe, Sophia Martinez, Manolito Martinez and wife, Edith, Bianca Boyance and husband, Mark; cousins, great nieces and great

nephews. He lived a long, loving, joyous, fulfilling life. May his story live on forever. His many friends and family will miss him deeply.

Captured from his autobiography, BLACKCREOLE, Dr. Maurice M. Martinez Jr., Ph.D., a New Orleans-born poet (often referred to as “Marty Most, Jazz Poet,” the Crescent City’s original beat poet), photographer, musician, filmmaker, host narrator (radio/video/film) was Professor Emeritus at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. A protégé of Langston Hughes, Dr. Martinez was steeped in the African American culture through both his heritage and scholarly endeavors. He has written numerous articles about the Mardi Gras Indians, and his award-winning film (the first definitive treatment on the history and culture of the Mardi Gras Indians) titled: “THE BLACK INDIANS OF NEW ORLEANS (1976)” edited by Sam Pollard of Spike Lee fame, is considered a classic. It was shown for a full week at the New York Whitney Museum’s “New Filmmakers” Program, and received a favorable review in The New York Times. Dr. Martinez was frequently called upon by Arts and Cultural centers to present keynote speeches on the sociocultural history of the Black Indians of Mardi Gras. He has published three college textbooks, a memoir, BlackCreole: Too White to be Black, Too Black to be White and his most recent book titled, No I Won’t Bow Down On That Dirty Ground: A History of the Black Mardi Gras Indians, a photobook, From the Dirt Streets They Came and a volume of original poetry, New Orleans Blues. Among his many passions were hunting and fishing with family and friends.

While Professor of Education at Hunter College, CUNY, Dr. Martinez was artistic director for several of the Caribbean Cultural Center’s “Expressions” concerts, including “Trumpet Traditions,” with Wynton Marsalis, and “Carnival in New York” at Lincoln Center. In addition, Dr. Martinez was the host on National Public Radio, WNPR, of a 15-part program series titled “North Carolina Blue Notes” that focused upon the lives of famous Jazz, Blues, and R&B musicians born in North Carolina, including John Coltrane, Theloneous

Monk, Max Roach, Nina Simone, Blind Boy Fuller, and Percy Heath.

Dr. Martinez earned his B.S. Degree at Xavier University of New Orleans, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He taught for 51 years before retiring: 8 years in New Orleans at J. S. Clark and Carver Senior High School; 24 years at Hunter College, and 19 years at UNCW. While on a two-year Ford Foundation grant to do field research, he introduced "Free Jazz" to Brazil in a 14 concert tour sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. His quintet: "Grupo Calmalma de Jazz Livre" featured three Brazilians: Vitor Assis Brasil, sax; Guilherme Vaz, piano; Lula Nascimento, drums; and two Americans: Wayne Maddalena, trumpet, and Maurice Martinez, string bass. His musical CD release (2002), titled "DRUMSCUSSION" features a cross-fertilization of the drum rhythms of Brazil and New Orleans as performed by master drummers, Jorge Alabe, Uganda, and Charles "Honeyboy" Otis. Dr. Martinez produced over 20 documentary films. His film footage was used on HBO in Spike Lee's four-hour documentary about Hurricane Katrina, "WHEN THE LEVEES BROKE."

The most popular among his many films are: "COLORED WHITE BOY," "THE QUORUM: ARRESTED IN NEW ORLEANS FOR INTERRACIAL GATHERINGS AT A COFFEEHOUSE; and "TOO WHITE TO BE BLACK, TOO BLACK TO BE WHITE: THE NEW ORLEANS CREOLE."

Visit: www.DoorKnobFilms.com for additional information.

A wake is scheduled on Friday, October 14th, 6:00-10:00 p.m., with music, poetry, and open-mic. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave, New Orleans, LA 70125.

A Jazz Funeral service will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 15th. Corpus Christi Church, 2022 St. Bernard Ave, New Orleans, LA 70116.

Repast at 3:00 pm at the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, 1901 Bartholomew Street, New Orleans, LA 70117.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to:

The Dr. Maurice M. Martinez Educational Fund at: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/dr-maurice-m-martinez-educational-fund>

OR

The Dr. Maurice M. Martinez Music Scholarship Fund at the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, 1901 Bartholomew Street, New Orleans, LA 70117, or online at www.ellismarsaliscenter.org/donate.

Cemetery Details

St. Louis #3 Cemetery

3421 Esplanade Ave
New Orleans, LA 70119

Previous Events

Wake

OCT **14**. 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM (CT)

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

Funeral Mass

OCT **15**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Corpus Christi Catholic Church
2022 St. Bernard Ave
New Orleans, LA 70117

Tribute Wall

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“ *Sincerest condolences & sympathy extended to the family and loved ones of Dr. Maurice M. Martinez, our beloved friend and Honorary Member
Louisiana Creole Research Association (LA Creole)
www.lacreole.org*

*Chantell Nabonne
LA Creole Board Chair*

Chantell Nabonne - October 13, 2022 at 12:05 AM

CN

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*Chantell Nabonne
LA Creole Board Chair*

Chantell Nabonne - October 12, 2022 at 08:27 PM

KJ

“ *To my Xavierite, Eternal rest granted unto his soul and may the perpetual light shine upon him. Dr.Martinez family you all are in my thoughts and prayers. Rest in peace my brother and thanks for all you have done for the City of New Orleans and the citizens.*



Kevin Joseph - October 11, 2022 at 02:20 PM



“ His book *NEW ORLEANS BLUES* by Marty Most (1964) contains the first citation of "Big Easy," the now popular nickname of New Orleans. His obituaries should credit him for that, but do not. Clinton Scott Jr., an executive at Nola Records, also used the term "Big Easy" in his 1960s columns in the publication *Inside New Orleans*. Martinez told me that he did not coin "Big Easy." I believe he picked up "Big Easy" from a dj at WYLD radio. If anyone has any more "Big Easy" information, please contact me. Dr. Maurice M. Martinez Jr. was a great man who deserves even greater credit. -- Barry Popik (Bapopik@aol.com

Barry Popik - October 08, 2022 at 06:04 PM



“ We will truly miss our BFF, Maurice. He was more than a delight to know; he was a force of nature that only passes through this earthly location once in each of our life times. We salute him and will cherish his memory forever.—Barbara and Obataiye Akinwole, Leland, NC



Barbara & Obataiye - October 08, 2022 at 12:31 PM