



MR. ROBERT BROADNAX

February 28, 1929 - November 21, 2025

On November 21, 2025, in the comfort of his home in Hyattsville, Maryland, Robert Lewis Broadnax—our Dad, husband, brother, and steady anchor—quietly passed away at the age of 96. His passing leaves a space in our hearts that can never be filled, but his life leaves us with memories warmer than words can hold.

Robert was born on February 28, 1929, in Washington, Georgia, to Mary (West) and Lonnie Broadnax. He grew up in the kind of rural life that builds both character and gratitude—on a farm overlooking the Little River, first in a former plantation house and later in another farmhouse closer to town. Those early years shaped him: he learned to work hard, to stay humble, and to appreciate simple blessings. He carried those lessons with him for the rest of his life.

He came from a big, close-knit family. Robert was one of many siblings, and though he outlived most of them, he never forgot where he came from or the people who helped raise him. He cherished his sister Juanita, the last of the siblings, and loved all of his nieces, nephews, cousins, and extended family who kept the Broadnax spirit alive.

In the small Black community of Washington, Georgia—where everybody knew everybody—Robert crossed paths with the woman who would change

his life: Odessia. They met through church, family, and the familiarity of a community woven tightly together. What began as part of everyday life blossomed into a lifelong love. On September 5, 1959, surrounded by family in the home of his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, George and Mammie Derricott, in Washington, D.C., Robert and Odessia were married. It was a simple wedding, but the marriage that followed was anything but small. Together they built a life grounded in faith, loyalty, and quiet devotion. Their greatest blessing came when they welcomed their son, Laron, whom Robert supported, encouraged, and proudly cheered on for all the days of his life.

Robert's path took many turns. He left high school after the 11th grade but later earned his GED—one of the many examples of the determination he carried inside. Before joining the Army, he lived with his sister Louise in Atlanta and worked alongside family, learning the value of perseverance in real ways.

He went on to serve 22½ years in the U.S. Army, traveling to bases across the United States, Europe, South Korea, and Vietnam. His service during the Vietnam War earned him the Bronze Star, a testament to his courage and his steady presence even in the hardest circumstances. But if you ever thanked him for his service, he would simply nod, smile a little, and keep moving—because that was the kind of man he was. Quiet strength. No showy pride. Just doing what needed to be done.

After retiring from the Army, Robert didn't slow down. He worked washing dishes at Bob's Big Boy at Prince George's Plaza, then crossed the street to become the loading dock supervisor at Kiplinger Editors, where he spent about 12 years. Even after retiring again, he continued working—cooking in the kitchen at St. John's High School, delivering eyeglasses around the area, and lending a hand at a Mill End Shop warehouse. He liked keeping busy. But more than that, he liked helping people and being part of something.

Faith anchored Robert's life from the very beginning. As a boy, he attended Heard's Chapel Baptist Church in Georgia, where his father preached. He sang with his brothers in the Victory Five Quartet, lifting their voices in harmony at their home church and sometimes at neighboring congregations. After moving to Washington, D.C., he found a spiritual home at New Bethany Baptist Church, where he sang on the Senior Choir and served faithfully as a Deacon—and eventually as Chairman of the Deacon Board. If something needed done at the church, he was there. Not loudly. Not for recognition. Just faithfully, the way he lived everything else.

He poured just as much love into his community. He belonged to the VFW, supported his son through every stage of scouting, and was the dad who never missed a game or a drill meet—high school or college. He enjoyed simple pleasures: cooking (no one could touch his candied yams or his peach cobbler), lending a hand at family gatherings, or tending a garden down the hill from his house in Hyattsville. That garden was his pride and joy—rows of vegetables grown with the same patience he showed in all things. Before that, he kept a community garden plot in Washington, D.C., bringing home bags of fresh produce like it was treasure.

If you spent enough time around Robert, you probably heard him say one of his favorite phrases:

“The Master been mighty sweet to me.”

Those words weren't just something he said—they were how he lived.

Grateful. Steady. Faithful through it all.

Robert leaves behind his loving wife, Odessia; his devoted son, Laron; his sister, Juanita; and a wide family and community who will miss him more than words can say. He lived a long life, but more importantly, he lived a good one

—rich in love, service, dignity, and quiet wisdom.

We are grateful for every year we had with him. His life made ours better.

May he rest now in peace, in the sweetness of the Master he trusted so much.

Cemetery Details

Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery

11301 Crain Hwy
Cheltenham, MD 20623

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 13. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

New Bethany Baptist Church
1300 10th St NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 462-7282

Funeral service

DEC 13. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

New Bethany Baptist Church
1300 10th St NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 462-7282

Tribute Wall

MH

“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



Marilyn Henderson - December 13, 2025 at 01:02 PM

MH

Uncle Robert has been a great influence and inspiration in my life. I love him dearly.

Marilyn Henderson - December 13, 2025 at 01:03 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of MR. ROBERT BROADNAX.



December 09, 2025 at 08:39 PM