



Ramon E Matthews

December 15, 1926 - December 6, 2020

RAMÓN ERNEST MATTHEWS, born in Baltimore on December 15, 1926, was the son of Walter Ernest and Blanche Louise Carroll. His siblings were the late Walter Monroe, and Doris Sidonia (currently residing in Texas). After a brief illness, Ramón departed from this life on December 6, 2020 at Genesis Multi-Medical Center.

Ramón's life reads as a life well spent. He started work early at the age of eleven as a newspaper boy, grocery clerk, arabber, and bootblack. Ramón left school at age sixteen. At the age of eighteen, he enlisted in the United States Army as a munition's handler. He became an expert rifleman, truck driver, and driving instructor. He was also a special driver for the Colonel in his regiment. He was honorably discharged in 1951.

Under the G.I. bill, he completed an advanced shoe repairing and shoe making program from Carver Vocational Technical High School. He started his own shoe repair business in Pigtown from 1952 through 1959. His brother, Walter also worked in the shop. During the mid-1950's, Ramón met his daughter's mother Delores. In 1961, he sold his business and was hired to work for Westinghouse. Under the Westinghouse Career Development Program, he became a certified welder. While there, he also became a shop steward and a first line supervisor. He was promoted to quality control and inspection. He resigned Westinghouse when he was called by a city official to

teach shoe repair at Carver, his alma mater. In 1973, during the Baltimore City schoolteachers' strike, he returned to Westinghouse. He was promoted to the quality control and inspection section and donned a suit and tie for his desk job. He retired from Westinghouse in 1987 at the age of sixty. After retirement, Ramón went back to school and received an AA degree from the Community College of Baltimore in June 1989. He held the distinction of being the oldest of 523 graduates. In 1990, he attended Towson State University and studied English Literature. He studied there until 1999. One of his instructors (a Yale scholar) impressed with his stellar scholastic efforts, gifted him with the complete works of William Shakespeare.

In 2010, the last job that he held was a part-time position at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum as a security guard. In 2015, he was admitted to the Genesis Multi-Medical Center. At Genesis, he learned to adapt to his new surroundings. He enjoyed watching the Turner Classic Movies, playing cards and bingo. He loved eating in the dining room, participating in the arts and crafts activities and relaxing during the live musical programs presented during the year and held on special holidays.

Those who love and know Ramón well, speak of his charm, handsome countenance, engaging smile, impeccable dress along with his well-spoken vocabulary, and captivating conversations. If he was not in a suit, he sported a guayabera (a Mexican wedding shirt) and donned a beret, panama, or fedora. He was extremely sociable and engaging with people of all cultures. He loved fine dining, attending plays, concerts, and other social events. Ramón was an avid reader who loved literature. One of his many hobbies included singing and guitar playing. He often sang "When the Swallows Come Back from Capistrano" with a resonant, baritone voice. He loved to watch old black and white movies. Ramón's favorite movies involved swashbucklers like *The Prisoner of Zenda* and the masked swordsman, *Zorro*. Years ago, at a family Halloween party, he dashed in the door costumed as *Zorro*. One of his other

favorite pastimes included attending the Maryland Renaissance Festival every year. Ramón sometimes wore medieval costumes while in attendance. One of his favorite performers was Johnny Foxworth, a famous swords swallower with whom he became good friends. Ramón was an engaging personality as well as an amateur actor. How appropriate that his mother named him after Ramón Navarro, the silent film movie star and heartthrob. He honed his craft at the Fells Point Corner Theater. He appeared in many movies and television programs such as Avalon, He said, She Said, and Homicide: Life on the Street. Another of Ramón's favorite past times included his energetic court moves as a tennis player with friends in Columbia. He was also an expert martial artist. He loved driving and rode his decked out Harley dressed in black leather from head to toe.

However, his illustrious life was well showcased when he appeared on the piste (fencing strip). The fencing community will miss him dearly for Ramón always held his fencing master, opponents, students, and peers in such high regard. A member of the USFA, he was affiliated with JHU fencing for over thirty years. One of his long-time friends fencing master, Coach Dick Oles was most revered by him. Ramón was a mentor, coach and armorer at the Salle Palasz/Tri-Weapon Club founded by Richard Oles. In a Baltimore Sun article in 2011, Ramón was interviewed about Oles. During his prestigious fencing career, Ramón achieved forty-two awards from 1956 through 1994 and was a two times three-weapon champion. His love for fencing was unequalled except for his love for family. The name Ramón is of Spanish origin and means 'wise protector'. This shield enveloped us all extending to family, friends, and all he touched.

