



CMSgt Edward J. Wright

December 9, 1927 - August 10, 2020

CMSgt (Ret) Edward J. Wright, born on December 9, 1927, was the third of five children born to Frank and Lizzie Wright in the Rantowles Community of Ravenel, South Carolina. Edward entered eternal rest on Monday, August 10, 2020 where he joins his wife, Mary A. Wright of sixty- five years who preceded him in death just fifty-one days ago on June 20, 2020.

Edward graduated from Burke High School in 1946. This was an achievement for a rural African American since there was no high school or buses in Ravenel. He had to catch a ride every day from Rantowles to Charleston to attend Burke High School. He was never discouraged by the obstacles of his circumstances, and when he graduated from Burke High the elderly residents showed their support by catching rides to attend his graduation at Morris Street Baptist Church in 1946. He continued to make his parents and the community proud by enlisting in the Army Air Corps where Edward began his military career at the age of 18.

In 1947 the Air Force became independent from the Army Air Corps and Edward began his career in the construction field. With the desegregation of the military in 1948 by President Harry S. Truman's Executive Order 9981, Edward was afforded the opportunity to excel. Early on he exemplified superb skills and leadership which put him on the fast track for promotion. In 1956 Edward graduated from Strategic Air Command

Noncommissioned Officers Academy. Within the first eight years, Edward received five promotions, reaching each rank in a minimum of two to three years. He transitioned to the career field of Aircraft Maintenance in 1957, and quickly advanced to the position of Aircraft Maintenance Superintendent.

The Air Force created its highest enlisted rank in 1960. It took Edward just four years to reach this rank. With nineteen years of service, at the age of thirty-seven, he was promoted to Chief Master Sergeant. During this era, Chiefs comprised only one percent of the total enlisted force and as an African American, he was among the elite, being the first black Chief at many of his assignments.

Over the course of thirty years, he traveled the world serving at twenty-eight assignments to include six days in Vietnam and eleven overseas tours. Edward traveled and experienced many different cultures. He served in Europe where he was assigned to Germany and France, Southeast Asia assigned to Thailand and Japan, and Taiwan in East Asia. Other assignments included the continent of Antarctic, New Zealand, Canada and many states including Alaska and the U.S. Territory of Guam. His family accompanied him to only one overseas assignment in 1971, Kadena Air Base in Okinawa Japan.

Edward had the distinct honor of meeting President Lyndon B. Johnson during a troop deployment while in Vietnam. He was also the 18th Tactical Fighter Wing nominee to Pacific Command for Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force in 1972. Chief Wright's exemplary performance in thirty years of service culminated in a distinguished career to his country and reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force. He retired at Shaw Air Force Base, Sumter, South Carolina on 30 June 1976.

The retired Chief's military awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (Two Oak Leaf Clusters), Air Force Commendation Medal (3

Oak Leaf Clusters), Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (3 Oak Leaf Clusters), Air Force Good Conduct Medal (Silver and Bronze Star), Army Good Conduct Medal (Bronze claps), World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Antarctica Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon (Silver Cluster), Air Force Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

A seasoned veteran, Edward returned home and embarked on his second career. He worked as an Industrial Maintenance Technician at DuPont Company. Edward retired from DuPont in 1986 after ten years of service. He did not stop there. Edward joined H&R Block Tax, Mortgage and Financial Services. He advanced to the level of Tax Advisor 2, served as an office manager twice, and tax instructor for twelve years. His tenure at H&R Block ended in April 2007, after twenty-one years of outstanding service! Edward still was not through. He used his financial and management expertise and opened his own tax preparation business at age 80 and continued preparing taxes through Tax Season 2019.

Throughout his sixty-one- year career, Edward has served and participated in numerous organizations to include the American Legion and the Mason, Consistory and Shriner. As a devoted and involved father, Edward was always active with the Parent Teachers Association (PTA). As a Son of South Carolina, he was recognized by the South Carolina Senate and House of Representatives for his exemplary service to his country, state, and community on his 80th birthday. On his 90th birthday the City of Charleston proclaimed December 9, 2017 as Edward Julius Wright Day. Edward's most prestigious recognition comes from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC. Edward is recognized in the Military Hall of Service at the museum.

