A Celebration of the Life of

Wilfred “Fred” Otis Easter, Jr.

May 26, 1941 – September 24, 2022

Skinner Memorial Chapel
Carleton College
Saturday, November 5, 2022
2:00 pm
Order of Service

**Prelude**  “Blue in Green” by Miles Davis  
Laura Caviani

**Welcome and Invocation**  Carolyn Fure-Slocum

**Reading**  “For My Sister Molly Who in the Fifties” by Alice Walker  
Allison Easter

**Remembrances**
“Casey at the Bat” by Ernest Thayer  
Recited by Charlotte Polk
Video by Marcus Polk
George Allen

Song “We Shall Overcome” (verses 1-4) Hymnal #570  
Led by Sarah M. Greer

**Remembrances**  Warren Simpson
Joe Nathan

**Song: “I’ll Fly Away”** by Albert E Brumley & Sons  
Led by Sarah M. Greer

Some glad morning when this life is o’er, I’ll fly away
To a home on God’s celestial shore, I’ll fly away

*Chorus: I’ll fly away, oh Glory, I’ll fly away when I die*
*Hallelujah, by and by, I’ll fly away*

When the shadows of this life have flown, I’ll fly away
Like a bird from prison bars has flown, I’ll fly away

*Chorus*

Just a few more weary days and then, I’ll fly away
To a land where joy shall never end, I’ll fly away

*Chorus*

**Remembrances**  Pat Anderson
Audio tribute by Mark Hunter
Glen Ford
Song  “Twelve Gates to the City” (traditional)  Led by Sarah M. Greer

Three gates in the east, Three gates in the west
Three gates in the north, Three gates in the south
That makes twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Chorus: Oh what a beautiful city (x3)
There’s twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Who are those children all dressed in red
Twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah
It must be the children that Moses led
There are twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Chorus

When I get to heaven, gonna sing and shout
Twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah
Ain’t nobody gonna keep us out
Twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Three gates in the east, Three gates in the west
Three gates in the north, Three gates in the south
There’s twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Chorus

Closing Words  Carolyn Fure-Slocum

Postlude  “All Blues” by Miles Davis  Laura Caviani

After the service, please join us in the Chapel narthex for refreshments and more sharing of stories about this remarkable man.
Fred Easter

Wilfred “Fred” Otis Easter Jr., beloved father, grandfather, Twins fan, jazz enthusiast, teacher, administrator, softball coach, and Go player passed away at 81 from cancer on September 24, 2022.

Fred was born May 26, 1941, in Harlem, New York City, to Mae Smith Easter and Wilfred Otis Easter, Sr. Fred attended George Washington High School where he led the basketball team to the Tri-State Championship. He graduated from The Gunnery in Washington, CT (now the Frederick Gunn School) in the first class that included Black students and received his B.A. from Harvard University, one of eighteen Black students. While at Harvard, he married Mary Easter (née Moore). They had two daughters. Fred was married and divorced twice subsequently, to Donna Maxey and Deborah Stepek. He ran the A Better Chance program for the western U.S. 1968 - mid 1970s, was head of MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) in CA, and ran The City Inc. in Minneapolis. Fred spent his life helping Black and brown students gain access to higher education, notably at The Windsor Mountain School in MA and Carleton College.

Fred had a sharp wit and a steady countenance. He was playful, often made duck noises at children and delighted them by closing one eye at a time without moving the rest of his face. He knew phrases in over 40 languages and loved surprising native speakers with their own language. He had a laugh that echoed through his whole body. He was a captivating storyteller and writer. He kept his friendships from his childhood in Dyckman Houses and Harlem River Houses all of his days. He appreciated life and he will be dearly and deeply missed.

Fred was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Douglas Easter. He is survived by daughters Allison Easter and Mallory Polk; son-in-law Preston Polk; grandchildren Marcus, Mason, Charlotte and Vanessa Polk; nieces Sandra Broadnax, Maya Hastings; nephew Douglas Easter, Jr; godchildren Julia Neville, Tim and Miles Gropen, Asa Morrall; step-daughters Shaina Pomerantz, Carmen Stepek; countless colleagues, students, and friends whose lives he touched.

The family expresses their gratitude to Fred's devoted caregivers, June Phillip and Jen Moore, to Trish Lewis and the friends who sat with Fred during his illness. In lieu of flowers donations may be made in Fred’s name to the Carleton College Scholarship Fund for students of color. Fred Easter donated his remains to the University of Minnesota Medical School to support medical research and education for health professionals.