

## John Edward McCleese

April 21, 1942 - July 24, 2023

### The Life and Legacy of John Edward McCleese

Sweet angels surround us as they carry his soul to Heavenly peace.

When the trumpet sounded on July 24, 2023, and the angels sang “When The Saints Come Marching In,” John Edward McCleese traveled in the footsteps of his siblings who had gone before him, and he was reunited with his loved ones. We give praise for the gift HE shared with us as we celebrate his life.

John was born on April 21, 1942, in Columbia, North Carolina. He was the second oldest child born to the late Henry Columbus McCleese and Lula Mae Spencer McCleese. He was preceded in death by two loving sisters, Ohrena E. Gale and Mary M. Caldwell, and two brothers, Dean L. and Gattis M. McCleese. John, also known to many as “John Edward,” was an exceptional person who always exemplified a special uniqueness in his character, ideas, and values.

John has always made Salisbury his home since moving here in 1958. He received most of his formal education in the public schools of Tyrell County, NC but later graduated from the former Salisbury High School in Wicomico County, MD. As a young man in high school, he met the love of his life, June Smith, and after a brief courtship, they married and remained married for 58 years. From this union, three children were born: Darrell, Andrea, and Carlisa.

John was a devout family man and a good provider who loved his wife and children dearly. He had a good, strong relationship with his children and grandchildren and would do anything in the world for them.

After high school, John was drafted into the United States Army on February 4, 1964. He served honorably for two years with the 14th Artillery Division in Fort Hood, Texas. After John's discharge from active duty, John enlisted in the Maryland Army National Guard, where he served with Detachment 1, 1229th Transportation Company, for more than 20 years as a Maintenance Supervisor until his retirement on August 8, 1991. During his service in 1990, John was deployed during the Gulf War to support Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. John received several medals and commendations, including the Army Achievement Medal and the State of Maryland Commendation Medal for meritorious and outstanding service. Additionally, John received a special award from then-Governor William Donald Schaefer for his dedication and bravery. As family and friends will attest, the discipline and patriotism he learned in the Army never left him. John was also a member and avid volunteer with the Maryland Disabled American Veterans, using his leadership abilities to help out his fellow Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen.

John was employed and held several positions with the Occidental Chemical Company, later, the Spartech Plastic Company, for 25 years before his retirement. Due to being raised on a farm and his parents' love for growing a garden every year, John developed a passion for gardening. Every summer, his family and friends could count on getting some fresh vegetables and melons from his garden. They could get collard greens for Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinner. He always had to grow some okra for his sister Pattie. As much as John loved gardening, he also loved watching CNN and Jeopardy, often sparking debates with family and friends on politics and current news.

John was a man of few words but of great strength. He didn't always have

much to say, but it was worth listening to when he did talk. John had a strong bond with all of his brothers and sisters; however, his sister Pattie always had a special place in his heart. He made sure to talk with her every week on the phone or in person. He was loved by all who knew him. Each one of his family, friends, and acquaintances always spoke very highly of him.

John leaves to cherish his memory: his loving wife, June A. McCleese; son, Darrell L. McCleese of Fruitland, MD; daughters, Andrea D. Thomas (Martin, Sr.) of Carey, NC, and Carlisa D. Johnson of Newport News, VA; six grandchildren, Rondollyn and Tracey Johnson, Latashia and Nyja McCleese, Aundres and Martin, Jr. Thomas; two adorable great-grandchildren, Khai Johnson and Devon Burt; two sisters, Georgia Sumpter of Middletown, DE, and Pattie Jackson of Fruitland, MD; three brothers, Charles McCleese (Janie) of Rahway, NJ and Andrew McCleese (Elea) and James McCleese, both of Salisbury, MD., along with an uncle, aunts, a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family members and friends. John will be greatly missed by his entire family and dear close friends.

Mourn Me Not

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 4. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Emmanuel Church  
217 Beaglin Park Dr  
Salisbury, MD 21804

## Funeral Service

AUG 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

Emmanuel Church  
217 Beaglin Park Dr  
Salisbury, MD 21804

## Live Stream Broadcast on Facebook

AUG 4. 11:00 AM.

Bennie Smith Funeral Home MD / VA

# Tribute Wall



“ *Bennie Smith Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of John Edward McCleese* ”

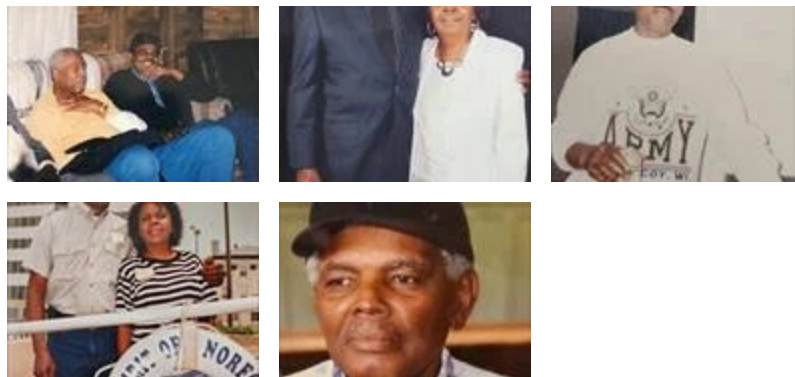


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**Bennie Smith Funeral Home** - August 04, 2023 at 11:21 AM

