A CELEBRATION OF LIFE AND MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR

WILLIE B. “WAJIR” PEACOCK
SEPTEMBER 5, 1937-APRIL 17, 2016

“I woke up with freedom on my mind.”
SNCC FIELD SECRETARY, MISSISSIPPI & ALABAMA 1960-1966

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THE BAY AREA VETERANS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

JUNE 18, 2016 2-5 PM
THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OAKLAND
685 14TH ST., OAKLAND, CA 94612
DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI WILLIE
Based on the song Deep Blue Sea as sung by Odetta

DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI WILLIE
DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI WILLIE
DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI WILLIE
DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI WILLIE
DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI WILLIE
IT WAS WILLIE
WHAT GOT FREEDOM
IN THE DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI
FREED HIS SOUL
FROM HIS BLACK BODY
FREED HIS SOUL
FROM HIS BLACK BODY
FREED HIS SOUL
FROM HIS BLACK BODY
IT WAS WILLIE
WHAT GOT FREEDOM
IN THE DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI
RAISED UP HIGH
ON HIS GOLD 'N WINGS
RAISED UP HIGH
ON HIS GOLD 'N WINGS
IT WAS WILLIE
WHAT GOT FREEDOM
IN THE DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI
DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI WILLIE
DEEP BLACK 'SIPPI WILLIE
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Bob Moses
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CELEBRATION PROGRAM

Ron Bridgeforth, Bay Area CRM Vet

Rev. Clarence Johnson, Mills Grove Church

Stand for Freedom: The Life and Times of Willie B. “Wazir” Peacock (film)

Bettie Mae Fikes, SNCC Freedom Singer

Bay Area CRM Vets, Reflections of a Friend & Comrade

Elaine & Pallo Peacock, Family Remembrances

Self-Realization Fellowship
Self-Affirming Self-Healing Africans
Stepping Stones Growth Center

Vukani Mawethu Choir

Open Reflections

Closing
Honoring Wazir

We in Bay Area Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement (BayVets) were privileged to work with Wazir, and learn from him. In the South in the 1960s, his Freedom Movement brothers and sisters usually referred to him as "Peacock," but here in NorCal in the late '90s and after we used his self-chosen name "Wazir."

"So many Willie's in the world," he told us. "For a while, I came to Islam right after SNCC around 1966, and I was given the name. It means essentially one who shares with the people. One of the persons who translated the Koran into English -- he said that the best meaning was one who worked on behalf of the people for God, for Allah. A servant of the people in its truest sense."

Wazir was one of our founding members when we first came together in 1999. He became an important guide and contributor to our Civil Rights Movement Veterans website (http://www.crmvet.org). Most of us had been active in the Movement in Alabama and Mississippi from 1963 on, so he was our link to the early pioneering days when young students were first stepping up and, "daring to stand in a strong sun and cast a sharp shadow."

We originally formed BayVets around the idea of finding ways to help our Movement sisters and brothers who had fallen on hard times -- the "walking wounded" as we called them. It was Wazir who showed us that we whose boots had been on the ground in the hard and dangerous days of the freedom struggle.
were all of us walking wounded ourselves. All of us were carrying hidden scars and emotional wounds that only others who had shared similar experiences could help heal. That healing became a vital part of our BayVets work.

Wazir loved to speak about the Freedom Movement to community groups, churches, and most definitely school kids. He had a special affinity for reaching the younger children in elementary school with whom he could talk about what it was like growing up as a child in segregated, Jim Crow Mississippi. And he loved -- and they loved -- being able to share with them the freedom songs of the Freedom Movement.

Recently, Milton Reynolds of "Facing History" wrote to Wazir: "I appreciate the fact that we have had the opportunity to connect as colleagues in the struggle, but also that I've been able to share your work and your beloved community of freedom fighters with hundreds of students. I can only tell you that they are inspired, and moved to action by your life of dignity and purpose."

For six years, Wazir was a primary resource expert for the San Francisco summer Freedom School program that worked to bring the lessons of the Movement to today's teachers and students. And until he fell ill, he was a regular guest speaker in San Francisco State University history and political science classes.
Professor Kathy Emery of the S.F. Freedom School and S.F. State said, "I can't tell you how much my students miss your semester visits to San Francisco State University. Your guest speaker visits have become legend. Veteran students have told new students that you used to come to class and tell compelling stories of growing up in Mississippi; running away to protest your father's decision to move you all to the plantation; why you changed your name to Wazir from Willie B (they are particularly outraged by the doctor naming you Willie B when you were born)... You gave your life to the movement and your stories have inspired hundreds of my students to participate in social justice action today..."

Two years ago Wazir recorded a video oral-history titled, "Stand For Freedom: The Life and Times of Willie B. Wazir Peacock" which is now available on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcBfHAdtM4Q). He took great pride in being able to share his legacy with those who are picking up the freedom torch today. A transcription of an earlier oral history is also available on the CRMVet website (http://www.crmvet.org/nars/wazir1.htm).

Bruce Hartford and Chude Allen,
Bay Area Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement
SNCC Legacy Project Statement on Willie B. "Wazir" Peacock

"Peacock" as we most often called him in Movement days, could have been a doctor, was in fact on his way to med school, but the movement came knocking at his door in Tallahatchie County, challenged him and his plans changed. He once said of the movement that reshaped him and Mississippi in so many important ways: "It caused me to act. And I learned that this is not just about myself. How do I get other people involved to help my dream come true, and translate it to them to show that — in their own language — this is what they're talking about too? Not to bring something, but to find something."

We who are engaged in the SNCC Legacy Project are part of Wazir’s legacy. And that legacy, Wazir would say, demands that we continue to act; and to find ways to act with others.

Mississippi was changed because men and women like Peacock acted. We emphasize this in this brief statement because as much as we miss his presence and recognize the impact of his work, we are neither gathered here nor thinking about Wazir from a distance, to mourn him. He would not want that. We need to remind ourselves with Wazir on our minds, perhaps thinking of one of the many songs he loved to sing, that struggle continues.

The SNCC Legacy Project
With Appreciation....
The family of Willie
“Wazir” Peacock thanks
you for your presence in his
life. We would like to thank
the Bay Area Civil Rights
Movement vets and every-
one who helped to make this celebration possible. We
would also like to thank those who loved and cared
for Wazir during his last months.

Wazir was preceded in death by his parents and one son Silas
Peacock; four brothers, Vernon Lewis Peacock, Johnny Peacock,
James Arthur Peacock, Jack Shelley Peacock and two sisters,
Della Mae Hudson and Clara Jean Peacock. Wazir leaves to
mourn his passing one daughter, Della Hill (Clinton, MS), two
sons Pallo Peacock (Oakland, CA), and Bijon
Bruce (Grand Rapids, MI); four grandchild-
dren; Dwight Anthony Hill Jr., Dana DeVante
Hill, Naia Rose Kramer, and Nouri Rana Pea-
cock. He also leaves a host of Nieces, Neph-
ews, Cousins, Civil Rights comrades and
many, many friends who loved and admired
him for his Life of Love and Service.

....FREEDOM ON MY MIND