



## James R. Speller

April 5, 1943 - October 20, 2022

### Celebration for the Life of a Champion

Mr. James R. Speller “BaBee” of the 1500 block of Crystal Lake. Died on October 20, 2022 from a long battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Deborah Foreman Speller. Predeceased his wife, Audrey Pugh Speller of 50 years and son, James Speller Jr., parents, Leroy Speller and Ella Clark Speller, brother, Henry Herman Speller. James was born in Bertie County, Windsor, N.C. to the late Leroy and Ella Speller and joined Saint Paul Church at an early age in Windsor NC. He leaves behind father-in-law, Donald Williams (Mary), mother-in-law, Barbara Partee, two daughters, Jeanie Williams (Russell) and Daphne Speller, one son, Calvin Bond; stepdaughters, Deidra Foreman Lockhart, MD, (Christopher) and Phylicia Foreman Rich (Errol) Jr. and one brother, Leroy Speller (Sarah) three sisters, Ella Mae Carthon (Walter) Louise Speller and Emma Mae Leary, grandchildren, Ta'ja, Jaime. Marcus Jamie, Jayden, Makayla, Rarshi, Akiya, Taveon, T'Coryous, Christopher, and Soriah Great Grand, Jayden, Rashi, Jr., Olivier Makayla, and Jaida, Meilani and a host of relatives and friends. James graduated from Etheridge High School in Windsor, North Carolina and took courses at a community college in Bronx, New York. James enlisted and served in the United States Air Force and was stationed in Suffolk County, New York. He was deployed to serve in the Vietnam War and assigned to Operation Pierce Arrow out of Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base in Thailand. He earned an honorable discharge. While living in Bronx, New York, he enjoyed coordinating Etheridge High School reunion events with several classmates and raising funds for scholarships for graduating high school students. His dream job and side hustle were to be a successful event promoter and came very close to managing a concert featuring a famous R& B singer in South Africa, but red tape and racism prevented him from being approved to have the event. Meanwhile, he loved going to listen to live jazz clubs in Harlem, New York with relatives and friends. James developed a passion for running half marathon while in the military and kept running at events such as Marine Corp, half marathons in New York and the Rock and Roll half marathon held in Virginia Beach. He loved going to the Portsmouth City's YMCA for daily work outs and to chat with his work out buddies. Many of the residents that lived in the Crystal Lake Community remember James as a runner and during his Golden years taking daily walks around the lake. James retired as a Court

Officer from the 12th Judicial District Bronx Supreme Court in 1995 at age 53 after serving for 25 years. He enjoyed sharing his experience of meeting Judge Judy Sheindlin and Judge Jerry Sheindlin, her husband while working for Bronx Supreme Court before they became famous on television. His job performance as court officer was exemplary. Prior to landing his dream job with the court, James worked in an Aluminum plant with other relatives in Mahwah, New Jersey, served as a correctional officer, Narcotic Rehabilitation Counselor with Rockefeller Program, postal clerk in Manhattan, New York. After retirement James and his late wife, Audrey moved from the Bronx, New York to live in his dream home and to be closer to relatives in Portsmouth and North Carolina. James was an active resident of his community's association and civic engagement. His favorite and most valued volunteer experience was working on President Barack Obama's Presidential Campaign and standing directly behind him on stage and meeting the Late Honorable John Lewis.

# Previous Events

## Wake Service

NOV 2. 10:00 AM (ET)

J. T. Fisher Funeral Services Chapel  
1248 N. George Washington Hwy  
Chesapeake, VA

## Visitation

NOV 2. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

J.T. Fisher Funeral Services  
1248 N. George Washington Hwy.  
Chesapeake, VA 23323  
(757) 487-3700  
info@jtfisherfuneralservices.com  
<https://www.jtfisherfuneralservices.com>

## Service

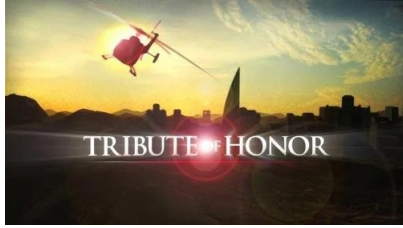
NOV 2. 11:00 AM (ET)

J. T. Fisher Funeral Services Chapel  
1248 N. George Washington Hwy  
Chesapeake, VA

# Tribute Wall



“ J.T. Fisher Funeral Services created a Tribute Video in memory of James R. Speller



J. T. Fisher Funeral Services - November 10, 2022 at 07:44 PM



“ Although we could not be with you during this difficult time our prayers and thoughts are with you.

