



Bruce "BJ" Everette Ricketts

February 26, 1979 - May 27, 2024

Bruce Everette Ricketts Obituary

“Always The Rainbow In Someone Else’s Cloud”

- Maya Angelou

Bruce Everette Ricketts was born on Sunday, February 26, 1979, in Seaford, Delaware. Bruce (affectionately known as “B.J.”) was the only child born to Tanya Ricketts and Bruce Coverdale. B.J. departed this life on Monday, May 27, 2024, in Silver Spring, Maryland. B.J. was that flicker of hope in the lives of so many, He tirelessly gave his time, talents, and services, with expectations of nothing in return, but only out of the kindness of his heart. That’s the man he will be remembered for—his hugs, his laughs, his support, was like no other. B.J. loved life and lived every day to the fullest. He often spoke about how unconditional love as being the greatest gift that we can give to ourselves and others. He would say, “Love forgives and embraces imperfections, that is what makes life so beautiful.”

B.J. attended Seaford School District and always excelled academically. I would often joke and say to him, “You are my son, but you are also one of the smartest people that I know.” I don’t know how serious he took that statement, but it was the honest truth. He was truly brilliant. He would tell me that it was because of me, that I was his hero, but little did he know, as a man, he had become my hero. Not only did he excel in all academic areas, but he was

quite involved during his youth. He loved singing and was selected for the Delaware All-State Chorus. He enjoyed band, where he played the saxophone and, in his earlier years, the piano. He became the drum major of the Seaford High School marching band, alongside his best friend, Joy Oliver-Hunt—they went on to win several competitions. B.J. was a winner and didn't accept anything less. He always strived to be the best at the task at hand. While in high school, he also played soccer and ran track and field. He truly loved learning, and never backed down from a good debate, especially if he thought himself to be right (and often he was). One of his joys during his childhood was being a part of the MERIT ("Minority Engineering Regional Incentive Training") Program, which was spearheaded by Mr. John Hollis.

After graduation, B.J. attended the University of Delaware on a full academic scholarship. He went on to receive an R.N. from Delaware Technical and Community College. He continued his education and received a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Science from Wilmington University. Upon moving to Silver Spring, he was accepted into the Master's Program in Public Health at Howard University. Not only did he love learning, but he also loved sharing and giving back to help others through his gifts of knowledge. He has truly served, impacted, and touched so many lives through his love, support, time, and dedication.

B.J. was employed as a Psychiatric Social Worker II at the Bridge Clinic in Georgetown, Delaware prior to moving to Silver Spring. Upon relocating, he was employed as Social Worker/Case Manager at Pathways to Housing D.C. He committed his life to service whether he was on or off the job. He was always helping someone else. More times than I can count, B.J. would suddenly stop the car and say, "Mom... they are homeless," and without another word, he would be taking that person inside the closest restaurant to pay for their next meal. That was the kind of heart that B.J. had—one of unconditional love. All of our outings together were adventurous and included

labors of love.

During B.J.'s early years, he attended Mt. Calvary A.M.E. Church in Concord, Delaware. He attended Sunday School and, to this day, he has a loving and extended church family. He was also the first 6-year-old to take a bride (Beetle) in the many performances of Tom Thumb Weddings. He also attended Macedonia A.M.E. Church in Seaford, Delaware. B.J. was a diligent worker and was heavily involved in the men's ministry. He continued to devote his life to daily practices of worship. God has always been the source of his strength, and he never went a day without expressing his gratitude for his many blessings.

To know B.J. was to know that he was a die-hard Duke, Eagles, and Alabama fan, which he passed on and shared a love with his son, Doc. They took trips to many games together. In his adult life, B.J. enjoyed many hobbies, including traveling, reading, cooking, hiking, and assisting me on whatever chores I had for him on that given day. We took many road trips together, where he would introduce us to different cuisines (some we'd try, others we wouldn't). He loved life and enjoyed spending time with his dogs (Nala, Spotter, and Atlas) and his favorite companion, Sophia. She realized that she could get more out of B.J. when I wasn't present. They began to shop and do activities without me. He loved her, and she loves him.

B.J. loved the arts and theatre. He auditioned and got the role to play Sydney Poitier in the show "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" put on by Possum Point Players in Georgetown, Delaware. It brought him so much joy and they had sold out performances each evening. He was honored to be selected and continued to be involved in theatre with Camp Rehoboth Theatre. B.J. was heavily involved in the community. He selflessly gave his talent and time to community service efforts. He teamed up with Hunger to Hope, where they

provided over 51,000 meals for families in Africa. He was involved in the Camp Rehoboth Outreach Program and volunteered with the Food Bank of Delaware, where he helped prepare meals for the homeless. He participated in the Oxford House 5k Relay to help fundraise for youth scholarships.

