

- [North Richmond](#)

Community mourns death of North Richmond advocate

September 5, 2017

0

1653



Photos provided by Kimmie James' family.

The community is mourning the recent death of Kimmie Morrisaid James, a longtime North Richmond resident, business owner and advocate.

A former track star who had battled kidney-related illnesses for decades, James died on Aug. 23 at age 52, according to his family. Following news of his passing, Supervisor John Gioia's office released a brief obituary from the family.

Known as "K" and "KJ," James grew up in North Richmond to two very large families and became an entrepreneur as early as age seven, according to the

obituary. He sold plants, worked as a paperboy and shopped at the store for neighborhood women.

At age 24, he opened a successful corner store, James Market, and later opened a second store, North Richmond Mini Mart, which was at one point visited by Martin Luther King III. He most recently opened and operated a party equipment rental business.

But some of his greatest achievements involved his contributions to the local community and to athletics. James loved North Richmond and never complained or used his illness as an excuse to get things done in the community, loved ones say.



“Even in his sickest days he would go to meetings to help the youth get on the right track,” his family said.

He volunteered for the youth baseball teams, provided party equipment for community events and donated whenever asked.

As a youth athlete, James excelled in track and field at Richmond High, where he set records from the 800 meters to the two mile race and was a state champion. He ran and won in the Junior Olympics, competed overseas and received a scholarship to attend the University of Alabama, where he befriended teammates Bo Jackson and Charles Barkley and where he once met Florence Griffith Joyner (Flo Jo).

He later went on to set the 800-meter record at Auburn State University.

In the same way, little could slow down James when it came to community advocacy.

“In these last days, even at his weakest points, he would ride around North Richmond and talk about ways he wanted to better the North Richmond community,” according to the obit.

James was preceded in death by his daughter Kimmia James, and leaves behind his mother and father Lou Washington and Edbert James, his children, Kimmie, Darjan, Dorjanae, Michael, Corey, Kimmisha, Jessica, Deja and Kimmiko, and 10 grandchildren, and also his life partner and best friend Lynne Abram. He also leaves behind a host of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

The memorial services will be held Thursday Sept. 7 at noon at North Richmond Baptist Church.