



## Robert Earl Price

April 4, 1942 - April 16, 2025

Robert Earl (Bashiri) Price, poet and playwright, died April 16, 2025 in Chestertown, Maryland at the age of 83. Mr. Price was the author of four books of poetry and had twelve of his plays produced, including productions in Berlin and Johannesburg. His book of poetry *Blood Flow* was awarded the William Meredith Award. Price was an NEA Literary Fellow and received the State of Maryland Individual Artist Award in both poetry and playwriting. Price grew up in Atlanta, Georgia and studied at Clark Atlanta University. He received the William Wyler Fellowship for Screenwriting at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. He spent fifteen years in Los Angeles and was part of the Black Arts Movement and the L.A. Rebellion. He collaborated with Norman Lear and Alex Haley on the TV series *Palmerstown, U.S.A.*, and Jan Kadar on the miniseries *Freedom Road*, and received an NAACP Image Award for his work co-founding the Black Anti-Defamation Coalition in 1980. From 1985-2007, Price lived and worked in Atlanta where he became playwright in residence at 7Stages Theater, teaming up with director Del Hamilton. His plays pushed the boundaries of the theatrical, combining poetry with a groundbreaking reimagining of the stage. Several of his plays highlighted jazz and blues musicians, including *Blue Monk* commissioned and produced as part of the Cultural Olympiad at the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. His play, *All Blues*, with nods to the jazz standard of the same name, chronicled the undercover travels through the Jim Crow South by Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reporter Ray Sprigle. *HUSH: Composing Blind Tom Wiggins* told

the story of the enslaved piano genius through the lens of Black artists of the twentieth century and their struggles for respect and freedom.

Price relocated to Chestertown, Maryland and became Artist in Residence in the Drama Department at Washington College where he wrote and produced two new plays. With Pam Ortiz, he wrote the musical Red Devil Moon based on Jean Toomer's Cane featured at the New York City Fringe Festival. He became active in preserving Eastern Shore African American history, including working to revitalize the Charles Sumner G.A.R. Post #25, a historic hall chartered in 1882 by African American veterans of the Civil War and built in 1908. He co-founded the Kent County Poetry Festival, now in its sixteenth year, and he worked extensively with the Kent Cultural Alliance, including staging a production of The Unlading, which contributed an understanding of the role of slavery in the Revolutionary Era that is celebrated in Chestertown's annual Tea Party.

His poetry and plays married the vitality of jazz and blues idioms with a dedication to the power of art to resist oppression and what he called "the stale and static status quo." His friends remember him for his wry humor, his wisdom, and his dedication to using art to see the world afresh. He is survived by his partner of 33 years, Carol Colgate; by his three children Dhati Price, Makini Jones (Elzia) and Mshinda Jones (Lisa); grandchildren Ariana, Phylicia, Philip, Jamal and Bashiri Halan, and great-grandson Brayden.

Those wishing to honor Robert Earl's life with a gift may join him in supporting the Kent Cultural Alliance, [www.kentculture.org](http://www.kentculture.org) , in Chestertown, Maryland.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

# Tribute Wall

JT

“ Julian T. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert Earl Price.

Julian T. - April 28, 2025 at 12:08 PM

MD

“ Megan Dill lit a candle in memory of Robert Earl Price



Megan Dill - April 18, 2025 at 09:22 PM

CD

“ My condolences extended to the family, Robert was my deceased brother in law Stanley Price brother. My sincere sympathy to the family at this time. Charlotte Davidson Accokeek Md

Charlotte Davidson - April 18, 2025 at 04:50 PM

LP

“ Lee Phillips lit a candle in memory of Robert Earl Price



Lee Phillips - April 18, 2025 at 11:46 AM

RT

“ *My deepest Condolences to Carol and his Children and Family !*



---

**Roni Thomas** - April 18, 2025 at 10:20 AM

PW

“ *Patti Webb lit a candle in memory of Robert Earl Price*



---

**Patti Webb** - April 18, 2025 at 08:17 AM