B.J. was featured in an interview on Delmarva Life (in partnership with Code Purple) and was featured in an article written by Delaware Online. His most meaningful service was his mission trip to Malawi, Africa, where he traveled across villages helping others and had the opportunity to plant a tree of his service in his name. Not only did he embrace the people and their culture while abroad, upon returning, he fundraised for Pastor Gilbert and his family in Malawi to help them overcome food insecurity. While on his trip, he met a college student, Ndilipo Kamodzi, who needed financial assistance to complete his last semester of college. B.J. fundraised, and many of you donated, so that Ndilipo could complete his studies at Malawi University School of Business and Applied Science. After he graduated from the University, he always remained in contact with B.J. and continuously expressed his gratitude. Due to B.J.'s unconditional love and service to others—a group of his friends in partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation presented him with a certificate of the planting of 10 trees, which have been planted in a “Forest in Need” in his honor.

B.J.'s son, Ryan (who he called him “Doc”), was his pride and joy. There was no greater love than that which he displayed for his son. B.J. was so proud of the fine young man that his son has become. If you truly knew B.J., then you know Ryan. There will be a great void, but loving memories for Tanya and Ryan. We were always a close unit and called ourselves the “Triangle of Love.” We often reminded each other that “We are stronger together, than we are apart.” B.J., though you are no longer here in the physical, the triangle will never be broken. Your spirit will live with us forever.

Bruce is preceded in death by maternal grandparents, Eugene and Kathleen White; paternal grandparents, William and Mary Catherine Coverdale; bonus father, Hollis L. Smack, Sr.; and his beloved dog, Spotter.

He leaves to cherish his loving memory, his son Ryan (Shanda) of Baltimore, Maryland; his loving mother, Tanya Ricketts-Smack of Bridgeville, Delaware; his father, Bruce Coverdale of Milford, Delaware; and his beloved pets, Nala and Atlas. He also leaves to mourn a sister LaToya Coverdale of Fayetteville, North Carolina; two great aunts, Betty Henry of Bridgeville, Delaware and Estella Ricketts (Clark) of Seaford, Delaware; one great uncle, William Ricketts (Betty) of Denton, Maryland; uncles, Cedric Ricketts (Kim) of Melbourne, Florida, Kevin Ricketts (Sherita) of Seaford, Delaware; William "Billy Bean" Matthews of Seaford, Delaware, Albert Davis (Connie) of Ellendale, Delaware, Alvin Cook (Yvette) of Waldorf, Maryland Stanley Ricketts of Delmar, Delaware; four aunts, Terrance Brummell of Seaford, Delaware, Beverly Matthews of Seaford, Delaware, Wanda Coverdale of Milford, Delaware, and Sandee Hopkins (Daniel) of Seaford, Delaware; bonus nephew, Jayden Hurley of Laurel, Delaware; bonus niece, Sophia Hurley of Laurel, Delaware; and a host of special friends, extended family, and cousins.

"No matter where I am, your spirit will be beside me. I love you dad!" – Doc

"Say not in grief, that he is no more, but say thankfulness that he was..."

Lovingly Submitted,
Ryan & Tanya Ricketts

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 7. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Macedonia AME Church (Seaford)
431 N. North Street
Seaford, DE 19973

Visitation

JUN 8. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. John's United Methodist Church (Seaford)
300 North Pine Street
Seaford, DE 19973

Funeral Service

JUN 8. 12:00 PM (ET)

St. John's United Methodist Church (Seaford)
300 North Pine Street
Seaford, DE 19973

Live Stream Broadcast on Facebook

JUN 8. 12:00 PM.

Bennie Smith Funeral Home MD / VA

Tribute Wall



“ *Bennie Smith Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Bruce "BJ" Everette Ricketts*



Bennie Smith Funeral Home - June 08, 2024 at 01:02 PM

CK

“ *Chris, Michael, Amit, John, and Kirk purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Bruce "BJ" Everette Ricketts.*



Chris, Michael, Amit, John, and Kirk - June 16, 2024 at 11:08 AM

SH

“ *I am going to miss you so much but I know that the 45 years you had with us on this earth was so impactful!! You touched so many people! Job well done!! I'll forever love you my very first friend..my best friend!!!! I will keep the memories, time shared, secrets told and all of our wild adventures close to my heart!! Keep watching out for Za'Nyah and help me guide her through this thing called life!!*

Shawnta - June 07, 2024 at 05:46 PM

RD

“ Rafael Dosman purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Bruce "BJ" Everette Ricketts.



Rafael Dosman - June 07, 2024 at 12:48 PM

RD

“ Rafael Dosman planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Bruce "BJ" Everette Ricketts.

Rafael Dosman - June 07, 2024 at 12:48 PM

ML

“ What a special human being. You were so loved, my friend.

Miss Lynne - June 06, 2024 at 11:17 PM

RD

“ Rest easy my dear friend. I love and will miss you.

Rafael Dosman - June 06, 2024 at 07:00 AM

YJ

“ BJ, I will miss you a lot. I love you.

Yvette Jacobs-Cook - June 05, 2024 at 12:35 PM

RS

“ *Rochell Smith lit a candle in memory of Bruce "BJ" Everette Ricketts*



Rochell Smith - June 05, 2024 at 08:25 AM

RS

My condolences to the family I worked with Bruce at Warwick Manor in the nurses station he was a nice and caring guy he will be missed.

Rochell Smith - June 05, 2024 at 08:29 AM

TW

“ *Sorry For Your Loss*



Thomas Widgeon - June 05, 2024 at 07:28 AM