Edward remained united and dedicated to Mt. Olivet Reformed Episcopal Church since his birth. His grandmother, Chloe, would always take him along to church and weekly prayer services. Edward was confirmed in November 1944 and has never faltered in serving the Lord. Throughout his military career he served God wherever he was stationed and continued to remain connected with Mt. Olivet. He rendered exceptional service to the Reformed Episcopal Church, serving as a member of the General Committee and Sustentation Fund. Within the Diocese of the Southeast, he served during the administrations of three bishops on the Standing Committee, Board of Trustees, and as the Diocesan Treasurer. He was the Senior Warden at Mt. Olivet Reformed Episcopal Church for over forty years. As senior warden, Edward's leadership was instrumental in many of Mt. Olivet's accomplishments during the past forty years. He saw the need for a new church building and his visionary leadership was a guiding light throughout the entire process. He was a financial guru and shared that gift with Mt. Olivet to accomplish building a new church facility, acquiring additional property, and a parsonage without a loan. He also established financial stability for Mt. Olivet and had the foresight to train others on the financial processes. He took great pride in how the current treasurer, has mastered the process. A title or number of years does not touch on how Edward served our Lord through Mt. Olivet. He was involved in most activities of the church, including the Women of the Church. He supported his wife, Mary, and the women's organization, he was an honorary member of the Women of the Church. Other positions served include, Diocese president of the Men of the Church, chairman of the Board for the Bishop Jerdan Conference Center (BJCC), and the BJCC business manager. He was honored as a Board of Trustees, Emeritus of the Diocese of the Southeast Reformed Episcopal Church and as Senior Warden, Emeritus of Mt. Olivet Church on his 90th birthday. His overall vision for Mt. Olivet was that "Mt. Olivet grow spiritually." Edward informed the church that after his 90th birthday, he would step down from his duties, but for the last two years

remained active in training and advising others in the church's financial and management roles.

After a brief illness, Edward peacefully transitioned into his eternal season of life on Monday, August 10th. He was surrounded by his three loving daughters and his family will be forever grateful for God's faithfulness and provisions throughout his life. God guided his footsteps for 92 years and 8 months. Edward was full of wisdom and shared his wisdom with so many others. He lived an extraordinary life that took him around the world and over the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans that his grandmother Chloe told him about when he was a boy. He was a blessed man and shared his blessings with all that he encountered.

He was preceded in death fifty-one days ago by his beloved wife of sixty-five years, Mary, parents Frank and Lizzie Wright, brother Joseph Wright, sisters Edna Mae Myers, Helen Gibbs, Daisy Bell Prioleau, and grandson Edward Julius Wright III.

Edward is survived by his son Col (Ret) Edward J. Wright, Jr., USAF (San Antonio, TX) Wanda Wright-Sheats, (Charleston, SC); Col (Ret) Sharon B. Wright, USAF (Woodbridge, VA); and Mary Ann Wright (Charleston, SC). He is also survived by four grandchildren: Erica (Devon) Dixon (Houston, TX); Nigel J. Sheats (Charleston, SC); Nina Sheats (Morrell) Carroll (Winnabow, NC); and "WES" Major (select) William E. Sheats, II USAF, (Colorado Springs, CO); along with four great grandchildren: Taylor Simone, Olivia Nicole and Caleb Edward Dixon (Houston, TX) and Autumn Rose Carroll (Winnabow, NC). Other surviving relatives includes his brother-in-law, Mr. Samuel Ancrum (Ravenel, SC); sisters-in-law Mrs. Helen Wrihten and Rosa Lee Ancrum, both of Ravenel, SC with a host of special nieces, nephews, and other relatives, his Mt. Olivet Church family and lifelong friends, Mrs. Anne Robinson (Chillicothe, OH), Mrs. Ann Lewis (Savannah, GA), Mrs. Elease

James (Sumter, SC), and CMS Tony and Mrs. Jeri Salter (Jacksonville, FL).

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.dorothyshff.com. In lieu of flowers the family request that you make donations to the Edward J. and Mary A. Wright Scholarship Fund. Mt. Olivet RE Church, PO Box 161, Ravenel, SC 29470. emwrightscholarship@gmail.com

A public viewing will be held on Sunday, August 16, 2020 from 4pm to 6pm. There will be a private family funeral on Monday, August 17, 2020 at 11am with a public Committal Service (graveside) at Mt. Olivet Memorial Cemetery at following the service (12:15-12:30 pm). 4283 Savannah Highway, Ravenel SC 29470.

