



## James D. Howard Sr.

November 17, 1941 - January 29, 2024

James Dennis Howard (also known as "JD"), the extremely versatile photographer whose work covered highly respected institutions, events, ministers, politicians, and everyday people here and across the global Black community, departed this life on January 29, 2024 due to complications from dementia. He was 82 years old.

Born on November 17, 1941 in Norfolk, VA, JD was the second of six children born to James Cruter and Eliza Peed Howard and the oldest of three sons. Protective over his brothers and sisters while also being mischievous at times, as a child he and his siblings lived with his grandmother in North Carolina for a year when his mother went to New York to study nursing. He was the strongest of the group, and was known for his bravery, athletic skill, and always testing his limits. In the summers, he and his brothers would go back to North Carolina each year from Norfolk to earn money for school supplies by working with their uncles harvesting tobacco.

This desire to safeguard others remained core to JD as he grew up. He developed a reputation as a fighter, earning him the nickname "One Punch" in middle school. He attended Booker T. Washington High School and excelled as a guard on the local recreation center football team. He caught the eye of trainer Earnest Tally, who taught him boxing, and ultimately he won the Virginia Welterweight Golden Gloves Tournament by defeating Walter Crump

in 1957. He finished high school in 1960.

JD joined the United States Marine Corps immediately after high school and was deployed to Camp Lejune, where he was part of the USMC Boxing Team. Two years into his enlistment, JD married Geraldine Stevenson in February 1962. Their first child, Denise, was born in October 1962. Their second child, James Jr., was born in December 1965.

Shortly before the birth of James Jr., JD served his first tour in Vietnam as a member of M company, 3rd battalion, 1st Marines. He received enemy fire on multiple occasions and was eventually awarded the Purple Heart. Following his tour, JD entered the Baltimore Police Force, but when his wife needed surgery and he lacked sufficient tenure to qualify for insurance, JD re-listed in the Marines so that she could receive the operation. He continued his service for several years after his second Vietnam tour and remained in the Corps for a total of 10 years, eventually reaching the rank of Staff Sergeant. He took up photography during his second tour in Vietnam, documenting what he saw in the field and taking pictures during breaks. Gradually he discovered he had a knack for capturing the most essential visual elements of people and places and using them to tell stories.

Following his discharge from the Marines in 1970, JD opened up a small shop on 105 North Charles Street behind S and N Katz Jewelers and went into business as a studio photographer. He shot individual and family portraits, baby photos, and graduation pictures. But never satisfied to just sit in the studio and wait for business to come his way, JD was a true entrepreneur. He relentlessly built inroads into some of the most well-known institutions in Baltimore's Black community. In churches around the city, he shot christenings, weddings and funerals, and covered the invocations of pastors and the performances of choirs. In schools, he covered graduation ceremonies, shot graduation albums, and knew countless principals, teachers,

and education administrators. In politics, he served as the official photographer in a number of local and state level campaigns. JD also plugged into the beautician network in Baltimore, which led to him working as the official photographer for the National Black Beautician convention for several years, and he also covered the National Beauty Culture League and the Bronner Brothers International Beauty Show in Atlanta. Some of his work was featured in Jet and Ebony magazines and the Baltimore Sun. And of course, he was a staff photographer at the Baltimore Afro-American newspaper for decades.

JD's work later extended into progress photography, where he documented the construction of many of the multi-million dollar projects that transformed the skyline of Baltimore and Washington D.C. in the 1980s and 1990s. Among his many projects, JD shot the construction of Harborplace, the Hyatt Regency Hotel, the Convention Center, and the BRESCO trash incinerator. He also documented the construction of the Fort McHenry tunnel and many of the tunnels and stations built for the Baltimore and Washington metro systems. It was during this period that JD and Geraldine adopted their third child, Les, in 1984.

Photojournalism was another platform for JD to shine and show others the world as he saw it. His photos were used extensively by the Afro, and besides people and events in and around Baltimore, through his eyes readers saw the Million Man March, the inauguration and funeral of President Nelson Mandela, the inauguration of President Barack Obama, and the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

Regardless of whether his subjects were extraordinary times and places, everyday people having a laugh, or vibrant flowers in the sun after a spring rain, JD had an exquisite eye for detail that he successfully built into an

extremely diverse portfolio of work, extending even into cake baking. Colors, light and balance were the tools he used to create countless images cherished by thousands of people. He was hard-working, disciplined, and a perfectionist when it came to his craft. He valued presentation and was an impeccable dresser, realizing that he wasn't only selling pictures, he was building and maintaining his personal brand as an artist and a professional.

