



ABOUT REVEREND CECIL WILLIAMS

GLIDE Co-Founder and Minister of Liberation

For over 60 years, Reverend Cecil Williams has expanded the limits of activism, inclusion, and diversity as Co-Founder and Minister of Liberation of GLIDE. Through his social justice and community leadership, and service as a minister, Williams is recognized as a national leader at the forefront of social change and in the struggle for civil rights. In his six decades of leadership, Williams has realized his vision of a radically inclusive, just, and loving community at GLIDE, and his work has inspired a new generation of services designed to create lasting change in the lives of the most marginalized San Franciscans.

Williams was born in San Angelo, Texas, in 1929, the same year that philanthropist Lizzie Glide broke ground for the construction of Glide Memorial Church. Growing up in the segregated South, he was born to the fifth of six children and was also the grandson of a slave. For his bachelor's in Sociology, Williams attended Huston-Tillotson University, a historic Black College and University in Austin, TX. Williams also attended the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, where he was one of the first five Black students to be admitted on a full-time basis. In 1997, he received his doctorate in Divinity from the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

In 1963, Williams came to Glide Memorial Church with a vision of creating a radically inclusive community that would accept and love all who wanted to attend. GLIDE's small, white, affluent congregation didn't share Williams' vision, and many left the church. Remaining determined, in 1964, Williams helped create the Council on Religion and Homosexuality, a pioneering organization in the LGBTQ movement in San Francisco, with offices at GLIDE.

Often considered controversial and radical, Williams made GLIDE into a home for political and cultural change. He marched in Selma, Alabama with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1965 and was among hundreds arrested. Williams was one of the first clergymen to take a revolutionary stand for same-sex couples by presiding over their weddings four decades before the national movement to legalize gay marriage. And in 1969, he removed the cross from GLIDE's sanctuary to send a message of inclusion and open his services and sermons to all. Located in the heart of one of the city's toughest neighborhoods, the Tenderloin, Cecil eventually grew GLIDE's membership to over 11,000.

In 1982, Williams married GLIDE Co-Founder Janice Mirikitani, who is also an activist and renowned poet. In 2021, Janice passed away. Together, Williams and Mirikitani built GLIDE into the social justice movement, social service provider and spiritual community it is today.

Williams has received many honors and awards throughout his influential career, including becoming the Chairman for the Northern California Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observance Committee at the request of Mrs. Coretta Scott King and the 2008 National Caring Award presented by the Caring Institute in Washington, D.C.

KEY TERMS

- **GLIDE:** name encompassing two entities, the GLIDE Foundation and Glide Memorial Church
- **Reverend Cecil Williams:** GLIDE Co-Founder, Minister of Liberation (not co-founder of Glide Memorial Church)
- **Tenderloin:** historic San Francisco neighborhood and community that GLIDE is part of
- **Radical inclusion and unconditional love:** key concepts underpinning GLIDE's spiritual philosophy and approach to social services

FAMILY:

Rev. Williams leaves behind his son, daughter, stepdaughter, and four grandchildren.

- Cecil's Daughter: Kim Williams, her daughter is Kaya Grant-Williams
- Cecil's Son: Albert Williams, Jr., his sons are Albert (Manny) Williams, III and Zachary Williams
 - *Kim and Albert, Jr. are from his first marriage with Evelyn Robinson.*
- Janice Mirikitani's daughter and Cecil's stepdaughter: Tianne Feliciano and her son is Nicholas Feliciano

ABOUT GLIDE

GLIDE is a radically inclusive, just, and loving community mobilized to alleviate suffering and break the cycles of poverty and marginalization. For more than 60 years, GLIDE has been on the front lines of fighting poverty and inequity. We are a social justice movement, social service provider and spiritual community dedicated to strengthening communities and transforming lives. Located in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood, GLIDE addresses the needs of, and advocates for, the most marginalized individuals and families.

Today, GLIDE is building on the legacy of GLIDE Co-Founders Reverend Cecil Williams and Janice Mirikitani by deepening our impact, expanding our reach, and affecting systemic change. Under our strategic vision, GLIDE Forward, we are embracing outcomes-based approaches and a new program model designed to help people navigate their journeys from crisis to stability to resilience. Today, under the leadership of President and CEO Dr. Gina Fromer, GLIDE remains a community beacon of hope for those most in need. As of April 2024, GLIDE has a \$33 Million annual budget and served over 600,000 last year.

GLIDE TIMELINE

- **1920s, Our Beginnings:** In 1929, San Francisco philanthropist Lizzie Glide purchased a parcel at Ellis and Taylor Streets and founded Glide Foundation, whose charitable mission includes establishing a church as "a house of worship for all people."
- **1960s, A Renewed Commitment:** In 1963, a young African American minister named Cecil Williams joins GLIDE determined to revive a dwindling congregation.
- **1960s and 1970s, For the People:** As the Vietnam War escalates, GLIDE becomes the counterculture rallying point in San Francisco, a home for political and cultural

change as well as spiritual growth. Everyone from Bill Graham to Angela Davis comes to GLIDE Sunday Celebrations to speak out and join in the community.