Ramón was predeceased by Walter Monroe Matthews, his sister-in-law Marion Matthews Bruce and his son-in-law Michael O. Lee Sr.

Ramón leaves to cherish his life: his sister, Doris Sidonia Matthews; his daughter, Deborah A. Lee; his grandsons, Damian R. Perkins, Michael O. Lee Jr. and wife Angela; his great grandchildren, Mikel, Karys, and Chrixus Lee; his nieces and nephews, Jeannette, Dorothy, Walter, Sandra, Robert, and Renee, who affectionately called him “Uncle Raymond”; his cousins, Grace and Thornton Carroll; his nieces, Thurma and Lorraine; and his great grandnieces and nephews, great-great grandnieces and nephews as well as a host of friends and associates.

Previous Events

viewing

DEC 16. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - West Baltimore
4300 Wabash Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215
(410) 542-2400
info@marchfh.com

Wake

DEC 17. 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - West Baltimore
4300 Wabash Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215
(410) 542-2400
info@marchfh.com

Service

DEC 17. 11:30 AM (ET)

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Tribute Wall



“ *To View the Webcast of the Funeral for Ramon E Matthews, Please Click the Link below.*



March Funeral Homes - December 08, 2020 at 11:50 AM

DM

I will always love you my big brother!! I sent you a bouquet of Beautiful Dreams, your little sister, Doris Matthews, in Texas

Doris Matthews - December 10, 2020 at 02:19 PM



“ *Ramon E Matthews*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM

BR

“ *Ramon and I hit a many tennis balls on the old Negro courts at Druid Hill Park. Ramon shared many stories of Baltimore days of old. He will be missed by many folks...Bob Rhodes*

Bob rhodes - March 07, 2021 at 05:07 PM

JM

“ *Peace and Blessings to Jeanette and Family during this time of bereavement. We are praying for the Family.*

J. Massey

Seniors on the Move, New All Saints Catholic Church

J. Massey - December 17, 2020 at 11:28 AM

CI

“ *Ramon was a man of very exacting standards! He tinkered with everything to break it apart then put it back together again according to specification. This was made very clear to me during my freshman year and season on the men's fencing team. We were required to learn weapons repair and the correct way to care for all the equipment in the fencing room from Ramon. When I returned to Baltimore in 1999 to coach the teams at various levels Ramon and I developed a strong relationship that grew over the next 20 years. At one point just prior to his declining health I was visiting him daily. We would share stories and adventures. Ramon always had the last word and comment because he basically had done everything that there was to do. You could not top him. I learned to value his advice and guidance. As his physical health started to decline I always knew that his mind was sharp because he could rattle off addresses and phone numbers of anyone from his past without a stammer or missing a beat when asked. I have never seen anything like this and that was my test for him. Prior to his passing I would visit him as much as I could and we would talk about fencing and all things that defined a Renaissance Man. Ramon was a dear friend who was respected and loved. He was very genuine. I was blessed that he was in my life.*

Charles E. Greene II, JHU 1986

Charles E. Greene II - December 15, 2020 at 11:45 PM

AL

“ *May Mr. Matthews R.I.P
A'dell Lee*



A'dell V Lee - December 14, 2020 at 02:30 PM

YM

“ *Your nieces, Starr & Malia purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Ramon E Matthews.*



Your nieces, Starr & Malia - December 14, 2020 at 01:12 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ramon E Matthews.*



December 14, 2020 at 12:35 PM

KO

“ *1 file added to the album Ramon*



Kathy Oles-Martin - December 14, 2020 at 09:37 AM

TT

“ Ray was one of the most friendly people you'll ever meet, and his generous spirit lit up the JHU fencing room for decades. The pride he took in his work, and his willingness to share his know-how with others, helped grow fresh generations of armorers tracking down ghosts in the machine. His frequent references to his time at Westinghouse were a tribute to a bygone era of industrial work in the U.S., and were as interesting to a history major as his mechanical skills. He will be missed.

