



## John R. Ward, Sr.

May 14, 1930 - December 7, 2021

John R. “Bobby” Ward, Sr., earned his eternal resting home on Tuesday, December 7, 2021. Born on May 14, 1930 in Norfolk, Virginia to the late Will Robert and Mable G. Ward-Payne, John was the second of eight children. He is preceded in death by his parents; two sisters: Jean Rhodes and Otelia Seeger and two brothers: Rudolph Ward and James Payne.

John received his formal education from the Portsmouth City Public School System and also attended photography school in New Jersey. In his early adulthood, John served in the United States Army as well as the United States Merchant Marines. Upon being honorably discharged, John sought employment with the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, where he retired in 1987 as a Production Controller after 37 years of service.

As a Godly man, John always strived to keep his Christian principles at the forefront of his life. In 1979, John found his forever church home at the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception. There, he served diligently on various ministries, including the Usher Board, Gatekeepers and as the Church Historian. John’s love for his church fueled him to remain faithful to his calling.

John not only loved his church, but he also loved and adored his wife of 71 years, the former Lethia Elaine Sexton (Ward). He demonstrated an

insurmountable love toward Lethia just as the Bible instructs: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” (Ephesians 5:25). Their union was the perpetual example of endearment, passion and adoration.

For 91 years, God ordered John’s steps and gave him the strength, wisdom and fortitude to raise and provide for his wife and family. His steadfastness as a family man with many talents was featured in a 1974 Virginian Pilot news article titled “The Bakers Dozen”. John used his talents to expose his children to diverse experiences. He loved to dance and listen to swing/jazz music. As a young adult, he played the bongos and the drums. He also enjoyed staying physically active by playing baseball, fishing, golfing and bowling. He, along with his cousins and other African-American bowlers were instrumental in helping to integrate the Victory Lanes Bowling Alley during the civil rights era in Portsmouth, VA. He was an avid follower of current events and was extremely passionate about local and national politics.

In modern day terms, John would be known as a Renaissance Man and a Jack-Of-All-Trades. With no formal training in carpentry or electronics, John was able to design and convert a two-bedroom house into a four-bedroom home for his family. He was also known as the neighborhood Mr. Fix-It; repairing televisions, vacuum cleaners, radios and anything with a chord.

Left to cherish his memory and carry on his legacy are: his wife of 71 years, Lethia Elaine Ward; two sisters: Genieve Kennedy (Grasonville, MD) and Shirley Harding (Portsmouth, VA); nine sons: Tony Bazemore (Margaret), Portsmouth, VA; John R. Ward, Jr. (Odessa), San Antonio TX; Linwood J. Ward (Pat), Hampton, VA; Daryll M. Ward (Jeanette), Fayetteville, GA; Danattis Ward (Theresa), Jonesboro GA; Vincent F. Ward (Tracy), Chesapeake, VA; Michael A. Ward (Debbie), Sumter, SC; Francis T. Ward (Kimberly), Chesapeake, VA; and Armondo Ward, Portsmouth, VA; three

daughters: Valerie McDowell, Edgewood, MD; Sharon Blizzard (Stanley), Portsmouth, VA and Janice Elliott (Wilbert), Suffolk, VA; 30 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren; three great-great- grandchildren; very special sisters-in-law: Angela Mullen (Portsmouth, VA) and Tina Sexton (New York, NY) and his only God-daughter, Blessing Washington (Norfolk, VA).

John R. Ward, Sr. was many things to many people, but the one thing that he was to everyone...was loved!

# Cemetery Details

## Meadowbrook Memorial Gardens

4569 Shoulders Hill Road  
Suffolk, VA

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 15. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (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

DEC 16. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Mary Catholic Church (The Basilica of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception)  
232 Chapel Street  
Norfolk, VA

# Tribute Wall

BC

“ *Barbara Cross-Jones lit a candle in memory of John R. Ward, Sr.*



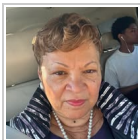
Barbara Cross-Jones - December 24, 2021 at 01:25 AM

KS

“ *My heart breaks as I write this message. The Wards took care of me as a baby. I soon became a part of the family. Thank you for the love and care that you gave me. I am so honored that my children were able to meet you. Rest well Mr. Ward. Mrs. Ward I love you so much. I am so sorry.*



Karen Smith - December 18, 2021 at 10:48 AM



“ *Praising God for the legacy and love you gave your family and friends, You wonderful sense of humor and your smile will be missed.*

*Joyce and Melvin Beamon*

Joyce Beamon - December 16, 2021 at 09:19 AM

SC

“ My deepest condolences go out to the entire Ward Family from the Wilkins and Comeaux Family of Knox Street/ Armstead Drive and may the Lord give you the strength.

Sherri Wilkins Comeaux - December 16, 2021 at 01:47 AM

AM

*Sending Prayers to the Ward Family  
Anniece Minor and family, Atlanta Ga*

Anniece Minor - December 16, 2021 at 11:43 AM

NM

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Nenneh Marshall - December 15, 2021 at 08:43 PM

PF

“ Port of Virginia family purchased the Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant for the family of John R. Ward, Sr..



Port of Virginia family - December 15, 2021 at 01:20 PM

RF

“ We pray for God's comfort for the Ward family as you celebrate the life and remember the legacy of Mr. Ward. The strength of the Lord will see you through.