He leaves to cherish his memory; two sons, James and Lester Howard; two granddaughters, Latavia Watson and MaKayla Howard; two brothers, Theodore Howard and Victor Howard; two sisters, Kay Collins and Phillis Doggett; seven nephews, Tony Williams, Maurice Williams, Brinston Collins, Theodore Howard, Rodney Howard, Lance Howard, and Joseph Howard; three nieces, Cherie Mallory, Veda Hicks, and Lynnea Mitchell; and a host of relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

# Cemetery Details

## King Memorial Park

8710 Dogwood Road  
Baltimore, MD 21244

# Previous Events

## Public Viewing

FEB 6. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home - West  
4300 Wabash Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215

## Wake

FEB 7. 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

March Funeral Home - West  
4300 Wabash Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215

## Funeral Service

FEB 7. 11:30 AM (ET)

March Funeral Home - West  
4300 Wabash Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215



# Tribute Wall



“ *March Funeral Homes created a Webcast in memory of James D. Howard Sr.*



---

**March Funeral Homes** - February 02, 2024 at 11:04 AM

JG

“ *James, I never got to meet you, but your dad spoke of you frequently. I spent a summer with your dad and Wallace Baden learning photography before I went off to college. That experience helped me pay for my Harvard education. He was so proud of you. Beaming all the time. When you attended MIT I heard all about it. When you moved to Tokyo, I heard all about it. I got numerous updates over the years. He was one proud dad. I am so sorry that I wasn't able to attend the service. The summer I spent with your dad was one of those inflection points in my life. I think of him often and will continue to do so. JP Grant*

---

**JP Grant** - February 14, 2024 at 02:03 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of James D. Howard Sr..*



---

February 05, 2024 at 04:54 PM

LC

“ Lisa and Steve Crooks planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James D. Howard Sr..

Lisa and Steve Crooks - February 05, 2024 at 04:54 PM

WC

“ On behalf of the American Legion Northern Central Region District 4 we send to this family heart felt words of comfort during such a time as this. A veteran that will never be forgotten. A Marine who will always be a hero. A man whom whom I still have my high school prom picture that he taken in 1974. A man of honor, respect, dedication and commitment. A soldier who has now been called to report to Post Everlasting by our heavenly Father. Amen Tim Causion 1st Vice Commander District 4 (NCR)

Wilson E Causion - February 05, 2024 at 09:01 AM

NH

“ Naoko & Yasu Honda purchased the Your Light Shines for the family of James D. Howard Sr..



Naoko & Yasu Honda - February 03, 2024 at 05:10 AM

NH

“ Naoko & Yasu Honda planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James D Howard.

Naoko & Yasu Honda - February 03, 2024 at 05:10 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of James D. Howard Sr..



February 02, 2024 at 09:00 PM



“ Alex Hor & Chizuru planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James D Howard.

Alex Hor & Chizuru - February 02, 2024 at 09:00 PM



“ Leslie and Yuko Donahe purchased the America t he Beautiful for the family of James D. Howard Sr..



Leslie and Yuko Donahe - February 02, 2024 at 12:18 PM



“ Leslie and Yuko Donahe planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James D Howard.

Leslie and Yuko Donahe - February 02, 2024 at 12:18 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of James D. Howard Sr..



February 01, 2024 at 05:06 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** - January 31, 2024 at 09:16 AM

JT

*Still remember the conversations I had with him. His wife and my wife were first cousins.*

*As a former Marine and Vietnam Veteran I say Semper Fi!*

*Dennis was a man of true character and resolve*

*LII*

---

**James Thomas** - February 07, 2024 at 09:24 AM

TW

*Thank you for your service and thank you for the memories Mr. JD Howard. It was a pleasure being a member of a wonderful group who was honored to care for you in your final days. You will be missed on 14BNH. May GOD bless and comfort your family. Sincerely, Tina Warfield/Perry Point VA Medical Center/14BNH*

---

**Tina Warfield** - February 08, 2024 at 11:16 PM