



Wilson Henry Friend Sr.

August 2, 1934 - February 6, 2026

Wilson Henry Friend, Sr. with quiet strength and unwavering faith peacefully entered into eternal rest on Friday, February 6, 2026. Wilson lived a life marked by humility, love, and service to others. A man who trusted God in ALL things, Wilson's faith was not loud or boastful, but evident in daily actions—through kindness freely given, compassion extended without hesitation, and a deep trust in God that guided every step.

Wilson was born on August 2, 1934 in Mannboro, Virginia, the youngest child of Willie Giles Friend and George Washington Friend. He was educated in Amelia County Public Schools, graduating from Russell Grove High School in 1951. At 16 years old, he stepped onto the campus of Virginia State College on a wrestling scholarship, already guided by a vision larger than himself to learn, discover, and contribute to the advancement of science. He viewed science as a way to serve humanity. Earning a bachelor of science in 1955 from Virginia State College, Wilson began his professional career as an educator in Halifax Public Schools at an all-black high school. While he enjoyed sharing his love of science, challenging and nurturing young minds, he felt a deeper calling to directly contribute to scientific research.

A true trailblazer, Wilson opened doors where none had existed before, not for recognition, but so others might walk more easily into those spaces. He was one of the first African Americans hired at the Medical College of Virginia in

the Biochemistry Department. Wilson was involved in various research projects including cancer research and mitochondrial function research. His research contributions led to several co-authored publications. A true educator, Wilson wanted to pass his knowledge onto the next generation. He became Coordinator of the Biochemistry Graduate Laboratories, shaping future medical, dental, pharmacy, and graduate professionals through teaching and laboratory research. During his tenure, Wilson earned numerous honors and accolades, among them a service award conferred by Dr. Eugene Trani, President of Virginia Commonwealth University. Wilson retired in 1996 after 40 years of research and service to MCV in the Biochemistry Department. A valued member of the department, he was asked to return to the Biochemistry Department as the Department Manager. Wilson worked at MCV for over 50 years allowing passion, hard work and perseverance to define his path.

During his early childhood, Wilson's spirituality was awakened and he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. He was baptized and joined Mt. Level Baptist Church where he remained a faithful member for over 80 years. Wilson's Christian conviction propelled him to serve his church in various capacities to include the Diaconate Ministry (60 years), Church Clerk (50 years), and Trustee Ministry (40 years). He was also active with the Brotherhood Ministry, the Male Chorus and The Ebenezer Baptist Association. A man of faith who believed deeply in preparation and training, Wilson was a board and founding member of the Ministers, Diaconate Conference of Amelia, Chesterfield and Powhatan. Always ready to serve, his wisdom and counsel were often sought by local pastors, who respectfully called him the 'Head of Deacons' or the 'Deacon of Deacons'.

Serving others wasn't just something he did; serving the community was who he was. He actively worked on local political campaigns of Senator Benjamin Lambert, Mayor Roy West, and Councilwoman Willie Dell, the first woman of

color to serve on Richmond City Council. A man of integrity, Wilson supported the election of these politicians because he believed they would work to uplift the community and protect the most vulnerable in society. Always looking for ways to make a positive impact on the community, Wilson was a board and founding member of the North Richmond Community Pool, which opened doors for children to learn to swim and for families to build memories together. A true innovator, he embraced community gardening long before it became widely recognized, cultivating both plants, a sense of connection among neighbors and teaching children self-sufficiency, hard work and life skills.

A true trailblazer, Wilson carried his achievements with such humility that many never knew the extent of them. He was initiated as a member of Phi Beta Sigma, Fraternity, Incorporated, Alpha Alpha Alpha Chapter in 1953. Until his passing, Wilson held the honor of being the oldest living member of his cherished Sigma in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Wilson was also a member of Sigma Xi, the oldest international Scientific Research Honor Society.

Wilson was preceded in death by his parents Willie Friend Randall and George Friend; one daughter Baby Girl Friend; two sisters, Willie Watson and Sallie Craig; and one brother, George R. Friend, Sr.

