



## Family Tree

A limb has fallen from the family tree  
I hear a voice that whispers, 'Grieve not  
for me'

Remember the best times, the laughter,  
the songs

The good I lived while I was strong  
Continue my heritage, I'm counting on  
you

Keep on smiling, the sun will shine  
through.

My mind is at ease, my soul is at rest  
Remembering all...how I was truly  
blessed

Continue traditions, no matter how small  
Go on with your lives, don't stare at the  
wall

I miss you all dearly so keep up your chin  
Until that fine day we're together again.

### *Interment*

Monday, August 22, 2022 — 11:00 a.m.  
Fort Sill National Cemetery  
Elgin, Oklahoma

Services under the direction of:  
**TEMPLE & SONS FUNERAL DIRECTORS, INC.**

2801 North Kelley Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73111  
(405) 427-8321

"We Care" — II Timothy 4:8

### *Acknowledgment*

The family of Cecil Williams wishes to express their sincere appreciation for all acts of kindness shown to them during this time of bereavement.

*In Loving Memory  
of  
Cecil Williams  
"Panhandle Slim"*



**SUNRISE**  
April 7, 1932

**SUNSET**  
August 6, 2022

#### **SERVICES**

Saturday, August 20, 2022 — 11:00 a.m.

**EARL M. TEMPLE MEMORIAL CHAPEL**

2801 N. Kelley Avenue  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111

Mr. Leon Williams, *Officiating*



## Order of Service

- Prelude ..... “Amazing Grace”
- Processional ..... Ministers, Funeral Directors, Family
- Music Selection ..... “Panhandle Slim”
- Scripture Reading  
     Old Testament ..... Mr. Leon Williams  
     — Ezekiel 37:1-14
- Prayer ..... Mr. Leon Williams
- Remarks *(Please limit to 2 minutes)*
- Music Selection ..... “Panhandle Slim”
- Obituary Reading ..... Janice Williams
- Eulogy ..... Mr. Leon Williams
- Military Ceremony ..... Flag Presentation
- Closing Prayer ..... Mr. Leon Williams
- Recessional ..... Ministers, Funeral Directors, Family

## Obituary

Howdy. Cecil Williams (to his family), ‘Panhandle Slim’ (to his fans), was born on April 7, 1932 to Curtis and Earnestine Williams in Pawnee County, OK. He was one of five children living as sharecroppers.

Growing up, Cecil and his siblings were taught the importance of attaining an education. He attended primary school in a single-room schoolhouse for Black children. Built in 1929, the school was a space for all children of Black families in Fairfax, OK. The family made sure it was made an everlasting symbol after its closure in 1956 by facilitating its admittance to the National Register of Historical Property in December of 2003.

Langston University was the first stop for Cecil, where after not much time, he met the woman who would be the love of his life. After a three year courtship, he did exactly as he said he would, and he married Velma Ruth Cotton, “the prettiest girl on campus.” Cecil would go on to graduate with a degree in Industrial Art/Education and an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

Before Cecil went to serve his military obligations, he and Velma were married. On October 18, 1953 in Fairfax at Sweet Home Baptist Church, sisters Catherine did the honors of planning the wedding and Mildred graced everyone with beautiful song. Velma went on to complete her education at Langston. Once reunited, two years later, the couple moved to Texas. Three children would arrive while there and then a new job opportunity would take the family to Rolla, Missouri. A short time later, they were going west to California, where they would learn and live for the next 20 years. Cecil and Velma made themselves known in their East Palo Alto community.

Through information, enlightenment and entertainment, Cecil spread the gospel of the Black West. As Cecil and Velma learned more of our wild west roots,

they were called to teach others. Cecil did this through storytelling and song. A guitar was bought, and self-taught left-handed guitar picking began. As more and more people became interested, the group the Nairobi Wranglers was formed. Velma was put in charge of managing Cecil’s many engagements. And Cecil continued to bring Black cowboys together, through a spectrum of Black History Programs and the East Palo Alto Hunting Club, where venison and sassafras tea could always be found.

After receiving a proclamation from the mayor in East Palo Alto, the journey continued. Back to Rolla Cecil and Velma went, but this time just the two of them. ‘Panhandle Slim’ was a household name in the Black West, as Cecil performed gigs on tv, radio, in schools, county fairs, extravaganzas, boys’ clubs, prairie day festivals, coffee shops, the Carver Museum, and more. With all this recognition came a membership to the Missouri Folklore Society.

To “inform, enlighten and entertain” was what Cecil was called to do, and its safe to say he did just that. And he did it well. If asked, I think he’d say “don’t mind if I do da do da.”

Cecil was preceded in death by his parents, Curtis and Earnestine Williams, and one brother, Cornelious Williams, Sr.

With great love, Cecil “Panhandle Slim” Williams is survived by his wife, Velma Ruth, his Queen of 68 years; three daughters: Linda King, Alicia Hall (Melvin), and Rita Williams; siblings: Catherine Williams, Mildred Marie House, Curtis Williams (Jeannina); grandchildren: Donald, Jr. (Sarah), Natasha (Jozséf), Tenia (Patrick), and Andrea (Joseph); great-grandchildren: Donatello, Esperanza, Milan, Gael, Langston, Quincy, and Teddy; and a host of nieces, nephews, relatives and friends, who will truly miss him.