

Darryl Wayne Rochester was born on March 27, 1953 in Newark, New Jersey. He was the youngest child of Mabel (Dudley) and Robert Stanley Rochester, Sr. and the brother of Iva Russell, Yvonne Bogar Lee (Russell), Sandra R. Carney, Robert Stanley Rochester, Jr. (Russell), and Gregory Leroy Rochester. Darryl attended Peshine Avenue School and Weequahic High School in Newark, New Jersey, graduating in 1971.

Darryl grew up on Johnson Avenue among a close-knit extended family and where he created a large circle of lifelong friends. As a child Darryl and his siblings attended Metropolitan Baptist Church in Newark, NJ. After the early and untimely death of his beloved mother, Darryl gained a stepmother, Lettie Rochester (Reeves) and two sisters Deborah Tuddles (Reeves) and Rosalyn Reeves. At an early age, Darryl showed an affinity for the arts so Sandra enrolled him in Kae Thompson Payne's dance studio. Under Mrs. Payne's tutelage, his love for dance flourished into a lifelong passion. After graduating from Weequahic High School, Darryl's love for the arts bloomed into his first career after he auditioned and was accepted in the famed Alvin Ailey Dance troupe. Unfortunately, Darryl soon suffered an injury which would bring an end to his dance career.

Darryl continued to embrace his artistic side by enrolling in the Wilfred Academy of Hair and Beauty Culture and Christine Valmy Beauty School in New York, receiving certifications from them both. With these certifications and the influences of his late mother Mabel and her dear friends, including Emily Miles "the grand dame of black style in Newark", Darryl began taking the tri-state area fashion scene by storm. He was tapped by the legendary Al Murphy (who was obsessed with Emily Miles) to choreograph funky dance-theater pieces for Murphy's highly extravagant fashion shows. Darryl and his dear friends, fashion designer Jaime McDonald and model Tommy Garrett, participated in these epic shows, as did such legends as Iman, Pat Cleveland, and Beverly Johnson, the first Black woman to grace the cover of Vogue Magazine. Around this time, Darryl opened his first salon, funded by Stanley, in the basement of the Rochester-Reeves family home on Keer Avenue. There, Darryl styled many of New Jersey's hottest models and celebrities including Beverly Johnson, Pat Cleveland and one of his best friends, the groundbreaking Tracy "Africa" Norman. He also styled participants of the legendary New York Ball culture and over the years was a premier stylist at Bamberger's, the famous Soul Scissors Salon, and Avalon Day Spa in Greenwich Village.

Darryl was central to the theatrical environment of this era. Most notable was his association with the Club Le Jock, 36 Halsey Street in Newark, an LGBTQ space that spawned the theatrical environment for the expression of free black subjectivity and a precursor for similar cultural spaces throughout the tri-state area. Darryl's contributions to the LGBTQ community and cultural scene have been recorded in the Rutgers University Queer Newark annals. He later became a fixture at such legendary clubs as Zanzibar, Studio 54, The Garage, and The Loft.

Although Darryl did not have children of his own he took great delight in being everyone's Uncle Darryl; his many friends and clients were like his family. As a right of passage, Uncle Darryl enjoyed taking his nieces clubbing to New York and New Jersey hot spots...after their hair and

makeup were sufficiently snatched enough to make him proud. And while he also never married, his longtime relationship with Calvin Cleveland brought love and light to his life.

Darryl enjoyed traveling to places as far as Amsterdam; however, nothing could compare to his love for Martha's Vineyard. He spent many a sunrise doing yoga on the Inkwell while watching the "Polar Bears" take their morning dip (we all know he couldn't swim), and many lazy afternoons on the beach or better yet people watching in the front yard of Sandy's Sanctuary on Circuit and Masonic Avenues.

As an adult Darryl continued his spiritual journey by joining the Good Neighbor Baptist Church where he became an active member and enjoyed participating in the church choir. Darryl's earthly journey ended December 8, 2020, but he rests eternally with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and his spirit lives on in his family and friends.

Darryl was preceded in death by his beloved parents, Mabel and Stanley Rochester, brother Iva Russell, sister Yvonne Bogar Lee, and sister-in-law Charlotte Russell. He is survived by his loving sister Sandra, brothers Robert and Gregory, sisters Deborah and Rosalind, special friends Calvin Cleveland and Yvonne Vickers, and an entire cast of aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

Newspaper Version

Darryl Wayne Rochester, 67, made his transition on December 8, 2020. The celebration of his vibrant life will be held via Zoom on Saturday, December 19 at 5 p.m. R.S.V.P. is required. Email DarrylRochesterMemorial@gmail.com to receive the information. Mr. Rochester, a legendary figure in fashion and hair design, was a longtime resident of Newark and later of Maplewood. He was the son of the late Mabel and Robert Stanley Rochester, Sr. and the brother of Sandra Carney, Robert Jr. and Gregory Rochester, the late Iva Russell, the late Yvonne Bogar Lee, Deborah Tuddles, and Rosalind Reeves. He is survived by an entire cast of aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.