



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF

Bitwoded Okbay

1962 - 2021

BIOGRAPHY

Bitwoded Okbay

The late Bitwoded Okbay was born to his father Mr. Okbay Metiku and mother Mrs. Awetash Metiku. His siblings: Bisrat, Arkebe, Sindayo, Tsehay, Getachew, Abraham, Fikreyesus, and Tesfamariam. His wife Rahel Markos and children Yafet, Salem, and Bethel. He was a loving father who dedicated his life to his family, community, and work.

Bitwoded went to primary school in Adigrat, Tigray until the 10th grade, then moved to Mek'ele, Tigray to attend Atse Yohannes High School. As a brilliant student, Bitwoded received the highest distinction throughout his early education. He became a refugee in Sudan due to Ethiopia's civil war, and through his oldest sister Bisrat's sponsorship, came to America on April 2nd, 1982. Bitwoded pursued his higher education immediately after he arrived in America, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer and Electrical Engineering with top honors.

After he graduated, Bitwoded received multiple job offers and chose to work for IBM in Silicon Valley. Reminded of Ethiopia's weather, he chose to continue his journey in California. He pursued a career with IBM and in the last 32 years, successfully became one of IBM's top senior staff engineers at the Santa Teresa campus. He is credited with the success of several patents and his research excelled, proving him to be among the top Africans in his profession.

Ever since coming to California, Bitwoded tirelessly served the community. He served as a board member for Saint Mary Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Debre Genet). During his tenure at the church, he successfully established the church foundation, including registering the church with the IRS and with the California Secretary of State in 1994. Bitwoded served as board chairman of the Bay Area Tigray Development Association Northern California (TDANC) and remained a dedicated member of the organization. While serving as chairman of the TDANC, he vigorously raised \$35,000 to build a school in Asgede Tsimbla, Tigray in 2006. Bitwoded was impressive and an unforgettable person for the Bay Area Ethiopian community.

Bitwoded was very meticulous, organized, disciplined, and multifaceted in all areas of life. One of Bitwoded's God-given, childhood gifts was his artistic ability. His family continues to treasure portraits, and to this day, you can find his art in

Tigray churches. He was a rare spirit: patient, humble, loyal, honest, trustworthy, and a charismatic gentleman. Keeping a smile even in the darkest of times was a testament to Bitwoded's kind heart. The legacy Bitwoded started will continue and live through his children and community. He was a beloved brother to his siblings and, above all, one of the sweetest souls taking care of his parents and family. We will miss him physically, but he will always be with us spiritually.

Our Guardian Angel, We Love You."