Reggie Williams & Family - December 15, 2021 at 11:04 AM

DT

*Sending Prayers and Condolences to the Ward Family. Praying God give the family strength in the time of Need. Blessing to the Family!!! 🙏*

**Diana Tillman** - December 15, 2021 at 06:40 PM

RS

*Cousin Elaine,  
My condolences go out to you and your family.  
I didn't get to know your husband well but, I have heard wonderful stories about his faithfulness to God, the Ward family and even to our Sexton family.  
May our Lord God strengthen and keep you and and your family through your time of grief.*

*Love to you all.  
RoseMary Sexton-Stephens and Family*

**RoseMary Sexton-Stephens** - December 16, 2021 at 10:40 AM



“ 29 files added to the album Life Tributes



**J. T. Fisher Funeral Services** - December 15, 2021 at 09:15 AM

SB

“ *Sending prayers for comfort, strength and peace to the entire Ward family...*

**Sandra Bishop** - December 13, 2021 at 07:30 PM

SM

“ Sending all my love and hugs to everyone, I love you guys. Sending love from Ga from the Morris family ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

Sasha Morris - December 12, 2021 at 08:15 PM

DW

“ To the Ward family; Please accept my sincere deepest sympathy for the lost of a Great Man, Mr. John R. Ward Sr. The Ward family have been a part of my life as far back as I can remember. Mr. Ward was indeed a good man who loved his family. As a young boy, my late brother Charlie White Jr. and I visited the Ward's house EVERYDAY for approximately 10 years. My late mother Elsie White gave Mr. & Mrs. Ward permission to discipline us whenever needed. Mr. Ward did not hesitate to chastise any child when it was deemed necessary. The love and guidance offered by Mr. & Mrs. Ward was always genuine because they cared for us as they did for their own children. Mr. Ward loved Law Enforcement/The Police. Whenever I came home to visit, I made sure I brought Mr. Ward some form of Police gear. 3102 Knox St. Portsmouth, Virginia continues to remain a special place for so many people and has done so for many years past. Everyone knew, if you visited the Ward's household, you would never go hungry and o you always felt love upon entering their doors. I am going to miss Mr. Ward for a host of reasons. Like my father, the Good Lord Blessed Mr. Ward to live a long good life. He was able to enjoy his wife, children and watch his grandchildren grow into adults. The Ward family will ALWAYS have a special place within my heart ❤️. May God continue to Bless you and may God provide you comfort during this sad moment in time. May Mr. John R. Ward Sr. rest in peace and may his memory be a blessing.

Dennis B. White

Detroit, Michigan

Dennis B. White - December 11, 2021 at 05:32 PM

DW

“ To my family I pray daily for us all! I thank God for the angel we had for so many years that shared how a real man of God is suppose to live, learn, love, teach and share. The life lessons will forever be used and cherished... The many hats u carried..... husband, father, uncle, grandfather, great grand, cousin, brother in law, A true giant, my hero, my God I thank you Lord for his love and guidance unconditionally!!!

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**Derek White** - December 10, 2021 at 12:07 PM

JE

“ To all my love ones,

*I do know this. If ever there is a day ya'll not together...  
There is something you must always remember you are Braver then you believe, stronger than you seem, loving like you always. But the most important thing is, when we are apart from DAD he will always be with us, in our heart our body and soul, that perfect protector until our day to join and be with him. Dad you are truly missed  
Love You  
Janice your daughter*



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**Janice Elliott** - December 10, 2021 at 09:18 AM

DW

“ To my family my prayers are with you daily. I thank you Lord for the angel you shared with us; An awesome man of God who taught us all his family and anybody he came in contact with how to love, teach and grow as a real man should! The father figure I desperately needed over the years Lord I thank you!!!!

Derek White - December 10, 2021 at 05:24 AM

YM

“ Sending my deepest condolences to the family . My God be with you all during this time.

Yvonne Hart Mercado - December 09, 2021 at 05:37 PM

DD

“ This Was A Great Day To Stand Beside A REAL MAN WHO I RESPECTED VERY HIGHLY.



Derrick Daughtry - December 09, 2021 at 12:28 PM

DD

“ Mr. Ward Was Like A Father To Me Who I Respected Very Much. I Learned A Lot From Him Every Since I Was Younger. How Take Care Of Your Family And Also I Talked To Him About My New Marriage And He Gave Me Some Good Advice That I'm Trying To Do But I Know For A Fact That I Can't Compete With The Wonderful Marriage That Him And Mrs.Ward Have. Rest In Peace. You Will Always Be Remembered In My Heart.

Derrick Daughtry - December 09, 2021 at 12:13 PM

WS

*Wanda Simms*

*Mr. Ward has always been a true Soldier. REST IN HEAVEN. Dear God, please continue to watch over The Wards. Love Always*

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**Wanda Simms** - December 14, 2021 at 02:54 PM

NM

*Mr Bobby was a true father figure not just to me but to my siblings in Gambia as well. He was always happy, smiling, had a kind word and just bubbly. He was so happy after getting his Ancestry results, validating his Roots. He will be missed. May Heaven be His Abode. Eternal Rest Grant unto him Oh Lord and let Light Perpetual Shine upon him. Rest in Perfect Peace . Dolly, Nenneh, Katie.*

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**Nenneh Marshall** - December 14, 2021 at 10:50 PM

AS

*Mr. Ward was a very great man. I had the pleasure of meeting a true son of God. May you rest well until we meet again.*

*God bless the Ward family.*

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**Adrian Shells** - December 16, 2021 at 10:46 AM