AT

“ *10 files added to the tribute wall* ”



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**Andrea Thomas** - August 05, 2023 at 07:40 PM

AT

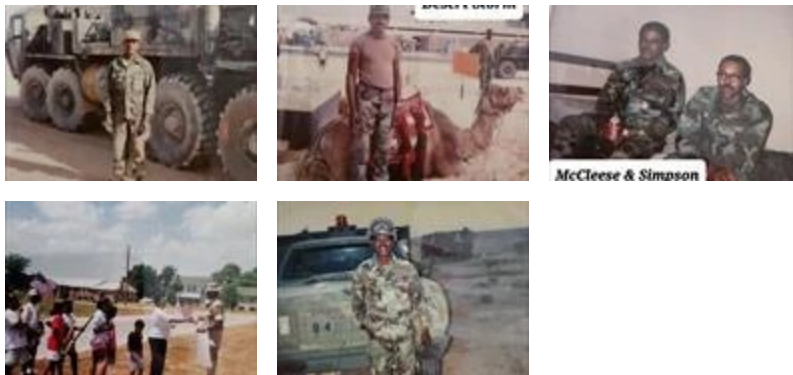
“ 10 files added to the tribute wall



Andrea Thomas - August 05, 2023 at 07:37 PM

AT

“ 9 files added to the tribute wall



Andrea Thomas - August 05, 2023 at 07:35 PM

EW

“ June sorry to hear the of your husband John sending my condolences to you and your family



Elsie Wallace - August 04, 2023 at 02:54 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of John Edward McCleese.*



August 04, 2023 at 10:06 AM



“ *George Whitney lit a candle in memory of John Edward McCleese*



**george whitney** - August 04, 2023 at 09:19 AM



“ *To June and the McCleese Family  
Please know that I am sharing in your sadness as you remember John Edward. I pray that your faith and wonderful memories help to comfort you during this difficult time.  
"Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning."  
Psalms 30:5 Lovingly submitted Essalene Holmes, NJ*



**Essalene Holmes** - August 03, 2023 at 05:25 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of John Edward McCleese.*



August 03, 2023 at 11:21 AM

LP

“ June and family, we wish to send our prayers of comfort and love to you in this time of sorrow in the lost of your beloved husband John. I hope this scripture bring you comfort knowing that Jesus is with you, "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." John 11:25-26.

*Rev. LaVaughn and Brenda Price*

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**LaVaughn Wesley Price** - August 02, 2023 at 06:29 PM

LP

“ LaVaughn Wesley Price lit a candle in memory of John Edward McCleese



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**LaVaughn Wesley Price** - August 02, 2023 at 06:22 PM

BB

“ June, Our Prayers and Condolences To You And Your Family. We Were Sorry To Hear Of John Going Home To Be With The Lord. May God's hope-filled promises bring comfort to your soul and peace to your heart.



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**Barbara Brown** - August 02, 2023 at 01:47 PM

LL

“ *Lisa Larmore sent a virtual gift in memory of John Edward McCleese*



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**Lisa Larmore** - August 02, 2023 at 10:07 AM

LL

“ *Lisa Larmore lit a candle in memory of John Edward McCleese*



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**Lisa Larmore** - August 02, 2023 at 10:06 AM

JS

“ *James Simpkins sent a virtual gift in memory of John Edward McCleese*



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**James Simpkins** - August 02, 2023 at 08:26 AM

CS

“ *Calvin Harmon Sr lit a candle in memory of John Edward McCleese*



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**Calvin Harmon Sr** - August 02, 2023 at 04:21 AM

CS

“ To the McCleese family John is home resting with God, John and I worked together very fine gentleman and I will miss seeing him outside of his when I ride my bike around the neighborhood. To the family stay in peace not pieces. Amen. Calvin H. Harmon, Sr.

Calvin Harmon Sr - August 01, 2023 at 07:22 PM

LB

“ God bless Georgia and family and please know that your friends in Jersey are keeping you all in our prayers. Our sincere sympathy. In loving Memory of your love on



Linda Burrus - July 31, 2023 at 09:57 PM

CP

“ The McCleese family and the Spencer family is connected. I remember when my father Nathan Reed had a church and the McCleese family attended years ago. My grandmother, Mary Spencer Reed told me we were related. Very few left and I wanted to use this time to give my condolences, as part of the Spencer family. Cynthia Polk

Cynthia Polk - July 31, 2023 at 09:55 AM

AL

“ John and June have been my neighbors for about 40 years. John was always so pleasant. When my husband passed , John and June  
Were there for me . When John came home from serving in the military, my daughter and other neighborhood kids formed a parade for him. He went back into his house and came back out with his uniform on. It was a celebration.  
Now, there will be a celebration in God’s kingdom for John . God bless June and the whole McCleese family.  
Your neighbor and friend, Anna Lee

Anna Lee - July 31, 2023 at 09:19 AM

PH

“ My condolences to Mrs. June and the family.  
My first interaction with Mr. John was through your day care services. I pray for your strength and comfort during this time.



Phyllis Hardy - July 31, 2023 at 09:17 AM

SW

“ Remember so many days going to take my niece and nephews their for daycare and my john Would be out side.very nice man he was prayers for the family

Sheryl waters - July 30, 2023 at 10:09 PM