



## Bradford James Waples Sr.

February 3, 1954 - September 21, 2025

Bradford James Waples, Sr., a devoted husband, father, grandfather, community leader, and friend, transitioned peacefully from this life after a lifetime of service and dedication. Born on February 3, 1954, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Bradford embodied resilience, excellence, and the unwavering belief in uplifting others. As a man of color who grew up during the era of segregation, he transformed obstacles into opportunities, leaving behind a legacy of leadership, compassion, and empowerment.

In 1961, the Waples family relocated to Lincoln, Delaware, where Bradford attended Slaughter Neck School, a three-room school for Black children. Following the integration of Delaware's public schools, he attended Cape Henlopen High School, where he excelled academically and athletically in track and field, earning several scholarship offers. He continued his education at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and pledged Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., strengthening his commitment to scholarship, service, and brotherhood.

Bradford's professional career began in finance and banking, where he rose quickly to Vice President at James Madison Limited in Washington, D.C. His entrepreneurial spirit later led him to establish Bradford J. Waples & Associates, an accounting firm instrumental during the federal government's savings and loan crisis of the 1980s and 1990s. He also founded

Youknowtech, a technology company dedicated to serving small businesses, schools, and nonprofits.

In 1995, Bradford accepted a position as Executive Director of the Police Athletic League (PAL) in Reading, Pennsylvania. He moved his family—along with his beloved mother-in-law, Essie Cooper, for whom they lovingly provided care after her Alzheimer’s diagnosis—to Reading. At PAL, Bradford implemented programs that served the needs of at-risk children and families.

In 1997, Bradford and Deborah became therapeutic foster parents, opening their home and hearts to children in need. Over the course of two decades, they fostered more than fifty children and became guardians for six. Bradford also became a certified Safe Crisis Management instructor in 2008 and trained others in a variety of mental health and behavioral courses. His home and his heart were always open, reflecting his belief in the power of love, care, and opportunity to transform lives.

His deep commitment to children continued through his work with the Children’s Home of Reading, where he brought both his technical expertise and his heart for service. He secured technology resources, trained staff, and later led the Day School as its Director, fostering a safe and trauma-informed environment for students. In 2018, his community leadership was recognized when he received the Men of Honor Award at the Philadelphia 5th Annual Men of Honor Community Tribute.

Even in retirement, Bradford remained dedicated to service, returning to Lincoln, Delaware, where he worked with Jobs, Education, and Vital Services (JEVS) to assist adults with disabilities. He enjoyed the simple joys of walking, fishing, and connecting with neighbors—always finding ways to encourage and uplift those around him.

Above all, Bradford was a man deeply committed to his family. He and his wife, Deborah, celebrated 40 years of marriage filled with love, partnership, and shared purpose. Together, they raised three devoted sons: Bradford Waples, Jr. of Reading, PA; ByNee' Waples (Shanika) of Philadelphia, PA; and BabaTunde Waples (Jashaydee) of Reading, PA. His pride and joy extended to his six beloved grandchildren: Kayla, Maya, Bradford J. Waples III, Zoey, Nzuri, and Lheia.

Bradford cared deeply for his siblings, cherishing countless fond memories with them that shaped his life and values. He will be lovingly remembered by John E. Waples (Princella), Joseph T. Waples (Ola), Edward Waples (Belinda), Melchisdec "Mel" Waples (Jackie), and Felisa Hazzard (Granville), all of Delaware. In addition, he leaves a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends who were inspired by his life.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John E. Waples, Sr. and Elizabeth Waples, as well as his brothers William "Bill" Waples, George H. Waples, and Edmund Waples, Sr., and his sisters Cornelia M. Waples-Henry and Gertrude "Gertie" Waples-Kollock.

Bradford James Waples, Sr. lived a life of faith, service, and impact. He will be remembered not only for the many roles he fulfilled but for the countless lives he touched with his generosity, vision, and love

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT 4. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church  
Slaughter Neck, DE

## Funeral Service

OCT 4. 12:00 PM (ET)

Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church  
Slaughter Neck, DE

# Tribute Wall

MM

“ Yvette and I would like to extend our deepest sympathies for your loss. Yvette always told me how Mr. Waples made each day at the CHOR Day Academy fun. She admired his dedication to teaching the children there and how he always had something positive and encouraging to say no matter how the day was going. I loved to talk history with him and he would often give me a perspective on historical events that I had not realized were a part of them. He will be missed by us.

*Mike and Yvette Mulligan*

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**Mike Mulligan** - October 05, 2025 at 10:02 AM

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“ Sorry For Your Loss



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**Thomas Widgeon** - October 04, 2025 at 07:43 AM