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William "Billy Bass" Nelson Jr.

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William Nelson Obituary

Obituary published on Legacy.com by Judkins Colonial Home - Plainfield on Feb. 4, 2026.

William "Billy Bass" Nelson, the foundational bassist and a co-founder of the iconic Funk band Funkadelic, has passed away at the age of 74. Nelson died on January 31, 2026, leaving behind a legacy as one of the most influential bass players in the history of funk music.

Born in [Plainfield, New Jersey](#), Nelson's musical journey began in his teenage years, working at George Clinton's barbershop. It was there that he became involved with Clinton's doo-wop group, The Parliaments. Nelson's pivotal role in the formation of Funkadelic

Nelson's distinctive basslines were a cornerstone of Funkadelic's early, seminal albums, including "Funkadelic" (1970), "Free Your Mind...and your Ass Will Follow" (1970), and "Maggot Brain" (1971). His playing style, deeply influenced by Motown's James Jamerson but infused with a raw, urban edge, provided the essential rhythmic and harmonic foundation for the band's experimental explorations.

Beyond his work with Funkadelic, Nelson's musical talents extended to collaborations with numerous other artists, including The Temptations, The Commodores, and Smokey Robinson. His contributions were recognized with his induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1997 as part of Parliament-Funkadelic, a testament to his enduring impact on music. Nelson's innovative approach to the bass guitar not only defined the "P-Funk" sound, but also inspired generations of musicians across various genres.

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Jay W. Yesterday

R.I.P. and Thank U 4 da FUNK!!! from Jay and #trendmagazineonline

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Rosella Brackett February 13, 2026

Rosella Brackett & Family of Hillsborough, NJ. To the Nelson Family sorry for your loss, we extend our Deepest Condolences to you. Praying for you.

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Ronnie Daniels February 7, 2026

Billy would be over Eddie's or walking with Tal, down to Short Street Park pass my house. I would follow with my guitar, they would play and tell me now you do it. This is all before the fame, of Parliament/ Funkadelic. Soft spoken kind, talented is what I remember most about Billy. I played at Mr C's the day my first was born. I did a bass solo. He came congratulated me on my having a child shook my hand, and said Take care of her Ronnie firmly. May GOD encompass you with his glory Billy.

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Mia Cox February 7, 2026

I will miss our long talks and reminiscing about how music and the world has changed. We used to talk and laugh about better times and all the people that we had in common. My heart is saddened selfishly, but I know that there is no more pain for you. Rest easy my friend.

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Denise Holiday February 6, 2026

Sending prayers and condolences to the family. Peaceful Journey Billy Bass... You will be missed by us all

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Victoria Grimes-Alvin February 5, 2026



SIP Uncle Billy* My uncle George " Cowboy George"& Uncle Charles Grimes would be proud of you. PEACE BE.
Condolences to the family & close friends.

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Judkins Colonial Home - Plainfield

 428 West 4th Street, Plainfield, NJ 07060

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