



## **Dr. Swanson Devon Carter**

**January 25, 1941 – November 16, 2018**

(From Hinton News – May 2019)

Swanson Devon Carter, Ph.D., passed away peacefully on November 16, 2018, in Williamsburg, VA, following a brief illness. He was the son of the late Louise Carter Gibbs.

Born on January 25, 1941, in Hinton, WV, Swanson attended Lincoln School during his early years and graduated from Hinton High School in 1959. Soon after graduation, he enlisted in the United States Air Force (USAF) and served his country for four years. After fulfilling his military commitment, Swanson was eager to return home to West Virginia and attend West Virginia State College (WVSC) in Institute, WV (now West Virginia State University) where he received a B.S. Degree in Sociology.

During his college years, he met and married Julie Ann Scott of Detroit, MI, his first wife, with whom he had a son, Scott. After graduation, Swanson accepted a position as probation officer in Detroit and continued his education at Wayne State University, earning a Masters Degree in Sociology. While still living in Detroit, the young couple had their second child, Robin.

Swanson was recruited to join the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 1971.

He was among the first 50 African American Special Agents and the first African American Special Agent from West Virginia. He quickly distinguished himself during his exemplary career with the FBI and was one of the first African American Special Agents to be promoted to a supervisory position. Early in his

career with the FBI, Swanson served the Bureau in Indianapolis, IN and then Philadelphia, PA. While in Philadelphia, he helped investigate the infamous Patty Hearst kidnapping case in 1974. Years later, in 1980, Swanson moved his family to northern Virginia to become a faculty member at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA, the first African American to serve in that prestigious capacity. In 1982, he completed his doctoral studies at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ and was awarded a Ph.D. in Education.

Following his tenure at the FBI Academy, Swanson was elevated to the rank of Senior Executive Service (SES) and assigned the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at FBI Headquarters in Washington, DC where he coordinated all television and motion picture projects as well as publications for the Bureau. Television programs, such as America's Most Wanted and Unsolved Mysteries, were initiated under his leadership.

Among the major films for which he served as a liaison were *The Pelican Brief*, starring Julia Roberts and Denzel Washington, and *The Silence of the Lambs* with Jodie Foster, a film that earned five Academy Awards in 1992, including Best Picture. Swanson made a cameo appearance in *The Silence of the Lambs* at the invitation of Director Jonathan Demme.

Swanson capped his FBI career in his home state of West Virginia, helping to lead the FBI's Criminal Information Services Division (CJIS) in Clarksburg where he received the "People's Choice Award" in 1998 and also was nominated for the FBI Director's Annual Award for Excellence in Management. Swanson retired from the FBI in 1999, bringing to a close his 28-year career. During his years of public service, Swanson mentored many Special Agents, support personnel and others who remember him fondly today for the impact he had on their lives and careers.

Immediately upon his retirement from the FBI, he accepted a faculty position with West Virginia State University (WVSU) and was voted "Teacher of the Year" just a year later.

In 2000, he also married his second wife, Carolyn Baker. After three years of teaching, Swanson resigned his tenured-track position at WVSU and relocated with Carolyn to her hometown, Williamsburg, VA where Swanson continued with his community service and teaching activities. In retirement, he remained active in several civic, social and fraternal affiliations, including Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Sigma Pi Phi Epsilon, Delta Boule, the NAACP, the Williamsburg Chapter of WVSU Alumni Association, for which he served as president and the

Williamsburg Men's Club. He also was a member of the New Zion Baptist Church of Williamsburg and, earlier in his life, Camon Baptist Church of Hinton, which was founded by his great-grandparents, Artie and David Jones and others in 1919.

Those who knew Swanson best understood the greatest loves of his life were his family, his hometown and beloved alma mater, West Virginia State College. He spoke often and passionately about these tremendous influences in his life. Many of his conversations, during numerous visits to WV or elsewhere, typically included a reference to one or all three. He loved his hometown so much that he purchased a cottage on the Greenbrier River at Barger Springs, which became his personal sanctuary whenever he returned to Summers County. His deep concern for the youth of his hometown inspired him to establish, in 1994, a chapter of the Boys and Girls Club of America. The community, in turn, honored him that year by naming him Parade Marshall for the Annual West Virginia Water Festival. Although the Boys and Girls Club effort ultimately fell short of his hopes and expectations, Swanson was pleased by the strong support given to this important program by so many in Hinton and beyond.

Among his many interests and hobbies, Swanson was a voracious reader, an advocate for education as a pathway to success, a car enthusiast and tenacious genealogist/researcher of his family's history. He was proud of the fact that his family established roots in Summers County, WV as early as 1870.

Swanson is survived by his wife, Carolyn; a daughter, Robin Stoecker (Doug); two stepchildren, Keisha Brawner-Ilea (Radu) and Darryl Brawner (Tiara); two sisters, Mischa Carter of Washington, DC, Joy Gibbs Baker (Charlie) of Washington, PA; a brother Gregory Gibbs (Greg) of Bethesda, MD; two grandchildren, Samantha Stoecker and Scott Stoecker; three step-grandchildren, Erin Gibson, Alexandra Ilea and Andrew Ilea, as well as several nephews, nieces, cousins and friends. He was predeceased by his mother, Louise Carter Gibbs, his son, Scott Carter, a brother, William Gibbs, and uncles Robert D. Moon and David L. Moon.

Swanson will be missed greatly by his family, friends and the communities to which he was so devoted. His remains were cremated and a Memorial celebrating his life was held on November 28, 2018 at New Zion Baptist Church in Williamsburg, VA, officiated by Dr. Robert A Whitehead, Sr. A final private family remembrance is planned for May 26, 2019, in Hinton.