



John Elbert Wilson Sr.

January 11, 1933 - May 16, 2021

John Elbert Wilson, Sr., age 88, was born on Wednesday, January 11, 1933, to John Hurlock Wilson and Margaret Jackson Wilson. To his family and friends, he was lovingly known as “Sunny”. On Sunday, May 16, 2021, John departed this life to be with the Lord. He was raised in the home along with two loving sisters, Geraldine and May Anna.

John began his education at Coleman Elementary School, and then continued at Henry Highland Garnett High School in Chestertown, Maryland, where he excelled in music under the tutelage of Mr. Roy F. Knight. John graduated from Garnett, with the first class to complete twelve years, in 1951. Upon graduating, he was offered a full scholarship to Maryland State College in Princess Anne, Maryland (now University of Maryland Eastern Shore - UMES). In exchange for his education, John was asked to sing in the college choir for the four years he was there, from 1951 to 1955. He also pledged the Delta Nu Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., while in college.

After his formal education, John married the love of his life, Miss Grace Cole, of Still-Pond, Maryland, on May 10, 1956. Together they had and raised three handsome sons and one lovely daughter. During part of this time, he worked in construction in the Delaware area for Local 199.

From 1956 to 1958, John served two years in the Army, and continued his

musical experience when he accompanied a five piece musical ensemble. He achieved the rank of Specialist 3rd Class (Technical) Headquarters and Service company 370th Armored Infantry Battalion. He earned the Good Conduct Medal, while serving overseas in Munich Germany as a Radio Operator, and later was honorably discharged from the Army.

John began his career of teaching music in Hurlock, Maryland, in Dorchester County, in 1960. While serving this student population, John created a full band and choir that was recognized for their excellence. From 1967 to 1969, he taught music at Cambridge High School in Cambridge, Maryland.

By 1970, John and his family had returned to Kent County where he taught at, the now integrated, Chestertown High School. Soon afterward, Kent County High School was built and John was assigned as the new music teacher. There he was able to inspire and train many singers and musicians with his gentle, yet steady and firm influence.

Meanwhile, on the home front, John founded the Coleman Gospel Singers and the Still Pond/ Coleman Charge Mass Choir. These groups blossomed under his leadership. The Mass Choir is still in existence this day and is now under the leadership of Mrs. Linda Wesley, who accompanied John on the piano while he conducted. Later, he organized the Men of Union and the Sanctuary Choir of Union United Methodist Church, where he has been a lifetime member and Lay Leader for many years. He also led a Bible study for the Men of Coleman

A tragic, severe, hearing loss began to affect John's ability to teach music. After transferring to Chestertown Middle School, John worked in a newly formed program named Child Find. This job offered him the opportunity to work with students and parents. After a few years, John decided it was time to retire from the field of education.

Despite his musical setback, John's spirit remained high and his influence widespread. Amazingly, though it was difficult, John was able to keep all the music he had ever learned in his long-term memory. He had "Perfect Pitch". As his former students and colleagues remember him, they have nothing but great things to say about his devotion to his profession and his outstanding traits as a Christian man.

Along with his parents, John and Margaret Wilson, John was preceded in death by his son, Reginald Lee Wilson, Sr. and his sister, Geraldine Fenwick.

John is survived by many and leaves to cherish beautiful, loving memories, his loving wife of 65 years, Grace Wilson; two sons, John and his wife, Yolanda and Melvin and his wife, Sheila; one daughter, Elaine; seven grandchildren, Melvin, Jr., Melody, Reginald, Jr., Lisa, Jasmine, Emmanuel and Julianna; seven great-grandchildren, Justice, Messiah, Aliyah, Rymir, Logan, Micah and Isis; one sister, May Anna Phillips; one aunt, Florine Jackson; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and acquaintances.

Husband, father, uncle, cousin, friend, mentor and acquaintance - John was loved by all and will be truly missed and will remain in our hearts forever.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 27. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Bennie Smith Funeral Home - Chestertown
855 High St.
Chestertown, MD 21620
(410) 778-2161
<https://www.benniesmithfuneralhome.com/>

Visitation

MAY 28. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Bennie Smith Funeral Home - Chestertown
855 High St.
Chestertown, MD 21620
(410) 778-2161
<https://www.benniesmithfuneralhome.com/>

Funeral Service

MAY 28. 11:00 AM (ET)

Bennie Smith Funeral Home - Chestertown
855 High St.
Chestertown, MD 21620
(410) 778-2161
<https://www.benniesmithfuneralhome.com/>

