



Mr. Tilman Blair

September 22, 1943 - January 8, 2026

Tilman Blair

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Detroit Police Corporal Tilman Blair was born to Willie Blair Sr. and Annie Rosco on September 22, 1943, in Inverness, Mississippi. He departed this life on Jan. 8, 2026.

Tilman's family migrated to Detroit, Michigan, when he was very young. Little is known about his early schooling, before Tilman attended Eastern High School in Detroit. He was a member of the high school's cross country track team, a trombonist in the A-Band, an officer in the Courtesy Patrol club, and on the reserve football team. Tilman graduated in June 1961.

Tilman briefly worked as a patient attendant at Plymouth State Home and Training School, an institution for people with developmental disabilities, before being drafted into the United States Army in 1965. He was stationed in Japan. After being honorably discharged, he returned to his job at Plymouth just long enough to meet and marry Eva Owens in 1967. The couple raised three daughters, Kimberly, Tonia, and LaTrina, imparting in them strong values, work ethic and the value of a dollar. No chores, no pay. And once your allowance was spent, there was no coming back for more!

For the past 58 years, Tilman served as a Detroit Police Officer. He joined the force in 1967, attending the academy during the Detroit riots. Tilman spent much of his career in the Traffic Enforcement Division. He rode everything from the early scooters to the Harley-Davidsons. He worked special events,

escorting presidents – even spending time identifying fingerprints before the invention of computers. Tilman was well-respected and was known for his quick wit, sense of humor, uncommon memory and ability to impart sage advice to up-and-coming officers. In 2024, Tilman was recognized as the longest serving active sworn member of DPD. He officially retired from active duty in December 2025. Tilman was also a licensed real estate broker for many years. He also attended Wayne County Community College.

An avid and curious learner, Tilman amassed a collection of thousands of books across a broad range of topics that interested him and the ones he loved. You could not mention a hobby or an interest within his earshot and not leave with a stack of books on the subject.

Tilman was a talented musician, playing the trombone and guitar. His voice rivaled the R&B greats. In the comfort of his home, it was common to suddenly hear Tilman's voice rise into a magical falsetto before dipping into an impressive baritone. Tilman's dulcet tones can be heard singing background on the album of his friend, 60's musical artist Nathaniel Mayer. Tilman's dance skills matched his musical chops. He and Eva often stunned onlookers with their skills on the dance floor.

Another little known talent was Tilman's love of writing poetry. With a little coaxing, he could recite poems he wrote long ago. "For the world is full of you and I / Who cheat, steal and even lie / To keep what we have and to part for nothing / And remember always the worst but never the best / You and I."

In addition to his wife and children, Tilman leaves to cherish his memory his grandchildren, Christen, Terrell, Brittany, Donald Jr., Jordyn and Shyra, and his great grandchildren Caleigh, Baileigh and Harleigh; his brothers Cornell, Clint, Clunge, J.W. and Judge; his sisters Brenda, Sandra, Clementine, and Beverly; and a host of cousins, nieces, nephews, grand nieces, and grand nephews. Tilman was preceded in death by his mother and father, Grandmother Sue (Mamee) Willie, brothers, Keith, Kenneth, and Willie Jr.; sisters Maxine and Mae, and his beloved aunts Alberta (Ninny) and Beatrice, and uncles Jack and Ben Blair.

Visitation from 3 p.m. – 8 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 26, 2026 at O.H. Pye Funeral Home, 17600 Plymouth Road, Detroit, Michigan, 48227. Services will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026, at Greater Grace Temple, 23500 W Seven Mile Rd, Detroit, MI 48219 – Family Hour from 10 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and Celebration of Life service at 11:00 a.m. Burial will take place at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2026 at Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan.

In honor of Tilman's love of books and reading, donations may be made in his memory to RX for Reading Detroit online at the Detroit Mercy Giving Page; Checks made out to Rx for Reading Detroit can be mailed to Rx for Reading Detroit; University of Detroit Mercy; 4001 W. McNichols Road; Detroit, MI 48221. Cards and condolences can be sent to Eva Blair and Family at 12920 Archdale Street, Detroit, Michigan, 48227.

Cemetery Details

Great Lakes National Cemetery

4200 Belford Rd.
Holly, MI 48442

Previous Events

Visitation

Monday, Jan. **26**. 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

O. H. Pye, III Funeral Home
17600 Plymouth Road
Detroit, MI 48227
(313) 838-9770
info@pyefuneralhome.com

Family Hour

Tuesday, Jan. **27**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Greater Grace Temple
23500 W. 7 Mile Road
Detroit, MI 48219
(313) 543-6000

Celebration of Life

Tuesday, Jan. **27**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Greater Grace Temple
23500 W. 7 Mile Road
Detroit, MI 48219
(313) 543-6000

Tribute Wall

EF

“ We are saddened to learn about your family loss.
May God you through his word the Bible and the gift of prayer.
Thinking of you all.

Evans family - February 09 at 06:36 PM

CB

“ It has been Wonderful working with you as my Boss for over 30
years in Traffic Safety==C Broda

Cheryl F Broda - January 26 at 01:45 PM

MB

“ Maurice, Carla & Kennedy Black purchased the S
erenity Wreath for the family of Mr. Tilman Blair.



Maurice, Carla & Kennedy Black - January 23 at 01:07 PM

MB

“ Maurice, Carla & Kennedy Black planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in
honor of Mr. Tilman Blair.

Maurice, Carla & Kennedy Black - January 23 at 01:07 PM

JK

“ John, Marita, Kinzie and Kaylen purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mr. Tilman Blair.



John, Marita, Kinzie and Kaylen - January 23 at 05:58 AM

JK

“ John, Marita, Kinzie and Kaylen planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Tilman Blair.

John, Marita, Kinzie and Kaylen - January 23 at 05:58 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mr. Tilman Blair.



January 21 at 03:21 PM

JD

“ Jeffrey Davis sent a virtual gift in memory of Tilman Blair



Jeffrey Davis - January 11 at 04:19 PM