

OBITUARY: Rev. Darren McCarroll

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

DETROIT – Rev. Darren McCarroll, a champion for social justice and longtime minister with the Unity Fellowship Church Movement, succumbed to a year-long battle with colon cancer Nov. 27. He was 48.

Born and raised in the city of Detroit, McCarroll studied electronics and instrumental music at Cass Technical High School. By the time he graduated in 1980, McCarroll was already involved with the Shrine of the Black Madonna.

“That’s where he met my brother,” said Kofi Adoma, a longtime friend. “He helped Darren learn to play the keyboard, play the organ and music theory, and Darren just took off with it. He was so naturally gifted.”

In 1986, McCarroll moved across country and settled in Los Angeles. He was working as a technician for Xerox when he discovered the mother church of the UFCM and attended a Friday night service.

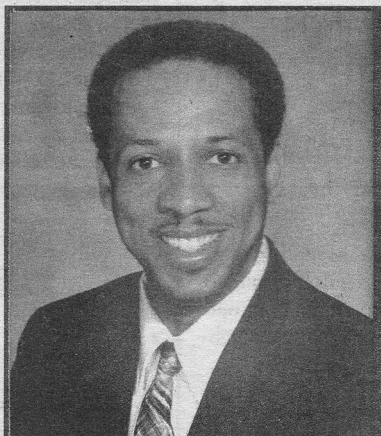
“He kind of sat toward the back because it was a new setting for him to see people with HIV and AIDS talk about being positive,” recalled Archbishop Carl Bean, founder of both UFCM and the Minority AIDS Project, which were then housed in the same building. “He had been diagnosed and I guess he kept it very close to the heart and the breast, and then he came into this setting where people were saying they were living with HIV and AIDS and they were welcome to do that.”

Before long, McCarroll confided in Bean that he had found his “spiritual home” and began offering his services

to the church. He eventually became the minister of music.

“I just welcomed him in and he began to work free of charge,” said Bean. “I don’t think he ever got a salary. It wasn’t that he wanted to be paid. He just volunteered it.”

McCarroll soon became involved



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with the Minority AIDS Project as well, leaving Xerox to take a position with MAP as a client advocate. But McCarroll felt a higher calling still and confided in Bean that he wanted to enter the ministry.

“I was just beginning to develop a diaconate class for those who wanted to learn more about liberation theology,” Bean said. “He became a part of that class. He was a brilliant mind, probably one of my most brilliant students ever.”

In 1996, when a pastorate opened up at what was then Full Truth Unity

Fellowship in Detroit, Bean sent his young student home and set him loose in the pulpit. McCarroll stayed with the church three years, leaving in late 1999 to return to school. He began working for the City of Detroit, most noticeably in the Mayor’s Office for Targeted Business Development, in 2000, and remained with the city for 10 years. He completed his law degree at Wayne State University in 2004 and went on to teach at Wayne County Community College as an adjunct professor.

Eventually, McCarroll even returned to pastoring, which Bean says was his first calling.

“He was clearly a called man when it came to spiritual love and compassion and concern for the least of them, those that were marginalized, and especially for same-gender attracted people,” said Bean.

Mark Young first met McCarroll when the two were in the band together at Cass Tech. It was the beginning of a friendship that lasted 35 years.

“He was confident, my cheerleader, my support team,” he said. “We were interwoven in each other’s lives.”

Because she was the older of the two, Adoma said she considered McCarroll a younger brother – yet still she looked up to him.

“He was an inspiration to me,” she said. “He taught me how to love unconditionally. He taught me how to be courageous about who I was, and how to love my enemies regardless of how much they despise me. And he taught me how to use my anger about oppression as an opportunity to lift people up.”

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