



John Henry Word

April 23, 1930 - June 19, 2020

There is a mythical story of John Henry. John Henry is an African American folk hero. He is said to have worked as a "steel-driving man"—a man tasked with hammering a steel drill into rock to make holes for explosives to blast the rock in constructing a railroad tunnel.

The story of John Henry is told in a classic folk song, which exists in many versions, and has been the subject of numerous stories, plays, books, and novels. Then there is the story of John Henry Word, affectionately called “John Henry” by family and friends. His is a story of a self-made man from Halifax Virginia. A story of love, hard work, passion, and the sheer desire to carve out a life for him and his family. He was a hard working railroad man, nurse, soldier, organization leader, entrepreneur, family man and friend.

A TIME TO BE BORN John Henry Word was born to Charles Taft and Flossie Hubbard Word on April 23, 1930. Three siblings, Odessa Davis, Vernell Word Waller, and Roy Lee preceded him in death. The remaining siblings, Mary B. Miller (Ike) of Java, Va., Herbert (Wynette), of Greensboro, NC, Charles, Jr. (Valerie), Theodore and David reside in Newark, Delaware. John was born and raised in Halifax, VA. He accepted Christ at an early age and remained a stout believer and active member of the church throughout his life.

A TIME TO LIVE John was educated in the public schools of Halifax County, Virginia. In 1948, John moved to Washington DC, and worked as a trackman on the railroad. He and Margie Bell Scott Word were married on June 23, 1951. That union lasted until the time of her death (67 years).

A TIME TO SERVE

A Soldier

On September 12, 1951 John became a member of the U.S. Army where he served active duty until August 19, 1953. John Served in Manheim, Germany during the Korean Conflict. Following his active duty service, he served as Sergeant First Class member of the DC National Guard, Chief Ward Master with the 115th Evacuation Hospital Surgery Services. He cherished his friendship and camaraderie with the members of 115th Hall of Fame

Group.

A Nurse

In 1953, he began working as a Nursing Assistant/Orderly at DC General Hospital. After being licensed by the D.C. Board of Nursing through Margaret Murray Washington School of Practical Nursing he worked in Psychiatry Service as an LPN from 1956 to 1958, Surgery Technician LPN from 1964-1966 and an Orthopedic Technician LPN from 1966-1986.

He continued his education earning an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Business Technology from the Washington Technical Institute, the precursor to The University of The District of Columbia in 1975. Always having a thirst for knowledge John attended Summer Seminars at Michigan State University, 1968 Ohio State University, 1969 and Colorado State University, 1971.

A Leader Among Nurses

John became a student Practical Nurse in 1954. He soon joined the National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service, Inc. (NAPNES). He moved up the ranks of this organization serving as its National president from 1976-1980. He served on the DC Board of Nursing from 1980 to 1995. As a result of his distinguished service the executive directorship was created, and he served as the Executive Director of the Licensed Practical Nurse Association (LPNA) of DC from 1974 until 1999 and the Executive Director of NAPNES from 1989-1999.

Below is an excerpt from the March 1999 issue of The Journal of Practical Nursing: The Voice of Practical/Vocational Nursing:

Mr. Word began forging his strong leadership capability as the son of a sharecropper in Virginia in the 30s and 40s. His ability to intervene successfully in human lives, usually under adverse conditions, as a nurse and caregiver is born of his proud heritage from a long line of hard-working Americans that developed his sterling integrity and work ethic while just a young boy. Mr. Word left the Virginia farm in 1948 to work in the District of Columbia. He served his country in the United States Army where he finished his high school education and developed skills that still serve him today. He married his wife, Margie, and they reared two sons while he worked constantly to pave the way for the health care providers of today.

Mr. Word is a life member of the NAACP and Voter Registration Committee. His affiliations with other national, state and local organizations cover an enormous area of cultural diversity and provide him with understanding, knowledge, skills and ability to work with

people from every walk of life. When Mr. Word makes a commitment to work in and for an organization, he moves rapidly from member to leader and the organization is well served.

