“He was a giant among men, a voice in times of challenge,” said the Rev. C. Jay Matthews, pastor of Mount Sinai Baptist Church, where Jones’ funeral was held. His coffin was draped in a red, black and green flag, which also was proudly worn by many who attended the service in remembrance of the struggle in the 1960s when he was best known as a local activist.

By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

Hundreds came out to pay their last respects to Harlell Jones. Almost all in attendance had a story to tell about how the internationally known activist and community organizer changed their life.

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Jones, 71, was a key figure during the ‘60s. Many of the speakers at Jones’ funeral remembered him as a level-headed and inspirational leader during those tough years. Jones founded several organizations, such as the Afro Set and later the Denise McNair New Life Center , which assists ex-felons re-entering the community.

Jones’ goal was to inspire African Americans and to make a difference in ones life. “My brother was a good person and we will miss him,” said Harllel’s sister Hadda.

“To me he was a great warrior and I want to continue what he has done. The best way to pay tribute is to continue to stay in the streets and end youth violence,” said activist James Box.

The Hue People provided a drum solo while Diane Bailey read a poem. The eulogy was done by Amir El’Hajj Khalid Samad, founder of Peace in the Hood. Samad talked about the legacy of Jones and stating to the crowd, “We must continue the legacy of Jones.”

Samad went to say, “we stand on the shoulders of Omar Ali Bey, Fannie Lewis, the honorable Carl B. Stokes, all those who defended our community.”

Jones had received many accolades for his decades of service to the City of Cleveland, including being awarded with the key to the City of Cleveland twice from former Mayor Michael R. White.

His commitment to the struggle for Black Nationalism and the empowerment of his people is legendary. He was part of a new breed of brash, bold, outspoken and uncompromising leadership that emerged in the ‘60s that were given the title of Black Power Leaders.

He met and worked with such leaders as El Hajj Malik Shabazz (Malcolm X), Imam Jamil Al-Amin (formerly known as H. Rap Brown), Stokley Carmichael (Kwame Touree), Huey Newton, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and all major Civil Rights and Black Power movement leaders of the time.

As the founder of Afro Set (The Black Nationalist Party for Self Defense) in the early ‘60s, he was also active in various afrocentric organizations including a nationalist coalition known as The Federation, made up of several organization such as the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), The Republic of New Libya, The Republic of New Afrika, Nation of Islam, street organizations, RAM, the Federation of Black Nationalists, local chapter of the Student Non Violence Coordinating Committee and other Non Traditional community leadership.

The Federation also received the support of groups such as the Black Lawyers Organization, NAACP, and Interchurch Council. His ability as a mediator enabled him to help to bring such diverse groups as the Moorish Science Temple of America, the Nation of Islam, various Masjids and church groups to the table to reach common ground to work together to address the problems plaguing the urban community.

His memory will remain in the hearts of his family; wife Hattie Jones, three sons Harlell Jones Jr., Dirrell Jones and Osceola Jones who preceded him in death. **Three daughters** Harletha Jones, Makeba Bryant and her husband Judson and Kenyatta Abrams and her husband Melvin.

He leaves to cherish his brothers Henry Jr., Harland and Highford (Harvey and Harwood preceded him in death. Sisters Helaine, Hadda (Harriet, Harlean, Harolyn who preceded him in death). He also leaves sixteen grandchildren, one great grandchild and a host of friends.

In a written statement from long time friend and fellow community activist Khalid A. Samad of Peace in the Hood, “Prime Minister Harlell X. Jones symbolized self determination, which is an inalienable right for all human beings and he was a voice for self definition, respect and determination. His leadership and those like minded young fearless and articulate voices ignited the most electrifying and tumultuous period in Black history and produced more committed leaders than any other era before or since.”