



## Richard Delroy Calhoun

April 15, 1942 - December 27, 2023

On December 27, 2023, at 5:40 p.m. Richard Delroy Calhoun passed peacefully at home in Minneapolis with his son Gabriel and wife Beki by his side. Just 30 minutes prior, 81 year-old Delroy was visited by his most precious grandbabies.

Born in Minneapolis in 1942 to Helen and Richard Ellis Calhoun, he served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War and earned his Masters of Education from the University of Minnesota.

Delroy's most impactful academic honor was his selection for the Community Fellows Program at Harvard University and MIT. This experience changed his perception of himself and the world around him. Delroy went on to achieve many other honors during his career, including the University of Minnesota Howland Endowed Chair. Delroy was incredibly proud to serve his community. He worked for Center for Community Action, Loring-Nicollet Bethlehem, Project for Pride in Living, and co-founded MERC Alternative High School in 1980. He served on many boards including Camp Sunrise, Mixed Blood Theater and the Whittier Alliance. Each year on Father's Day, Delroy would receive calls, cards, and messages from the many people who were fortunate to have been impacted by his good heart. Delroy was known for his raucous laughter, loved music and was known to hum regularly to himself.

He is survived by his wife Rebecca (Beki) Saito with whom he celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary nine days before his departure. Beki recalls:

"During our first trip to New Orleans, we stayed out all night dancing in the

French Quarter (we were much younger then). One of the musicians ran up to us on the street and said he had been watching us all night and hoped that he and his new wife-she, Asian American and he, African American-would be as happy when they were as old as us..."Delroy is also survived by his greatest source of pride, his son Richard Gabriel Calhoun. Gabriel is married to the incredible Michelle Gehri Calhoun. Together they are raising two granddaughters, Natalie and Grace, who brought Delroy endless love, fulfillment, and joy.

Delroy is also survived by his brother, Stephen Harris, an Uncle, numerous cousins, nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and beloved sister, Adrienne Foreman-Jones.

A memorial service will be held at Zion Baptist Church, 621 Elwood Ave N., on Saturday April 6, 2024 at 1:00 pm followed by a continued celebration of life at 6:00 at the Bethlehem Community Center, 2539 Pleasant Ave S, where Delroy was director for 20 years.

We ask that you continue Delroy's work by giving of your time and other resources to young people in your midst.