Mr. Word is a man sensitive to the human condition. He cares deeply for poor underserved populations regardless of the current need. One cannot attend a meeting on health care issues without hearing, at some time during the meeting, Mr. Word says “But how will this decision impact patients?” “What about the people that can’t get this care? How will we reach them?” He is very often the collective “conscience” of any group and leads with kindness and consideration. Yet, at the same time, with stubborn adherence to an internal code of ethics that truly respects and hears the minority while carrying out the mandate of the majority.

Since Mr. Word left the sharecropping farm in the 40s, fifty plus years in the calamities of everyday life changed the young boy into the man. The man that is the well-known and widely respected leader in the healthcare environment of today. Anyone that meets the leader of today quickly comes to understand that he is an appropriate tribute to the young boy from humble beginnings armed only with a dream of who he might become. Mr. Word is a living example of an “All – American” story.

John’s expertise and leadership skills were enhanced by the diverse roles and positions that he held. He served on the D.C. Public Schools Advisory Council on Practical Nursing, Vocational Education Advisory council, Lifetime Member of the Association for Career and Technical Education. He was a longtime supporter of Margaret Murray Washington Vocational High School

Man, of God

John was ordained as a deacon at the Upper Room Baptist Church on January 8, 1961. He continued to serve God and the church as a member of the trustee board at Plymouth United Congregational Church where he has been a member since 1981.

Entrepreneur

John worked with the Capital Cab Company for many years. He served on the Board of Directors and served as Chairman of the board. Like everything he did, he put his heart and soul into his service with Capital Cab. At one time, he owned a dozen cabs which he used to supplement his income but also provided job opportunities for young men seeking work.

After retiring from nursing, John ventured into real estate. He taught himself what was necessary to pass the licensing requirements. Having failed the exam more than once he was not the kind of person to be denied. He worked with Long and Foster for over 25 years.

Sportsman

To talk about John Word and not mention Bowling would be the oversight of the century. He loved bowling and spent many hours at various bowling alleys. He was also a hometown fan of the Nationals and the Redskins. He spent many hours watching and cheering on those teams.

A TIME TO DIE Early After a long and arduous battle with Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, dementia and heart disease, in the middle of the afternoon on June 19, 2020 John Henry Word transitioned to be with the Lord. He fought a good fight, he finished the race, he kept the faith. Now there is in store for him the crown of righteousness.

A TIME TO MOURN John leaves to cherish his memory and continue his legacy two children, Reginald and John, Sr. (Marsha), four grandchildren Regginald Washington (Deceased), Andre, John Jr., and Alexander (Brianna), eight great grandchildren, Chevon Washington, Shanice Washington, Regginald Washington, Jr., Iyana Washington, and King Washington, (Regginald). Jalyynn Word and Jordyn Word (John Jr. and Juanita) and Ava Word (Alex and Brianna) and a host of in-laws, cousins, nieces, nephews and dear friends with whom he would talk regularly and with whom he enjoyed being a confidant and friend.

Over the years the John and Margie's house was home to many friends and relatives. Some lived with them for periods of time and others dropped in for counsel and conversation. They were always working the phone, solving problems and sharing love, wisdom and insight.

In lieu of flowers the family would like contributions sent to:

Plymouth Congregational
United Church of Christ
5301 North Capitol St, NE
Washington, DC 20011
c/o John Henry Word

Expressions and Condolences may be sent to:

The Word Family
808 Nicholson St, NE
Washington, DC 20011

Service Live Streamed via Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/PlymouthChurchDC>

Johnson & Jenkins observes cdc regulations for
COVID-19
pandemic.

Cemetery

Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington, VA, 22211

Events

JUL **Viewing** 11:00AM - 12:00PM

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Plymouth Congregational United Church
5301 North Capitol Street NE, Washington, DC, US,
20011

JUL **Funeral service** 12:00PM

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Plymouth Congregational United Church
5301 North Capitol Street NE, Washington, DC, US,
20011

Comments



“ 8 files added to the album CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF JOHN HENRY WORD



John Word - July 01 at 05:36 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John Henry Word.



June 30 at 05:24 PM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of John Henry Word.



June 29 at 03:02 PM



“ Condolences to John Word's family. I am a follow Realtor who met John Word maybe 25 years ago. We did two or more deals together. He was such a wonderful human being to know, to talk to and work with. Always kind and accommodating. I appreciated his professionalism and humanity. He will be missed. May he rest in peace.