Cemetery Details

Mt. Olivet RE Church Cemetery

4283 Savannah Hwy
Ravenel, SC 29470

Previous Events

Viewing

AUG **16**. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Mt. Olivet RE Church
4283 Savannah Hwy
Ravenel, SC 29470

Tribute Wall



“ CMSgt Edward J. Wright

November 11, 2022 at 04:26 PM



“ Hello, My name is Brianna. I never knew Mr. Wright but I am in AFJROTC at Laney high school and my class read this obituary about Mr. Wright. and i just wanted to say that his obituary moved me more that anything, it inspired me and told me that no matter what happens in my life there is always something else going on in someone else's life. I thought it was amazing how he made sure he got a ride to school everyday, he didn't just give up.

Pretty much what I am trying to say is Mr. Wright has inspired me to do somethings with my life. And I offer my deepest condolences to his family, may God be with you.

Brianna - September 01, 2020 at 02:22 PM



“ Condolences and prayers for the Wright Family...

Ted Spencer - August 20, 2020 at 09:11 AM



“ Truly a wonderful man with a proud legacy. Chief, I salute you. May you rest in peace in heaven. William Crielly, Lt Col, USAF (Ret) 1968-1990.

WILLIAM CRIELLY - August 19, 2020 at 03:18 PM

AR

“ Such fond memories I have of Sgt. Wright and Mrs. Mary. I find comfort knowing that they are reunited but it saddens me that they are no longer physically here with us. Sarge is an integral part of all my REC and DSE memories. He was a kind, compassionate mentor and advisor. Thank you all for sharing your parents with us. Your family will be in our prayers. I pray that God will bring you comfort and peace.

Alvalene Rogers - August 17, 2020 at 12:44 PM

AR

“ Alvalene Rogers lit a candle in memory of CMSgt Edward J. Wright



Alvalene Rogers - August 17, 2020 at 12:41 PM

MI

“ My husband & I read your father’s obituary on Saturday and although we never met him or Amy of you- we were so moved and impressed by his life’s work and dedication to our country and his church we just wanted to reach out and say what an outstanding man he was! Your family were blessed to have him as a role model. He seemed a rare individual, and I can only imagine your mother must have been a special woman as well. May God Bless you all in your loss. Sincerely, J. Addison & Maia Ingle. Charleston.

maia ingle - August 17, 2020 at 07:43 AM

BR

“ We remember Ed and Mary Wright as dear friends who lived lives of dignity and worth, who served Christ and His church with faithfulness and zeal, and who related to everyone with kindness and love. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

The Rt. Rev. and Mrs. Leonard W. Riches (Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church 1996-2014)

Bishop Leonard W. Riches - August 17, 2020 at 07:20 AM

BB

“ To Jimmie,
My condolences and prayers are with you and your family. May the Lord continue to strengthen your family during this time of bereavement.

*From,
Brenda Buxton, Barnwell SC*

Brenda Buxton - August 16, 2020 at 09:36 PM

FG

“ Ms. Sheats,
Thinking of you at this time of sadness and sending heartfelt sympathy to you and your family. May God comfort and keep you through the days ahead.

Florence Gibbs

Florence Gibbs - August 16, 2020 at 09:00 PM

MI

“ Sharon,
I am truly sorry to hear of your loss. May God comfort and keep you all as you endure these difficult times. As I read through you father's obituary I recognized you are most certainly your father's daughter. Sending prayers for you and your family. Love you Sis!!!

Michelin - August 16, 2020 at 07:24 PM


JW

“ Sharon,
My condolences to you and your family during this sad time. May god's grace continue to embrace you.

Janet Wilson

Janet Wilson - August 15, 2020 at 04:47 PM

TK

My condolences to Wright family may God continue to bless and keep the family, that he will sustain you through this time of sorrow. 🙏🙏🙏


Thelma Perkins Kinlaw - August 17, 2020 at 04:11 PM

MK

“ *My husband and I send our love and deepest sympathy to the biological and church family of this remarkable man who lived his life to the fullest for his country and for Christ. May you feel God's comfort and peace as you recall happy memories. Chuck and Mary Mena Koches.*

mary g koches - August 15, 2020 at 03:02 PM

JS

“ You are the smartest accountant I have ever met. Thank you for serving us all these many years. Your understanding went far beyond our expectations. We will certainly remember you for generosity and kindness. The Sams Family, Wadmalaw Island.

James and Henrietta Sams - August 14, 2020 at 11:41 AM

TT

“ Mary Ann,

I offer you and your family my thoughts and prayers. May the Lord bless and comfort you all during this time.

*My sincere condolences,
Tawana Tolbert (DESC)*

Tawana Tolbert - August 14, 2020 at 08:59 AM