



## Charles R. Armstrong

December 26, 1926 - July 12, 2020

Charles Robert Armstrong, a beloved husband and father, military officer and architect, was born in Winston Salem, N.C., on Dec. 26, 1926, to Charles E. and Lula Belle Armstrong. The second oldest of four children, he was 5-years-old when his family moved to High Point, N.C.

He learned early about the importance of hard work. Armstrong helped his family sell wood and wash clothes for other families. He also had an extensive paper route that he attended to with the aid of his brother and friends. Armstrong attended racially segregated schools and after graduating from William Penn H.S., he enrolled in North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, a public historically black college in Greensboro, N.C.

He went on to serve as a sergeant in World War II and later as a lieutenant in the Korean Conflict. It was in Korea when he was a newly commissioned officer that he led members of the Second Infantry Division in the Battle of Bloody Ridge during the late summer of 1951. It was a successful mission but one that would haunt him the rest of his life. He went on to lose his right foot in the battle of Heartbreak Ridge, a nearly month-long battle that took place in September 1951. Armstrong left Korea strapped to a gurney and fighting for his life.

“After I recovered, I asked to be assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers but

was told that they were not integrated yet,” he told Yvonne Latty, author of the 2004 book, *We Were There: Voices of African American Veterans from World War II to the War in Iraq*. “I had a degree in architectural engineering and was one of the few black officers to have successfully led a mostly white combat squadron but it didn’t matter to the Army brass. The Army just didn’t know what to do with us back in those days.”

He was assigned to desk work – menial jobs – and chafed at the restrictions imposed upon him by an institution plagued throughout by systemic racism. Armstrong, who had planned on a military career, eventually left in 1956.

“I was going to stay 30 years, be a role model, become a general, but they found it unbearable to promote me. They passed me over five times,” he says in *We Were There*. “I knew it was a losing battle, but I wanted to serve my country. So few of us were commissioned officers, people were looking to me to be successful. I felt it was my obligation that I fight.”

He moved his young family to the Washington, D.C., area where he worked as an architect in the private sector before eventually retiring in 1973 because of his disabilities. He completed a master’s degree at Southern Illinois University in 1974. A long-time member of Trinity AME Zion Church on 16th Street, he served as a steward, trustee, choir member and Sunday School teacher. Many Sundays following services, he would drop by his brother’s house to visit relatives on his way home to Sir Lancelot Drive in Bowie, MD.

A gregarious man, he enjoyed hosting cookouts in his spacious back yard, attending gatherings of the High Pointers Club and going to professional football games. He also was an award-winning foster parent. Following the death of Ora his wife of 45 years in 1998, Armstrong found love a second time around and married the former Veronica Scott. Together, they traveled to Paris and took various cruises together.

Armstrong spent his final years at Althea Woodland Nursing Home in Silver Spring. Several days before his death, workers wheeled him outside where he looked up at the trees and hummed quietly to himself. Veronica was there with him. It was the day before their 21st wedding anniversary. He died peacefully on July 12, 2020.

Armstrong was preceded in death by his wife Ora and their sons Charles Jr. and Michael and siblings Louise Powell, McKinley J.H. Armstrong, and Georgia Bass.

He is survived by his loving wife Veronica Armstrong; Jernell Reynold Armstrong; Candace Lee Jacob Wilson and Michael Wilson; six grandchildren including Charles Robert Armstrong and numerous nieces and nephews and in-laws.

# Cemetery Details

## Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington, VA

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

MARSHALL-MARCH FUNERAL HOME OF MD  
4308 SUITLAND ROAD SUITLAND MARYLAND 20746  
SUITLAND, MD 20746

## Service

AUG 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

MARSHALL-MARCH FUNERAL HOME OF MD  
4308 SUITLAND ROAD SUITLAND MARYLAND 20746  
SUITLAND, MD 20746

# Tribute Wall



“ *To View the Webcast of the Funeral for Charles R. Armstrong, Please Click the Link below.*



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**Marshall-March Funeral Homes** - July 27, 2020 at 09:59 AM



“ *Charles R. Armstrong*

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October 23, 2023 at 08:15 AM



“ *Rest in peace, Cousin Charles!*



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**Dee Walker** - August 01, 2020 at 10:51 AM



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the family in this time of sorrow. Continue to rely on God and know that he hears your prayers, because he cares for you. Truly sorry for your loss.*

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**Evans family** - July 31, 2020 at 04:18 AM

TW

“ *Sorry For Your Loss  
Jesus Christ Loves Me  
We Love You*



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**Thomas Widgeon** - July 24, 2020 at 06:42 AM

TW

“ *Sorry For Your Loss  
Jesus Christ Loves Me  
We Love You*



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**Thomas Widgeon** - July 23, 2020 at 12:52 PM



“ *We the March Family and Marshall-March 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.*

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**Marshall-March Funeral Homes** - July 22, 2020 at 07:10 PM