Joel N. Martin

Joel N. Martin - June 27 at 01:49 PM



“ My deepest sympathies go out to you and your family. May God give you the peace that you seek, Although I have not really met Late John Henry Word , but I have heard so much Good things About him through His Son ,Ambassador Reggy Word, who has been of Great humanitarian Assistance to the African communities. Rest In Peace JOHN HENRY WORD..

Mr. Femi Ibrahim (Nigeria)

Femi Ibrahim - June 28 at 01:17 AM



“ My deepest sympathy to my family John was a dear friend and cousin and was very kind to me when I move to Washington DC I'm going to miss the fella we had great times lot of talks lot of family gatherings rest in heaven my friend

Molly Hubbard Gilmore - June 28 at 09:30 AM



“ Rest in eternal peace Mr John Word... I'm glad I had the pleasure of meeting both you and Mrs Word. Over the years Reggie has always spoken so highly of his parents who he loved dearly. When I met you both you made me feel most welcome in your home.

Reggie and family I pray that God will strengthen you all at this time...My deepest condolences to you all.

Roselyn Shepherd - June 29 at 06:15 AM



“ Drs. John and Marsha Word,

You have the condolences of the entire Goodman family on the loss of your father Mr. John Henry Word. May God bring continued comfort to you and the members of the family.

Michael Goodman - June 29 at 03:25 PM



“ No amount of words can express the pain that you are going through. Extending my deepest sympathy to you during this time. My prayers and blessings are with you and your loved ones.

Johanna Giraldo - June 29 at 06:40 PM



“ My deepest sympathy to you and your family during this time. I am sure your Father had a lot to do with the man you have become. I always appreciated your leadership and vision you instilled at Kenmore! Prayers for your family.

Robert Maghan - June 29 at 09:23 PM



“ To the whole Word family, I send condolences to each of you. I was young but I remember Mr. Word quite well and your mom. To John and Reggie I wish both of you peace. From the whole Brown family to yours.

Mike Brown

Michael Brown - June 30 at 09:39 AM



“ Condolences from the Johnson Family; it takes a great father to raise such a great and admirable man like Dr. Word and to leave such a wonderful legacy behind. My prayers are with your family.

Elliot Johnson and Family

ELLIOT JOHNSON - June 30 at 01:48 PM



“ Mr. Word was my Mentor when I started my career in Real Estate with Long and Foster. He was like a father to me. He always gave me sound Godly advise in everything. I remember his stories about loving to Bowl and the league that he was in. He had a Smile that would LIGHT up a room and he spoke with a Gentle Authority and Power. Though I now live in the Charlotte region of NC, I still remember and hold on to all of the things that Mr. Word has taught me in Real Estate and life. God bless the Word family and know that you are in my Prayers. Mr. John Word will be missed but Heaven has received a WONDERFUL man.

Arlene Douglas - June 30 at 03:51 PM



“ Sympathies to you and your family. I never had the chance to meet Mr. Word, but I know that you, Dr. Word, held your Dad dear and near to your heart and that he was an inspiration to you in many ways. May your memories bring you comfort in this difficult time. Prayers for you and your family.

Shauna Dyer

Shauna Dyer - June 30 at 09:18 PM



“ May your soul rest in heavenly peace Mr. Word.... I never got a chance to meet you but I have heard so much about you from your son (or Twin) as he love to say it sometimes Reggie.... Rest easy knowing you raised a fine,honourable and respectable son.... From us here in Uganda we continue to uplift the entire Word family in prayers..... May the Almighty God comfort you during this most difficult time

Tusiime - July 01 at 02:12 AM



“ Dr. Word, I would like to express my sincere condolences to you and your family. I have no words to descride how sorry I am for your loss. I know how much your father meant to you. He was a great person. May God have him in his Glory.

Gaby Fernandez Coelho,

Gabriela Fernandez Coelho - July 01 at 04:19 PM



“ Dr. Word and family,

I rejoice for the life that your father lived. He left a strong legacy that will live on for generations. May the peace of God rest on you as these first moments pass without your father here on earth. The good news is that we will see him again because we believe God's Word.

Take your rest John Henry Word.

Lolita Pollard-Kezele - Yesterday at 12:51 AM