Wilson's memory will be cherished by the love of his life, his devoted wife of 65 years, Margie Clark Friend; three children, Felecia Friend-Harris (Delmar), Byron Craig, and Wilson Friend, Jr. (Gina); six grandchildren, Leroy Williams, Brittany Craig, Lori Friend, Sydni Friend, Illiana Harris and Halli Friend; one great-grandson, Liam Mitchell Conner; one sister Sallie Randall Harris; five sisters-in-law; three brothers-in-law and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. One devoted nephew, Darryl Friend who lovingly assisted with his care as his health began to decline.

Wilson will be remembered as a faithful servant, courageous pioneer, and a gentle soul whose life reflected love in action. Family, friends, and all who crossed his path were met with warmth, wisdom, encouragement. His legacy lives on not only in accomplishments, but in lives touched, barriers broken, and faith lived out authentically. Though he will be deeply missed, his example remains as a living legacy of faith, service, perseverance and quiet strength. True to his character, Wilson wanted to leave words of encouragement to everyone: Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; And lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3: 5-6.

Cemetery Details

Forest Lawn Cemetery

4000 Pilots Lane
Richmond, VA 23222

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 13. 9:30 AM - 6:30 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes
2110 E Laburnum Ave
Richmond, VA 23222-2413
(804) 321-4200

Family Hour

FEB 13. 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes
2110 E Laburnum Ave
Richmond, VA 23222-2413
(804) 321-4200

Phi Beta Sigma Omega Service

FEB 14. 9:00 AM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - Laburnum Chapel
2110 E. Laburnum Avenue
Richmond, VA 23222
(804) 321-4200
info@marchfh.com
<https://www.marchfuneralhomevirginia.com/>

Funeral Service

FEB 14. 10:00 AM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - Laburnum Chapel
2110 E. Laburnum Avenue
Richmond, VA 23222
(804) 321-4200
info@marchfh.com
<https://www.marchfuneralhomevirginia.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *March Funeral Homes created a Webcast in memory of Wilson Henry Friend Sr.*



March Funeral Homes - February 09 at 05:30 PM

KG

Dear brother Wilson and family. Kyle and I want to express our condolences on the passing of your father. Memories last forever and they keep our loved ones in our hearts and minds forever.
Kym & Kyle Grinnage

Kym Grinnage - February 13 at 01:49 PM

EW

“ *Wilson, we are so sorry and saddened to hear about the passing of your father. I can't begin to imagine how difficult this is for you and your family - to lose such a pillar in your family. Please accept our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies. We are thinking of you during this grieving time and don't hesitate to reach out when you need anything. Our thoughts will continue to be with you and your family.*



Ebony Wyatt - February 16 at 09:19 AM

JH

“ Margie, Snoopy, Felicia, BK and the rest of the family: So sorry that I was unable to attend Wilson's funeral today, but we were able to watch it on live-stream. It was a beautiful service and very befitting for him! Thank you all for telling his story. I never knew the real Wilson Henry Friend!!! The memories we hold of him are gifts our hearts received and to bring comfort as we grieve. While sharing in your sadness, we're asking God to enfold each of you in His faithful love and comfort you with the cherished memories you hold so dear.

Thinking of you and lifting you up in our prayers. Cousin Joyce and Herbert Hicks

The memory of the just is blessed. Proverbs 10:7 KJV

Joyce G. Hicks - February 14 at 01:05 PM

MM

“ To Margie and Family.I am so sorry for your lost.But as his cousin he will be also missed my prayers with you all.Cousin Maxine Hill McNeil and family.

Maxine McNeil - February 13 at 02:32 PM

DJ

“ My deepest condolences on the loss of your Father. I will keep you and your Family in my thoughts and prayers.

Dwight Jones - February 13 at 12:43 PM

TR

“ Tessie R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..

Tessie R. - February 13 at 10:45 AM

TR

“ Wilson Friend Jr & Family, my thoughts and prayers are with you not only today but for the days to come. Thank you for sharing such a beautiful obituary which speaks volume of your dad's life. Apples don't fall far from its tree. You've been an amazing son loving and caring for your dad. May God grant you with strength and brighten your days with the beautiful memories you will remember. With deepest condolences, Tessie Reed & family (CSC)

Tessie Reed - February 13 at 10:39 AM

RS

“ Dear Family! We wish to express our condolences and let you know you are in our prayers. Deacon Friend was a strong Christian Role Model we met many years ago active in the Ministers Diaconate Leadership Conference of Amelia, Chesterfield and Powhatan Counties. Rev. Dr. Caroel and Dea. Jacqueline Selby.

