



## Talmadge B. Portis Jr.

April 30, 1933 - February 1, 2018

Son, brother, husband, father, uncle, educator, mentor, athlete, coach, community activist, friend, highly respected.

Talmadge B. "Sonny" Portis, Jr., opened his final parachute, at Gilchrist Center, Columbia Maryland, on February 1, 2018, at the age of 84.

Talmadge, son of the late Talmadge B. Portis, Sr. and Bertha Portis, was born on April 30, 1933, in Laurel, Mississippi. He accepted the Lord at an early age at the East Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church.

Talmadge is a 1052 graduate of Oak Park High School in Laurel, Mississippi. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Alcorn A&M College, then went on to serve his country in the 82d Airborne Division. Upon returning to Laurel, he began his career as an Elementary School Teacher at Nora Davis Elementary School. He strongly believed in community and was instrumental in starting a baseball team for Black children and coached championship football teams. He followed in his father's footsteps and played with the Laurel Black Cats, a semi-professional baseball team located in Laurel, one of Mississippi's original independent Negro League charter franchises. Negro Leaguers such as Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, and Satchel Paige are among the many players to play for the Black Cats.

Portis marshalled the cooperation of White and Black business people in the town of Laurel, and in one summer, he and his group (Community Action Club) built a baseball diamond, put up concession stands and bleachers, built a fence around the field, and outfitted 90 Little Leaguers. In addition to the

baseball field, they also built tennis courts. Since their inception, the courts have been refurbished and named in his honor. He then went on to become the first African American to work for the Mississippi Employment Security Commission. After 6 months, he was promoted to the Equal Opportunity Officer and moved to the state headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi to lead the EEOC division. To enhance his personnel skills, he earned a Master of Science degree from Mississippi State University in Guidance and Counseling, with an emphasis in Employment Counseling.

Through his work with the Employment Security Commission, he was recruited by General Motors to head the personnel division of Packard Electric in Clinton, Mississippi and retired as Manager of Plants 21 and 24. He also served on the Board of Trustees of Hinds Community College, served several terms as President of the State Board of Education, and Gov. Ray Mabus' Commission of Workforce Education. After his retirement from Packard Electric, he formed his own parts distribution company, TalPort Industries, Yazoo, MS.

Talmadge was a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. He was an avid sportsman and lettered in Football, Baseball, and Tennis at Alcorn A & M College. One of his favorite experiences was the opportunity to play an exhibition match with tennis pro, Arthur Ashe at the Riverside Country Club in Jackson, Mississippi. He also refereed high school and college football and basketball games.

Talmadge is survived by his wife of 59 years, Rose McInnis Portis, children, Cathy Lawrence Patterson, Jackson Mississippi, Donald Andre Wade, Laurel, Mississippi, Monica Logan DeJohn, (Randy) Jackson, Mississippi, Angela Portis Keys, Columbia, Maryland, and Lisa Portis Morgan (Athol), Ellicott City, Maryland and sister, Naomi Cole Johnson, Chicago, Illinois, a host of grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins. He is preceded in death by his parents, Talmadge and Bertha Portis, and his sister, Barbara Jean Portis Shanks.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Talmadge B. Portis, Jr. Scholarship Fund.

# Previous Events

## Public Viewing

FEB 7. 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Life Tribute Center, P.A. - Randallstown  
5616 Old Court Road  
Windsor Mill, MD 21244  
(410) 655-0110  
<https://www.marchlifetributecenter.com>

## Wake

FEB 8. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

Morning Star Baptist Church  
1512 Woodlawn Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21207

## Service

FEB 8. 10:30 AM (ET)

Morning Star Baptist Church  
1512 Woodlawn Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21207

# Tribute Wall



“ *Talmadge B. Portis Jr.*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *Dear Lisa and Family,  
My thoughts and prayers are with you at this  
sorrowful time. I know the pain of losing a  
father, as I lost mine when I was only 11. You  
were blessed to have him in your life! As  
believers, we know your Dad is in a better place where we will all  
see him again. Keep your fond and precious memories close to you  
heart, as he will always be with you!  
With deepest sympathy,  
Kathie Nee*



Kathie - February 07, 2018 at 04:39 PM



“ *Sapphire Skies Bouquet was purchased for the  
family of Talmadge B. Portis Jr..*



February 07, 2018 at 11:36 AM

LF

“ *Levernis Crosby & Family purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Talmadge B. Portis Jr..*



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**Levernis Crosby & Family** - February 06, 2018 at 03:49 PM

RJ

“ *To the Portis family I send sincere sympathy for the painful loss of your loved one. When we lose a loved one the grief and the feelings of helplessness can seem unbearable. At such times we can go to God's word, the Bible, for comfort. In the past many people died even while Jesus was on earth. Yet he brought many back to life including his good friend Lazarus. For future generations he made this promise found at John 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life." So by means of the promised resurrection your loved one will live again. May you find strength and hope in God's wonderful promises.*

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**Rita Johnson** - February 04, 2018 at 02:13 PM

KE

“ *Hello, I Would like to send condolences to the family of Talmadge portis. I am so sorry for your great loss. Our heavenly Father is thinking of you at this time of your great loss, and he is able to give you comfort that only he can give. May your dear memories help your hearts to heal as time goes by. Very soon our heavenly Father has promised us the hope of seeing our dead loved ones again under better circumstances (Rev 21: 3, 4). Hoping you find some comfort in these words.*

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**Kenyetta** - February 04, 2018 at 12:05 PM

PH

“ As a neighbor and a honorary Grandpa to me and my family, a pillar of the community, and surrounding area in Terry, MS you Pappa Portis will truly be missed. I would like to thank Momma Rose for sharing you with us. Your honesty, love, kindness, wisdom, knowledge, creativity, innovative mind have led many to strive for more out of life !!!

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**Patricia Huddleston** - February 03, 2018 at 11:06 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.

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**March Funeral Homes** - February 02, 2018 at 02:02 PM