

**From the Cradle to the Grave**

**Our Legacy of Love and Hope**

**A Collection of African –American Funeral Programs**

**1958-2005**

**A Mother's Worst Fear**

**Sheron Leavy**

**September 18, 1979- November 8, 1998**

All of us have our fears. Some of us are afraid of heights, snakes, spiders, closed in spaces- silly, irrational reservations about things we very seldom will encounter. There is one fear though that lurks in the hearts of every parent worth the skin they inhabit, the completely rational fear of losing a child.

On Nov. 8, 1998 in Brownville, Tenn., Carolyn Leavy's greatest trepidation came to pass, her oldest son and second child Sheron's flame was tragically snuffed out forever.

"I don't wake up crying anymore," Leavy said. "Usually when I think of him now, I laugh." He was 19 years-old.

One of the many things she remembers fondly of her son was his speech pattern.

"I used to laugh about the way he talked," she said. "He would get tongue tied a little bit."

She said that now she remembers the simple things between them.

Acceptance was a long and treacherous road for Leavy to get to. Her son was gunned in cold blood by a young man who had a history of violence.

The assailant used to bully Sheron's third cousin and take his said cousin's lunch money. When Sheron discovered that his cousin was being bullied he decided to take matters into his hands and defend his cousin by means of force.

"I told him you can't save the world," she said. "He would do anything for his family."

Sheron was by no means a bully. He was well loved and respected in his community as well as his relatives. He was a high school senior.

"He had a good personality, if someone pushed a button more than once then of course he would get a temper," she said.

His being shot was heartbreaking enough, the tragedy of it is he would have had a chance of survival if their local ambulance and law enforcement would have had arrived on time.

"They stood out there the whole time and did not do anything," Leavy said. They waited for an ambulance to come even though it would have been quicker to simply drive him to the hospital on the interstate.

"The hospital told me the helicopter was late because they had to fuel up before it took off. I know that was a lie because those helicopters fuel up after every landing," she said.

When they finally got him to the hospital, the physicians at the hospital were amazed at how his body was so healthy.

“They were so surprised at his organs,” they had convinced Leavy to donate his body for transplants. She complied.

“He took really good care of himself, he took pride in his appearance,” she said.

She later pursued suing the hospital as well as the police department for negligence, which after trying to convince lawyer after lawyer, she had to give up and left the rest in the hands of God.

“I can’t imagine why a parent would relive that stuff over and over again in trial,” Leavy said.

Each lawyer she contacted claimed they had a relative or at the very least was affiliated with someone on the medical board and stated that was the reason why they could not take her case.

The Brownsville Police Department was callous about the death of her child.

“They told me to get over it,” she said.

When they finally found the young man responsible, he only spent seven months in jail. It took him stabbing another young man 14 times before they decided to put him away for good.

“I will never forgive Brownsville PD for what they did. It was wrong.”

One of her greatest sources of comfort during her son’s passing was her pastor, Oscar Bailey of Dancyville CME Church.

“He was the only person who really stood by me during that time,” she said.

He gave her strength.

Until this year, she would fall apart on the anniversary of his death.

“I could always feel it, (Nov 8) I did not need anyone to tell me or a calendar for that.”

The night before he died they shared a tender moment together.

“The night before he died, he came in and lied down beside me on the floor. We were watching some movie about an ape in space. We laughed and laughed. I remember I told him that I loved him and then I went to bed. I didn’t realize it at the time but as I look back on it something about that moment felt so final,” she said.

Currently, Leavy lives in Covington and has no desire to return to Brownsville. She has three grandchildren by her daughter, Shalesha and her youngest, Santonio lives with her mother Bobbie Bells in Brownsville.

“I bought my first house two years ago,” she said.

Sheron Leavy will always be apart of his mother’s life even though he is no longer with her.

“Whenever I made dishwater he would tell me, ‘I don’t know why you making that water, you are not going to wash those dishes until two hours from now you are wasting water.’ He told me that every night. I still do that to this day and every time I do, I hear his voice.”