Donald & Mary Williams - November 07, 2022 at 12:02 PM



Thinking of the Speller family, my prayer is comfort and peace surround you in the days ahead. Love to my friend Jeanie, Calvin, Mrs Speller, and the entire family.

Debbie and Family - November 09, 2022 at 11:36 PM



“ 1 file added to the album James Speller Life Celebration



J. T. Fisher Funeral Services - November 03, 2022 at 12:58 PM



I carry you in my heart ❤️ Gina

Jeanie Williams - November 18, 2022 at 09:25 PM



Rest in peace Uncle James. No reached out to me. I just found out. Always love you. Gail

Gail Venerable - November 26, 2024 at 11:46 PM



I see my beautiful aunt audrey. His first wife.

Gail Venerable - November 26, 2024 at 11:48 PM

GV

*My condolences to his second wife.*

**Gail Venerable** - November 26, 2024 at 11:50 PM

GV

*I also see Beatrice Pugh, my grandmother.*

**Gail Venerable** - November 27, 2024 at 12:05 AM

CL

“ *Condolences to the family. Mr. Speller was a great neighbor to my parents, the Lassiters. It was always a pleasure coming home and having a chat with him. He will be missed~*

**crystal lassiter** - November 02, 2022 at 12:06 PM

RD

“ *Our condolences to Deborah and family may God bless much the Roseland Dunigan and family*❤️

**Roseland M Dunigan** - November 02, 2022 at 12:02 PM

RW

“ *Rev James R Wrighton lit a candle in memory of James R. Speller*



**Rev Dr James R Wrighton** - November 02, 2022 at 11:46 AM

RW

“ *To the Speller Family we send Love and Blessings it was always a joy to have Brother Jame in service when he came home ,now He has a New home with Our Lord and just waiting until that day when we All will meet again,Brother James enjoyed ♪♪ sorry We could not be there to sing No Tears until that day sleep on God bless you all. Much love Rev.& Sister Wrighton.*

**Rev Dr James R Wrighton** - November 02, 2022 at 11:44 AM

RV

“ Our deepest condolences to Aunt Deborah and the Speller family. Praying that God grant you Peace during this time of bereavement. Though we are unable to attend the funeral services, our hearts are with you.

Love,  
Seko, Rhonda and the kids

Rhonda Varner - November 02, 2022 at 08:09 AM

SB

“ Sincere condolences to the Speller family. We share your loss! “BaBee” loved His W.S. Etheridge HS Alma Mater and was dedicated to keeping fellow school and classmates united through class reunions. We appreciate his efforts and shared so much fun during the reunions! He will truly be missed!

Love and Sympathy,  
John & Shirley Taylor

Shirley B.Taylor - November 01, 2022 at 06:41 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James R. Speller.



October 31, 2022 at 03:53 PM



“ 74 files added to the album LifeTributes



J. T. Fisher Funeral Services - October 31, 2022 at 11:10 AM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of James R. Speller.*



October 29, 2022 at 04:36 PM

DW

“ *I met James while walking. He was running and asked me to come on and run with him. I did, but could only hang for 1 mi. I'm one of those many walkers who enjoyed his company, conversation, and love of community. He shall be missed. My condolences to you Deborah & family.*

**Dolores White** - October 29, 2022 at 04:02 PM

PE

“ *Babee you never allowed your illness to hold you down. Life was good to you and you embraced it. I'll miss having conversations with you when we would see each other and the knowledge you endured. I'm Grateful to call you my cousin. Forever Young and SIP 🙏❤️*

**Peggy** - October 29, 2022 at 07:40 AM

B1

“ *Classmates of the BTW Class of 1972 are saddened to hear about the passing of your husband, Mr. James R. Speller. Please know that our prayers are with you and your family. We know that God will give you the strength and peace to see you through this difficult time. Remember the fond moments that you shared and always keep them in your heart.*

**BTW Class of 1972** - October 24, 2022 at 11:24 PM



*Our sincere condolences to the family of James Speller. Always such a kind man. He would always stop to greet you with a kind word when I saw him walking in the neighborhood. God Bless*

**Lynne Lamb** - October 28, 2022 at 10:06 AM

HM

*Our heart felt sympathy is sent to Deborah and the Speller Family. May God provide you comfort and may happy memories of your love one, help you through this difficult time.*

*Horace and Linda McCoy*

**Horace and Linda McCoy** - November 01, 2022 at 11:53 PM