Interment

MAY 28 (ET)

Union United Methodist Church
13522 Whyble Road
Worton, MD

Tribute Wall



“ *View and Download the Funeral Program*

Bennie Smith Funeral Home - May 26, 2021 at 02:53 PM



“ *Patricia A. Hopkins lit a candle in memory of John Elbert Wilson Sr.*



Patricia A. Hopkins - May 28, 2021 at 10:41 AM

“ John E. Wilson, Sr. -was the ‘Inspiration’ for Who I Would Become as A ‘Director’ of Music- Following in his ‘Footsteps’ — As He Had been My 1st Music Instructor: Piano @ age ‘8’ as My Parents Home was Across from where he lived in Hurlock, MD. Then in ‘3rd Grade’ Learning to play ‘Clarinet’ in our ‘Hurlock Elem. #2 Band- Which was the ‘Only Elem. Marching Band in the State of MD. — & Additionally— in The Hurlock Elem. Chorus— where we were taught ‘High School Choral Standards’— such as ‘3part Harmony on ‘No Man Is An Island’. (I still have a Copy of the ‘Words’ he handed out— as He began to teach the ‘50 ’ Elem. Grades 4-7 School Chorus).

Consequently— As He was ‘Promoted’ to Director of the Cambridge High School Music Program— I ‘Continued’ to Move forward’ toward my ‘Goal’ to Be a Director - Just As ‘Mr. Wilson’- My Mentor. Long Story Short: My Parents Provided the ‘Funds’ for My Continued Lessons on Piano/ Guitar/ Oboe & Voice. I would Graduate in 1973 w-Music Honors in the ‘All Eastern Shore Band- 4 Consecutive Years as an Oboist’ & All American to Greece- & In My Senior Year- To Russia.

My ‘Inspiration’— Mr. John E. Wilson. I was So— Proud to be asked to ‘Speak’ @ A Banquet Honoring Him in 2003. & As I Retired As A Director of Music in Prince George’s & Montgomery County Schools after ‘36’years.

I was Very Happy to have Him Attend My Own Retirement Event in 2011.

We continued to stay in touch— as I Spoke to him just recently after his Birthday a few months ago.

I offer this ‘With Enormous Sympathy’ to his Family who I Knew as my neighbors for a dozen years. ‘GOD’ Bless You All at this difficult time.

His Life’s Achievements Will Live On to Inspire Others as it did me.

Patricia A. Hopkins - May 28, 2021 at 10:40 AM



“ *Mr. Wilson was an amazing music teacher. I will always remember the great times I spent in his chorus classes. He had a great love for music and he shared this gift with so many of us at Kent County High School.*

Rest in peace , our loss but heaven's gain.

Annette Beck Turner "Class of 77"

Annette Beck Turner - May 28, 2021 at 12:23 AM

AS

“ *What a great man! The joy he displayed when directing choirs/ choruses was immeasurable. Now he will be part of the choir of all choirs.*

Ann Maie Bryant Sutton - May 27, 2021 at 08:57 PM

RJ

“ *Mr. Wilson was one of he Best teachers in Kent Co., Such a sweet soul. Many Memories, RIP till we meet again*

Rose Dempsey Jackson - May 27, 2021 at 02:43 PM

DS

“ *Mr. Wilson always radiated joy and happiness. I was very fortunate to be a student of his for 4 years. His class was always a bright spot in my day. My sincere sympathy to your family.*

Diane Smith



Diane H. Smith - May 27, 2021 at 01:44 PM

MS

“ *Many grateful and blessed KCHS Choir Students purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of John Elbert Wilson Sr..*



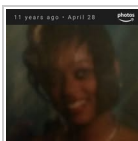
Many grateful and blessed KCHS Choir Students - May 27, 2021 at 08:26 AM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of John Elbert Wilson Sr..*



May 26, 2021 at 09:49 PM



“ *He was kind a kind man. Always had a smile on his face.*

Sheila Tinch - May 26, 2021 at 07:30 PM

MU

“ *Marie Usilton lit a candle in memory of John Elbert Wilson Sr.*



Marie Usilton - May 26, 2021 at 07:25 PM



“ *Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of John Elbert Wilson Sr..*



May 24, 2021 at 01:51 AM



“ *To the family of Mr. John Wilson*

We offer our condolences to you.

May God continue to strengthen you and keep you during this time.

Bishop Nelson Lewis - May 20, 2021 at 04:23 PM