Rev. Caroel Selby - February 12 at 10:23 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



February 12 at 03:26 PM

CW

“ Cari Webb planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..

Cari Webb - February 12 at 01:39 PM

CW

“ Cari Webb purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



Cari Webb - February 12 at 01:39 PM

AM

“ Dr. Friend, I was sorry to learn of the passing of your beloved father. May the memories from the past serve as a healing agent. Also, know that the Lord will provide strength for you and your family during this difficult time.
With heartfelt sympathy,
Angela W. Moss

Angela Williams Moss - February 12 at 01:36 PM

LF

“ Love, Pastor D. Covington and Family purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



Love, Pastor D. Covington and Family - February 12 at 10:39 AM

MW

“ Melissa W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..

Melissa W. - February 11 at 07:20 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



February 11 at 01:51 PM



“ Ann Hargrove lit a candle in memory of Wilson Henry Friend Sr.



Ann Hargrove - February 11 at 01:30 PM



“ Edwina Barnett planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..

Edwina Barnett - February 11 at 01:17 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



February 11 at 01:17 PM

DY

“ *Dr. Sherry Young-Jones lit a candle in memory of Wilson Henry Friend Sr.*



Dr. Sherry Young-Jones - February 11 at 09:44 AM

BC

“ *May God's blessings of comfort, love, joy and peace be upon the Friend Family and the Clark Family and all who knew and loved Wilson H. Friend. I love you all dearly and each of you can depend on me to pray for you in accordance with God's will and purpose for each of your lives. May the pleasant memories and the precious moments that we all were blessed to share, continue to keep us together in unity and love the name of JESUS.*



Bernice A. Clark - February 11 at 09:37 AM

BC

“ *Bernice A. Clark lit a candle in memory of Wilson Henry Friend Sr.*



Bernice A. Clark - February 11 at 09:22 AM

KB

*Dear Felicia & Family. We are deeply sorry to hear about the loss of your dear father. Our deepest sympathy & prayers are with you during this time.
Kim & family*

Kimberly B - February 12 at 10:45 AM

AF

“ Annie and Anthony Friend purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



Annie and Anthony Friend - February 10 at 07:34 PM

LD

“ Love CSC Department purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



Love CSC Department - February 10 at 05:35 PM

ST

“ There was not a sweeter man than Mr. Friend. The times that we were with him, Mrs. Friend, Snoop and Gina there was always laughter and FOOD! No seriously, he was a great man, loved his family and made my family feel like his family. The last time that I saw him, even though his memory was impaired, something that never changed was his smile and gentle spirit. He will be deeply missed, but we know with absolute certainty he is now in the Lord's presence. We send our love and condolences to Mrs. Friend, Felicia, Snoop, Gina and B.K. and my God nieces Lori, Sydni, and Halle. It will take time. Let grief be processed. Embrace memories. Always love each other. My prayer is that the Lord will fill the void that is in your lives with His grace. We love you all.
Stephanie, Tuck, Kyah, and Kourtney

Stephanie Tucker - February 10 at 02:55 PM

CW

“ Sending you my prayers and condolences to you and your family, Wilson, during this difficult time.
Sincerely, Christina Wurm

Christina Wurm - February 10 at 11:24 AM

FT

“ From Lisa Thanadar purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



From Lisa Thanadar - February 10 at 11:07 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



February 10 at 10:19 AM

CH

“ Cousins, Geraldine & Wanda Hill planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..

Cousins, Geraldine & Wanda Hill - February 10 at 10:19 AM

LF

“ Lynn Fleet planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..

Lynn Fleet - February 10 at 07:50 AM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Wilson Henry Friend Sr..



February 10 at 07:50 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 - February 09 at 05:30 PM