- **1980s and 1990s, Confronting New Crises:** Guided by Janice Mirikitani's leadership and Cecil Williams' steady vision, GLIDE programs increase in size and scope. The flagship Daily Free Meals Program begins feeding the hungry and homeless three times a day. The Generations program holds its first graduation ceremony in 1987. From protesting the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory's development of nuclear weapons to leading the Northern California Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Observance Committee, GLIDE walks the walk for peace, equality and justice while organizing to address the crack cocaine epidemic and the AIDS crisis harming the health of the community.
- **2000s, A Strong Foundation:** GLIDE enters the 21st century with a surplus of vision, enthusiasm, and hope. Janice, as Executive Director and President, restructures GLIDE and expands programs to meet the evolving needs of the community. In the late 2000s, Willa Seldon becomes CEO and Rev. Donald Guest and Rev. Karen Oliveto joined GLIDE Church. Cecil retires as Reverend and continues as Minister of Liberation. Janice retires as Executive Director and President and continues as Founding President.
- **2010s, GLIDE Forward:** The Bay Area is roiled by a historic economic boom that creates social and economic inequality and tensions. Displacement and homelessness accelerate, and the Tenderloin—long a safe haven for people down on their luck—is part of the fierce citywide competition over space and resources. Facing these challenges, the GLIDE Foundation embraces the 'GLIDE Forward' strategic vision in 2019, and expands the Center for Social Justice, mobilizing the power of love for personal growth and social betterment.

TIMELINE OF REV. CECIL WILLIAMS KEY EVENTS

YEAR	EVENT
Sept 22, 1929	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil Williams born in San Angelo, Texas.
1955	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil receives his bachelor's degree from Perkins School of Theology. He was one of the first five Black students to be admitted on a full time basis to Perkins School of Theology.
1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil comes to GLIDE as Director of the Church and Community Involvement for the GLIDE Foundation. Cecil announces his plans to create a new and inclusive GLIDE, and 35 primarily white congregants walk out of services.
1964	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil provides leadership in the creation of the Council on Religion and Homosexuality, a pioneering organization in the lesbian/gay movement in the city of San Francisco, with offices at GLIDE.
1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As chair of the Committee Against Segregated Education, Cecil threatens to boycott San Francisco schools to protest de facto segregation.

1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil, along with 6 other ministers, challenged the SFPD for breaking up a private benefit for homosexuals sponsored by the Council on Religion and Homosexuality.
1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil leads civil rights pickets protesting SF School Board's refusal to release racial headcount of city schools. Superintendent Harold concedes and asks the Board to publish a census.
1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil forms Citizens Alert, a citizens group to investigate charges of police brutality, and marches alongside the Black Panthers.
1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil marches with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Alabama, and is arrested.
1967	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil speaks at anti-Vietnam War protest which begins at the Civic Center and ends at Kezar Stadium.
1966-67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Compton's Cafeteria Riot in the Tenderloin (one of the first recorded LGBT rights demonstrations) Cecil advocates for transsexual people seeking legal name changes.
1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil helps organize Officers for Justice, which is made up of predominantly Black police officers, in an effort to combat racism within the law enforcement system.
1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil speaks at Grace Cathedral memorial service for Senator Robert F. Kennedy.
1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil takes down the cross in the sanctuary of GLIDE Church.
1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Black Panther Party asks Cecil to serve as the chairman of Religion Section of the United Front Against Fascism conference held in Oakland.
1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil spearheads a drive to send thousands of letters and raise money to halt the Chicago trial of Black Panther Leader Bobby Seale.
1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil officiates a ceremony to confirm the commitment of a gay couple at GLIDE.
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil eulogizes the murder of openly gay SF Supervisor Harvey Milk to a crowd of 10,000 at the corner of Castro and Market on Milk's 49th birthday.
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GLIDE Free Meals Food program is created.
1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil is arrested in a protest to blockade the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant being built in San Luis Obispo.
1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil and Jan marry.
1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil is arrested on charges of obstructing traffic at University of California's Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, while protesting the development of nuclear weapons for the U.S. Defense Department.
1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil is arrested for trying to stop school buses from carrying Bayview-Hunters Point students of Drew Elementary School, in a boycott against one-way busing.

1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil is chosen by Coretta Scott King to head the Northern California Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Observance Committee. The annual San Francisco march and celebration at the Civic Center is the second largest observance of this holiday (after Atlanta, GA).
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil, along with Angela Davis and elected officials, is arrested at UC Berkeley's protest against apartheid and the university system's investments in South Africa.
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil organizes a community effort to speak out against anti-Semitic acts of violence.
1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil and Jan receive UCSF's highest award at the Founders Day banquet.
Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan establishes core GLIDE programs including the Family, Youth & Child Center (FYCC), holiday toys giveaway, free daily meals program, Men In Progress, recovery circles, etc.
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil organizes a peaceful march protesting the beating of Rodney King by the LAPD.
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil leads 200 Tenderloin residents in a march to City Hall to raise their political voices by voting on absentee ballots.
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil organizes the 1st anniversary march protesting the verdict of the beating of Rodney King by the Los Angeles Police.
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil organizes a contingent from Northern California to participate in the 20th Anniversary commemoration of MLK's 1963 March on Washington.
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil is among the protesters arrested at UC Berkeley, protesting a bill to end affirmative action in the university system.
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil is elected a delegate to the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil, Jan, Rev. Jesse Jackson, and 10,000 protesters cross the Golden Gate Bridge to protest Prop 209, an anti-affirmative action bill.
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Clinton appoints Cecil to serve as 1 of 12 People on the U.S. Holocaust Commission.
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Janice Mirikitani Building for Children, Youth, and Families at 434 Ellis Street has its grand opening on Mother's Day.
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil retires as reverend of GLIDE Church and is appointed Co-founder and Minister of Liberation.
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan and Cecil receive honorary doctorate degrees from the California Institute of Integral Studies.
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan and Cecil receive the Crystal Eagle Leadership Award from Coro Northern California.
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil and Jan join in protest against INS Special registration.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecil is honored by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).

2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Janice passes away
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cecil retires from GLIDE
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cecil passes away