



**Ellis Louis Marsalis Jr.  
(November 14, 1934 – April 1, 2020)**



---

# The Master is Gone

---

They broke the mold  
after him.

Born in [New Orleans, Louisiana](#), Marsalis was the son of Florence Marie (née Robertson) and [Ellis Marsalis Sr.](#), a businessman and social activist. Marsalis and his wife Delores Ferdinand had six sons: [Branford](#), [Wynton](#), Ellis III, [Delfeayo](#), Mboya, Mboya, and [Jason](#). Branford, Wynton, Delfeayo, and Jason also became jazz musicians.<sup>[4]</sup> Ellis III is a poet and photographer and [Jason](#). Branford, Wynton, Delfeayo, and Jason also became jazz musicians.<sup>[4]</sup> Ellis III is a poet and photographer. Marsalis played saxophone during high school but switched to piano while studying classical music at [Dillard University](#), graduating in 1955. He later attended graduate school at [Loyola University New Orleans](#).<sup>[6]</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s he worked with [Ed Blackwell](#), [Cannonball Adderley](#), [Nat Adderley](#), and [Al Hirt](#). During the 1970s, he taught at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. His students have included [Terence Blanchard](#), [Harry Connick Jr.](#), [Donald Harrison](#), Kent Jordan, [Marlon Jordan](#), and [Nicholas Payton](#).

---

# Musician, Teacher

---

## And Great Father

Marsalis was inducted into the [Louisiana Music Hall of Fame](#) in 2018.<sup>[4]</sup> The [Ellis Marsalis Center for Music](#) at [Musicians' Village](#) in New Orleans is named in his honor. In 2010, The Marsalis family released a live album titled *Music Redeems*, which was recorded at The [John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts](#) in Washington, DC, as part of the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival. All proceeds from the sale of the album go directly to the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music.

Marsalis was a fraternity brother of [Phi Beta Sigma](#) and [Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia](#).<sup>[12][13]</sup> In 2015, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia announced that Marsalis has been named Sinfonia's 24th *Man of Music*, the highest honor given by the fraternity to a member, for advancing the cause of music in America through performance, composition or any other musical activity.<sup>[13]</sup> In 2018, Marsalis was awarded an honorary doctorate of music from Berklee College of Music during the college's 50th annual High School Jazz Festival.



---

# Know him or not, we lost a jewel.

---

I did not know Ellis personally, based upon his family's discussion of him I wish I did. I believe under his mentoring, I would have been even a better person achieving more than I have accomplished today. To say he will be missed will not only be an understatement, But a lost of an opportunity of myself and others that could have been used to do and perform better in our youth.

---

## Bill Sommerville

Reference: Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellis\\_Marsalis\\_Jr.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellis_Marsalis_Jr.)