



Reverend Roland Albert Cunningham Sr.

October 16, 2025

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept my faith: henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me that day; and not to me only but unto all of them also that love his appearing.”

On Thursday morning, October 16, 2025, Reverend Roland Albert Cunningham, surrendered peacefully to God’s call to come home. He found peace and rested in the arms of the Lord. Roland lived a good life and kept the faith. He was a husband, active and devoted father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great grandfather.

Roland was born on March 17, 1932 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Roland was a product of New Orleans public schools. Being the oldest sibling, he left school to help take care of his family. He learned his craft from his grandfather, Peter Cunningham and uncle, Peter Cunningham, Jr. and used those skills to become a successful self-employed contractor. Later, those skills were used to provide for this wife and eight children. Sending four to college and or trade school.

As a young man in the early 60’s, he became an entrepreneur opening a laundromat and apartment complex in the Irish Channel of New Orleans.

Sadly, after finding out he was a young African American, folks closed him down. He purchased his family home in 1959 in the Uptown Carrollton neighborhood known as Pension (Pidgeon) Town. He also opened a clothing store with one of his cousins.

As a young child he was raised Catholic, then converted and was baptized at an early age. He was a member of the Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church #2. There he served and sang in the choir. He also was a member of the Ideal missionary Baptist and Educational Association, Inc.

Roland was a Charter Member of the Fellowship Missionary Baptist where he served as a Deacon and member of the Mass Choir under the direction of the late Rilma Kathern Singleton Thibodeaux. Having been ordained, he became the Pastor of the Philippiian Baptist Church in the uptown section of New Orleans. Roland was also a member of the Cornerstone Missionary Baptist General Association.

Roland was a member and strong supporter of the NAACP in his early years. He was also a strong supporter of the Civil Rights Movement. In later years, he kept up with world affairs and had very strong opinions.

Having retired at 55 years old, he proceeded to serve as Head Coach for Harrell and Conrad Park football teams. Through his coaching, he touched the lives and mentored many young men. Some of these young men went on to play in the NFL.

Roland leaves to cherish his legacy and fond memories, his seven children: Roslyn M. Cunningham, Reginald Cunningham, Rosiena C. Edgar (Clarence, Sr.), Rhonda C. Coco (Alvin, Sr.), Raynard Cunningham, Randall Cunningham (Samantha), and Calvin Cunningham (Elizabeth); one sister-in-law Geraldine Reed-Drew, one brother-in-law, Phillip J. Reed, Sr. (Stephanie); 15

grandchildren, 29 great- grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. He was also the Godfather to Janice R. Brady and Dorothy S. Johnson.

Roland is preceded in death by his wife, Joyce Olivia Reed-Cunningham; his parents, Albert Cunningham and Mary Josephine Helton Cunningham; two sons, Roland, Jr. and Ronald Cunningham (Twins); two sisters, Doris Turner and Hattie Mae Perkins; his beloved cousin, Bernard Russo (Jr.); great-great grandson, Robert K. Brown; brothers-in-law, Nathanel H. Reed, Sr. and Babe R. Hughes, three sisters-in-law, Mattie Jean Reed, Mary Shelton and Anna R. Hughes.

Lord, now you are letting thou servant depart in peace, according to your word
– Luke 2:29

Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend a Funeral Service at Prayer Tower Church of God In Christ, 8708 Willow Street, New Orleans, LA 70118 on Saturday, November 8, 2025 at 10:00am. Visitation will begin at 8:30am until 10:00am. Internment: Restlawn Park Cemetery, 4004 Hwy 90, Avondale, LA 70094. Arrangements entrusted to D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave., New Orleans, Louisiana. Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the online guestbook, share memories and condolences with the family.

Cemetery Details

Restlawn Park

4004 US hwy 90 W.
Avondale, LA 70094

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV 8. 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Prayer Tower Church of God In Christ
8708 Willow Street
New Orleans, LA 70118

Funeral Service

NOV 8. 10:00 AM (CT)

Prayer Tower Church of God In Christ
8708 Willow Street
New Orleans, LA 70118

Tribute Wall



“ *Carolyn Y, Washington lit a candle in memory of Reverend Roland Cunningham*



Carolyn Y, Washington - November 08, 2025 at 04:24 AM