



James Richard Harris

October 15, 1938 - October 16, 2019

Born in Baltimore, Maryland on October 15, 1938, James Richard "Dickie" Harris came into this world, delivered at home by his father, the late Bernard Harris, Sr., M.D. He was also the proud son of the late Ethel Traver Harris and the youngest child in an immediate family circle of four brothers and three sisters. He passed with peace and grace on October 16, 2019, at Seasons Hospice, Sinai Hospital.

Although his parents and four of his siblings were members of Centennial United Methodist Church, Dickie, his sister Elise and youngest brother Robert followed the Catholic faith. As a younger, he was an active member of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church where he served as an altar boy.

Dickie attended Baltimore City Public Schools, first at Charles Carroll of Carrollton Elementary School and on to Dunbar Junior and Senior High Schools. A mischievous youngster who dearly loved school, he participated in numerous activities including the Student Government Association, baseball and varsity football teams as well as the school's golf team.

Following high school, Dickie enrolled in Morgan State College (now University) majoring in Health and Physical Education. An outstanding swimmer, he demonstrated his aquatic skills as a member of the school's swim team. He often boasted of the fact that his record on the team is still highly visible in the university's Hall of Fame. At the end of his sophomore year, he transferred to Central State University in Xenia, Ohio, where he completed his major in Health and Physical Education.

After college, Dickie was drafted into the U.S. Army, stationed at Ft. Gordon, Georgia and Ft. Jackson, Columbia, South Carolina where he was assigned to Special Services, assisting with athletic programs for fellow soldiers and youth housed on base. It was there he met his future wife, Mildred Smoot, an Atlanta, Georgia native teaching at C.A. Johnson High School. They were married at St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church in Atlanta in 1964, and shortly thereafter, moved to Baltimore where Dickie began a 30-year

career with the Bureau of Recreation and Parks, beginning as a recreation leader at Cloverdale Recreation Center and eventually as Director of the Aquatics Division, a position he held until his retirement.

Dickie's sphere of interests was eclectic. As a teenager, he spent much of his time as a lifeguard at the Druid Hill Park swimming pool and quality time at the family's summer home on the Magothy River where he, family and friends enjoyed boating, crabbing, fishing and visiting nearby beaches. As an adult, he actively participated in professional, fraternal, community, civic, social and athletic organizations. His in professional organizations included membership in the U.S. Lifesaving Association (USLA), National Recreation and Parks Association, and Maryland Recreation and Parks Association. He was also a certified pool and spa operator.

For many years, he followed in his parents' footsteps as a member of IBPOE of W(Elks) rising to the position of Past Grand Exalted Ruler. He led the Education and Athletic departments of the Tri-State Elks of Maryland, Delaware, and D.C., and held numerous positions in his local lodge, East Baltimore Lodge #1043.

He was an active member of the No Name Club, Meritocrats, Baltimore Driftwood, Baltimore Mules and Forest Park Senior Golfers until failing health prevented him from attending meetings. For many years, he was a season ticket holder with the Baltimore Colts and was an original PSL owner with the Baltimore Ravens until the time of his death. He served as a member of the staff of AFRAM for several years and was a former member of The Boys Are Back in Town and The Baltimore Bullets at the CIAA.

When relatives and friends were asked to describe Dickie in a few words, comments included "generous spirit", "party animal", "loyal friend", "excellent host". "smooth dresser", "handsome", "gregarious", "witty", " a jokester", "champion of the red ball", " the guy who always drove a convertible" and many other complimentary and humorous terms.

He had an inexhaustible supply of compassion for those in need and was quick to help youngsters with college tuition, others to pay their rent, property taxes, car insurance, traffic tickets, all with no expectation of being repaid. He took enormous pride in sponsoring friends for membership in his social groups, especially the No Name Club.

Married for 55 years, he and Mildred enjoyed national and international travel, attending conventions and conclaves as well as annual vacations, especially on the high seas, his favorite mode of travel. Dickie also enjoyed traveling with golf buddies to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Carroll Valley, Pennsylvania and participating in locally sponsored golf

tournaments.

Known by some as the "Luther Burbank" of Dennlyn Road, Dickie had a green thumb and raised prize beefsteak tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and several "accidental" hybrid vegetables. He was once the envy of his block because of his attention to detail as he manicured his lawn on a weekly basis. He was never satisfied when forced to pay a gardener to mow his lawn. No one could tend to his lawn the way he could.

Blessed with a beautiful tenor voice, Dickie looked forward to Christmas when he would give a harmonious rendition of "Oh, Holy Night," and at the end of each No Name Club dinner dance when he would lead members and guests in singing "The Party's Over," and the party wasn't over until he sang.

A devoted husband, uncle, friend and confidant to many, Dickie's work here is done. He received a call, an offer he could not refuse for an appointment from which he will not return. This assignment comes with a huge sing-on bonus; a reunion with family and friends he hasn't seen in many years. His new mission takes him to a wonderful place where there is no cancer, no stroke-a place where music, laughter and love are guaranteed eternally.

He left detailed instructions for his loved ones and friends to celebrate his life. Low adherence to his instructions will not be tolerated! We must follow his directive and share wonderful memories of "the man", "the myth", "the legend"-our inimitable Dickie Harris.

Left to celebrate his life are his wife, Mildred Smoot Harris; sister, Elise Harris Clarke; nieces Brenda Clarke Blount, Marilyn Harris Davis (Michael); nephews Miles G. Harrison, Jr., M.D. (Wanda), Barry K. Watson, Robert Blount, Jr. (godson), Roland Dean (N.Y.); sisters-in-law Florine Smoot Neal and Evelyn M. Smoot (Atlanta, Ga.); grandnieces Monica Blount (Wayne), Jennifer Blount Lucas (Guy), Kia Harrison Wyatt (Armani) Atlanta; Jessica Hart; Sage Conaway, Shannon Mack Grimes, Kelli, Kourtni and Kylee Mack, all of Atlanta; Sophie Duffie and Brooke Harrison; grandnephews Kyle Harrison, Maxxwell and Mario Davis, Jordan, Mason and Christopher Hart, Smith Harrison, Khristopher Mack and Kameron Hose (Porsha), Atlanta; the Carr Family and a host of friends and former colleagues. He is also survived by Joanne Edwards, a devoted, trusted, protective, patient and understanding caregiver, who loved her "Mr. Dickie".

He was preceded in death by siblings Bernard Harris, Jr. M.D., Bernadine Harris Harrison, Robert H. Harris, Sr., Anita Harris Watson, Berkley White and nephew Robert H. Harris, Jr.

Cemetery

Garrison Forest Veterans
11501 Garrison Forest Road
Owings Mills, MD,

Events

OCT 22 Viewing 08:30AM - 08:00PM

March Funeral Homes - West Baltimore
4300 Wabash Avenue, Baltimore, MD, US, 21215

OCT 22 Family Hour 05:00PM - 07:00PM

March Funeral Homes - West Baltimore
4300 Wabash Avenue, Baltimore, MD, US, 21215

OCT 23 Wake 10:30AM - 11:00AM

Union Baptist Church
1219 Druid Hill Avenue, Baltimore, MD, US

OCT 23 Service 11:00AM

Union Baptist Church
1219 Druid Hill Avenue, Baltimore, MD, US

Comments



“ Hilda Phillips lit a candle in memory of James Richard Harris



Hilda Phillips - October 24, 2019 at 12:12 PM



“ Anthony & Ruth Jackson lit a candle in memory of James Richard Harris



Anthony & Ruth Jackson - October 23, 2019 at 07:03 AM



“ We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.

March Funeral Homes - October 18, 2019 at 12:59 PM