

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 13, 2017

ERIC EMMERSON STRONG UPDATED FUNERAL DETAILS

LUBBOCK, TX – On Saturday, March 11, 2017, Eric Emmerson Strong a local leader and community activist died at 4 p.m. surrounded by his loving family, at Covenant Hospital. He had been dealing with a lengthy illness.

Strong was a poet, an educator, a writer, a historical arts activist, a nationally recognized storyteller and the Founder and Director of Roots Historical Arts Council. He was the first-place winner of the 2007 Writers League of Texas Oral Storytelling Competition.

Eric's stories spoke to issues of tolerance, hope, and self-esteem. His repertoire included stories of the Old West, African and African-American folktales, peace tales and personal stories; and is at times punctuated with music, song, dance, poetry and puppetry.

A former university administrator with over 25 years of experience in higher education, Eric garnered state and national recognition for innovation in college-prep programming for classroom teachers and limited income students.

He held a Bachelor's Degree from Prairie View A&M University and a Masters from Texas Tech. His service in the arts and humanities led to his being named "Man of the Year" on two occasions, once by the Confederated Women's Clubs of West Texas and a second time by the area chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. He was awarded "Texas Man of Distinction" by the National Business League of Texas and "Top Techsan" by Texas Tech University.

Eric was a driving force of the Lubbock Roots Historical Arts Council that began as the Roots Committee in 1978. At that time the organization's desire was to share the African American experience in the Early American West. This led to the committee to organize the first-ever reenactment of Nolan's Staked Plains Expedition of 1877, where a troop of 10th Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers survived on the parched West Texas Plains by drinking the blood and urine of their dying horses. The success of the reenactment and the group's desire to share the African American historical and cultural experience with the region led Eric to prepare the incorporation of Roots as a nonprofit arts and humanities organization.

He was the founder of the Caviel Museum of African-American History, which he brought to fruition in 2015. The museum sits at the corner of Avenue A and 17th Street. It became the first African-American museum in West Texas.

Eric believed that African-American history and culture was an important and integral part of the Lubbock community. The Caviel Museum is truly a piece of history celebrating those like Eric, who impacted not only Lubbock but the world.

This visionary was tenacious and humble. He later opened the Roots Community Revitalization Center, an office located on Ave. A, which showcases art and is used as an office for many groups including neighborhood associations and organizations serving the African American community.

He was working on the Historic East Lubbock Gateway, an individually funded beautification project designed to enhance about six city blocks, from 17th Street on Avenue A south to 23rd Street, all in an effort to revitalize east Lubbock.

"If they'll go to Amarillo to see Cadillacs buried in the sand, imagine what people will do to see dancing sculptures in the wind, and interpret African American history," said Eric.

In addition, Eric was the founder of the annual Caprock Jazz Festival that successfully brought high-quality contemporary jazz performers to the South Plains. The festival is a major fundraiser for the Roots Historical Arts Council and the Caviel Museum of African American History.

In January 2017, the Martin Luther King Commemorative Council of Lubbock honored him for his service to the community. He humbly accepted the award acknowledging others during his acceptance speech.

Despite his lengthy illness, Eric worked tenaciously to honor the contributions of others, humbly working as a volunteer all the way to the end.

Eric was a strong advocate of the arts, of culture, and of people. He planted many seeds and his legacy will continue to grow and be celebrated.

He is survived by his wife, Maria Lopez Strong, two sons, Tizoc Strong, married to Kirrah; and Eric Jerbran Strong, married to Jennifer; as well as two daughters, Tamitra Taylor his oldest daughter; and Destinee Townley, married to Matthew. As well as six grandchildren: Camron, Emery, Easton, Kayla, Kastle, and Amelia. Two sisters, Linda "Bunnie" Strong and Sandra McLemore, and two brothers Bryant "Treedom" Strong and Rowland Strong.

He will be missed but not forgotten.

VIEWING:

Friday, March 17th

1-6 p.m.

Griffin Mortuary

1715 E. Broadway

Lubbock, TX 79403
In Lubbock, TX

WAKE:

Friday, March 17th 6:30-8 p.m.
Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church
2302 Cedar Ave.
In Lubbock, TX 79404

FUNERAL SERVICES:

Saturday, March 18th 11 a.m.
Viewing begins at 10am and ends when service begins at St. John United Methodist Church
1501 University Ave.
In Lubbock, TX 79401

INTERMENT:

The interment will be at Peaceful Gardens following the services
15602 TX-493 Loop,
Lubbock, TX 79423

In lieu of flowers, the family suggest donations to the Lubbock Roots Historical Arts Council at <https://www.rootshistoricalartscouncil.com>

In addition, the Eric Emmerson Strong Memorial Fund has been set up at all City Bank locations.

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Media is asked to contact the PR representative Christy Martinez-Garcia at (806)544-6526 or (806)792-1212 for more details, interviews, photos, video during this time of grieving. In addition, please visit www.rootshistoricalartscouncil.com/ericstrong for updates.

Writer's Note: *Eric Strong was my mentor. I met him at the age of 15. He recruited me to the Upward Bound Program. We remained friends for life, and he was one of the significant persons that helped me to become who I was destined to be. His vision, passion, commitment to people, culture, and the arts is something that we shared. We had many discussions of people and former students. He celebrated the achievements of all who met him. He was a people connector and would often send folks to me. My daughter Amaris began helping him with PR, marketing, and multi-media work to help further promote his good work. Eric was extremely humble and driven, and in his last days, he had made visits to my office. He was at the point where he could no longer get off the car and was being chauffeured by his sister Bunny. This is a bittersweet day for his family and all who loved him - and that was by many.*