-Tim Train, JHU '91

Tim Train - December 13, 2020 at 06:23 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ramon E Matthews.



December 10, 2020 at 03:14 PM

YD

“ Your Daughter Deborah purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Ramon E Matthews.



Your Daughter Deborah - December 10, 2020 at 11:05 AM



“ *It was an honor and pleasure to know Ray for many years while being involved with the Salle Palasz and JHU fencing club. As long as I could remember over the nearly thirty years that I was involved with fencing, Ray was at the club and tournaments and always had a huge heart and smile. He was tireless with his devotion to the sport and his friends.*

He was able to keep the club equipment operational which was not an easy task. Thanks to Ray's expertise and dedication the club tournaments would not have run so well. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Ray for countless hours of work.

I, for one, will remember Ray forever. Ray made the world a better place.

With warm regards. Mike Kasun

Michael Kasun - December 10, 2020 at 06:56 AM

DH

“ *1 file added to the album Ramon*



Dana Hall - December 09, 2020 at 09:23 PM

BV

“ *Ramon was an icon in Maryland Fencing in the 70s. I don't remember the specifics of our conversations only the gentle but fierce building of a winning mindset that shaped me as a competitor and as a young African-American man and fencer. Since leaving Maryland and TWC, I have often thought fondly of him and Coach. Rest in peace!*

*Bryan Vauls
TWC 1973-1978*

Bryan Vauls - December 09, 2020 at 08:54 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Ramon E Matthews.*



December 09, 2020 at 05:22 PM

R1

“ *Ron Kramer, JHU Fencing, 1976 purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Ramon E Matthews.*



Ron Kramer, JHU Fencing, 1976 - December 09, 2020 at 11:38 AM

RG

“ *Renee Gillis lit a candle in memory of Ramon E Matthews*



Renee Gillis - December 09, 2020 at 12:36 AM

GP

“ *Ray was a kind, friendly, and cheerful soul whose knowledge as a top flight armourer was passed on to many Hopkins fencers over the years. I always enjoyed seeing Ray at our alumni-varsity meets over the years; he inevitably greeted the alumni as long lost brothers, and, in a way we were. My sincere condolences to the family on the loss of Ray. May you be comforted by the many fond and loving memories that you undoubtedly have.*
Glenn Pantel JHU '75

Glenn Pantel - December 08, 2020 at 11:24 PM

CK

“ *I was JHU foil team armorer in 1990-1992. As someone who couldn't tell duct tape from Teflon tape before joining the team, Ray's advice was invaluable in honing my craft and avoiding ridicule from Coach!*
Ray lit up the fencing room with his charm and warmth. Generations of JHU fencers benefited from his friendship.
My prayers and condolences to the Matthews family.

Christopher Koh
JHU Class of 93

Christopher Koh - December 08, 2020 at 10:33 PM

DC

“ *Ramon was a great friend and supporter of Johns Hopkins fencing. He was always a warm presence in the fencing room. He always greeted you with a big smile and a great story to tell. He taught me a lot about being an armourer during my time in Baltimore in the mid-late 80's. I always enjoyed seeing him when I returned to campus for our annual alumni meet. His warmth and humor and joy of life will be missed and always remembered. I want to offer my heartfelt condolences to his family from my family and the Hopkins fencing alumni.*

*David Cohen
Johns Hopkins - Class of 1989*

David Cohen - December 08, 2020 at 10:26 PM

MO

“ *Ramon was a long-time friend of the sport of fencing in Baltimore. He was a mentor, teacher, advisor and all-around handy-man at the club. Many of those whose lives he touched are carrying forward and sharing the knowledge he shared with them. We may not be able to duplicate his smile and wit but we will do our best to make sure he is remembered.*

*Salle Palasz
Tri-Weapon Club
Maryland Division US Fencing
The Oles Family
Richard F Oles (d 2011)*

Michael Oles - December 08, 2020 at 02:24 PM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Ramon E Matthews.*



December 08, 2020 at 02:07 PM



“ *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 - December 08, 2020 at 08:18 AM