Funeral services for Political Strategist Arnold Pinkney were held at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church on Saturday afternoon on Cleveland’s east side and drew over 1,500 people. Pictured are the late Pinkney (in striped brown tie) and Olivet Institutional Baptist Church’s Sr. Pastor Dr. Jawanza Karriem Colvin, who did the eulogy. Also pictured are
Arnold Pinkney laid to rest, Olivet Church Pastor Dr. Jawanza Colvin gives dynamic eulogy, mayors, governors, state and federal lawmakers, city council members attend, Stokes and Moss keynote

Pinkney and his wife Betty in 1971. (Read the article below for the list of dignitaries that attended, including mayors, governors, state and federal lawmakers, members of Cleveland City Council and Black clergy)

By Kathy Wray Coleman, editor-in-chief (Cleveland Urban News.Com Reporter Johnette Jernigan contributed to this story)

CLEVELAND, Ohio-Funeral services for Democratic political strategist Arnold Pinkney, a former Cleveland school board president who spearheaded campaigns for greater Cleveland schools and tax levies and those of a host of political wannabes and politicians including former Cleveland mayors Carl B. Stokes and Michael R. White and retired Congressman Louis Stokes, and who ran the Rev Jesse Jackson's 1984 campaign for president, were held Saturday afternoon at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church on Cleveland's east side. Dignitaries show up in droves.

Though Rev Jackson did not make the trip to Cleveland to say farewell to Pinkney he sent a resolution through his Rainbow Push Coalition, a resolution among many including from churches, Cleveland City Council, Cuyahoga County Council, and President Barack Obama.

More than 1,500 people paid tribute to Pinkney, 84, who died Monday afternoon of leukemia. The keynote speakers during the two and a half hour service, which followed an hour long wake, were retired Congressman Louis Stokes, the Rev Dr. Otis Moss Jr., pastor emeritus at Olivet, Businessman Dr. William Pickard, Charles Perry, who was Pinkney's partner at the insurance firm they owned titled Pinkney Perry Insurance, and Dr. Alison Harmon, a niece of Pinkney.

Stokes, 88, who told the audience that Pinkney was the campaign manager for his late brother Carl's 1967 win for Cleveland mayor, and that Pinkney ran his campaign as Ohio's first Black congressperson, drew a standing ovation. And so did the articulate Moss, 78.

"Arnold asked that I speak on behalf of former and elected officials," said Stokes. "He has been the architect and political strategist for so many people."
Moss said that Saturday's turnout was reflective of what Pinkney gave back to the community, the Black community in particular.

"This is the overflow of a legend and we thank God for his life," said Moss, a Civil Rights activist who marched with the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

But Olivet Sr. Pastor Dr. Jawanza Karrriem Colvin, 38, who did the eulogy, gave the most dynamic speech.

"We have not come to bury him [Arnold Pinkney], we've come to praise him," said Colvin, pastor of the 4,000-member Olivet since 2009.

Colvin's 30 minute eulogy displayed the talent of the young pastor and cum laude graduate of the prestigious Morehouse College, also Moss' alumni.

Colvin compared Pinkney to the biblical character of David relative to David and Goliath. He said that like David, who killed Goliath with one slingshot, Pinkney had one shot in life and that instead of choosing to work in the steel factories in his hometown of Youngstown, Ohio as the youngest of five children, he went to college where he met his wife Betty Pinkney. And with support from his wife, and his daughter Tracie Pinkney, he then went on to choose the path of greatness.

"He was young, gifted and Black," said Colvin, the sixth pastor at Olivet, and whom Moss recruited to succeed him when he retired as senior pastor there.

Colvin said that the Black community is losing ground on Civil Rights gains over the last 50 years and that Pinkey's get-out-the-vote strategy is a national model that Obama's campaign used in 2008 when he won a first term as president of the United States of America.

And Colvin said that were it not for Pinkney spearheading the 1967 campaign victory of Carl
Stokes as the first Black mayor of a major American city, subsequent Black mayors in cities such as Washington, D.C., Chicago, Baltimore, Atlanta and elsewhere in the country would not have come into fruition, and Obama, a junior U.S. senator from Illinois would also likely not have become president.

Among other dignitaries there were U.S. Sen Sherrod Brown, 11th Congressional District Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge, Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Tim McGinty, former Cleveland Mayor Michael R. White, former Cuyahoga County Commissioner Tim Hagan, Cuyahoga County Democratic Party Affiliate Lynnie Powell, Political Strategist Jerry Austin, Ohio Eighth District Court of Appeals Judge Patricia Ann Blackmon, Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, Cleveland Chapter Southern Christian Leadership Conference Executive Director the Rev. Dr. E. Theophilus Caviness, also the first vice president of the Cleveland NAACP, Cleveland NAACP President the Rev. Hilton Smith, and Cleveland NAACP Executive Director Sheila Wright. Other notables that attended include Ohio Gov. John Kasich, former Gov. Dick Celeste, former Lt. Gov Lee Fisher and his wife Peggy Zone Fisher, Bishop Tony Minor, Word Church Sr. Pastor Dr. R.A. Vernon, Cuyahoga County Democratic Party Vice Chairperson Blaine Griffin, Call and Post Associate Publisher and Executive Editor Connie Harper and former Cleveland City Council President President George L. Forbes, also the former president of the Cleveland NAACP.

Cleveland councilpersons Mamie Mitchell, Jeff Johnson, Zack Reed, Phyllis Cleveland, and Terrell Pruitt were also there, as were state Representatives John Barnes Jr. (D-12), Bill Patmon (D-10), Sandra Williams (D-11), and Armond Budish (D-9), and state Senators Shirley Smith (D-22) and Nina Turner (D-25).

"It was a great loss and he was a great man," county prosecutor Tim McGinty told Cleveland Urban News.Com, Ohio's most read digital Black newspaper and one of the top Black owned Black online newspapers in the country.

"Mr. Pinkney developed leaders and help get them elected and I am one of them," said Councilman Jeff Johnson.

Rep. Bill Patmon, who is currently in his second two-year term as an Ohio legislator, said that Mr. Pinkney's home going was "fitting and just."
Bill "Silver B" Richards called Pinkney "a mentor."

State Sen Smith said after the funeral services that "the people turned out and I think they paid him [Arnold Pinkney] the tribute he deserves."