



## **McRAE, WILLARD M.**

Social worker, civic leader, and a tireless volunteer who devoted himself to improving the lives of many, especially young people, Willard M. McRae died February 18, 2016 at his home in Middletown, CT. He was 82. A native of Middletown, Willard was born on October 11, 1933, the youngest of five children of Edmond and Bertha (Gillespie) McRae. He graduated from Middletown High School in 1951 and then earned his bachelor's from Central Connecticut State College. He completed a two year tour of duty in the Navy as a chaplain's assistant. Following his service, Willard returned home and was employed as a caseworker in the State Welfare Department. After receiving his master's in social work from the University of Connecticut and becoming a licensed clinical social worker, he became the District Director of the Middletown office. Willard served Middletown well over a long and distinguished career. He was elected to three terms on the Middletown City Council. He was a proud founder of the Wesleyan University Upward Bound Program and made major contributions to many local organizations. Willard was the first African-American to chair the Board of Directors at Liberty Bank and was a founding director of both the Liberty Bank Foundation and the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. At the time of his retirement in 1996, Willard was the Administrative Director of the Middlesex Hospital Mental Health Clinic. For his distinguished service, Willard has received numerous awards including the Middletown Press 2015 Person of the Year, the Sherry and Herb Clark Beacon of Philanthropy Award from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County and the Middlesex United Way Community Leadership Award. He is also a past recipient of the Liberty Bank Community Diversity Award and received the additional honor of having the award named for him. Willard is survived by Katherine (Bolden) McRae, his wife of 53 years; two daughters, Sandra Alyssa McRae Bowie (Dwain) of Rockwall, Texas; Lorraine Moira McRae, M.D. (Mike Fuquay) of Savannah, Ga.; a brother, Edmund McRae, of Middletown; four grandchildren, Morgan, Justin, Peerce and Vivian; and a host of nieces and nephews. Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his brother, Irving, and sisters, Thelma Riley and Vivian Wesley. Funeral services will be held on Tuesday, February 23rd at 10:30 am at Wesleyan University Memorial Chapel, High Street, Middletown. Burial will follow in Pine Grove Cemetery where full military honors will be accorded. Family and friends may call on Monday evening from 4:00 to 7:00 pm at Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church Street, Middletown. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Katherine and Willard McRae Fund of the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, 211 South Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457, Middlesex Hospital Hospice and Palliative Care, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457 or Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center, 536 Saybrook Road, Middletown, CT 06457.