



## Mr. John Burchelle Roach

November 27, 1925 - December 2, 2016

Born on Friday, November 27, 1925, at the family ancestral home in Sumter, South Carolina, John was the eldest child of the late Beauregard Roach and Thelma Roberta Spann-Roach. Along with his parents, he was predeceased by one son, Andre Burchelle Roach, and five siblings, James Mervin Roach, Gladys Louise Roach-Gray, Edgar Bernard Roach, Reverend Clyde Wendell Roach and Geraldine Vanatta Roach-Ray.

He was educated in the Steelton Public School System, receiving his diploma from the former Steelton High School in 1946 while on leave from military service.

Drafted in 1943, he joined the United States Army Air Corp serving as a TEC 5 Electrician 2806th Engineer Group and Company C 1870th Engineer Aviation Battalion 3161 Engineer Fire Fighting Platoon in Okinawa, Japan. A qualified marksman-sharpshooter, earning the American Theater Ribbon, Good Conduct, Asiatic Pacific Service, WWII Victory and Army of Occupation Medals, he received an Honorable Discharge in 1950.

He attended Thompson Business School and was a graduate of Sullivan's Barber School.

On April 11, 1948, he married Ruth Salome Walden at the Walden family

homestead in Bressler, PA. Their union was blessed with four children.

John was the proprietor of Roach's Esso Station on Cameron Street, a bike rental shop and a roadside produce business.

His civil service career began in 1947 at the former Olmsted Air Force Base, Middletown, PA, where he served as Packing Supervisor, transferring to Newark Air Force Base-Aerospace Guidance and Metrology Center, Newark (Heath), OH, serving as Chief of Packaging and Packing as well as an EEO Officer. His position took him extensively to military installations throughout the United States including Aberdeen Proving Ground, Goose Bay Labrador, Homestead A.F.B., Kelly A.F.B., Marietta A.F.B., McClellan A.F.B., Parris Island, Sheppard A.F.B., Tinker A.F.B., Warner-Robins A.F.B., Wright-Patterson A.F.B., and to the National Disease Control Center-Atlanta, the University of Wisconsin, Kent State University, Cleveland-Hopkins Airport and the Cincinnati Ohio Expo Center among others where he completed intensive coursework and training.

He retired in 1978, at the age of fifty-two, having received countless letters and citations of appreciation, citations for superior sustained performance as well as United States Treasury, United States Air Force Resource Conservation and monetary awards for his innovative suggestions and improvements in the workplace.

John was a lifelong member of the Monumental A.M.E. Church, Steelton, PA, where he served as Steward, Trustee and Boy Scout Leader. While in Ohio, he served as Sunday School Superintendent and Trustee at Trinity A.M.E. in Newark.

His organizational memberships included Dauphin County N.A.A.C.P.; in Ohio, Licking County Big Brothers-Chapter President, Heath City Schools Parent-

Teacher Organization (Fulton Middle School)-Chapter Vice-President and a Moundbuilders Kiwanis Club Board Member.

He holds the distinction of being the first African-American apprentice auctioneer in the State of Ohio.

He attended the August 28, 1963, March on Washington, D.C., and the November 25, 1963, funeral of President John F. Kennedy.

John enjoyed reading political and military biographies, collecting and restoring antiques, going to flea markets, garage and yard sales, auctions, hunting, gardening, cooking, having barbeques for family and friends, watching western and war movies, dressing well and his family.

He was lovingly known to his parents and siblings as “Burch,” to his wife as “Bug,” to his children as “Dod” or “Daddy,” and his grandchildren and great-grandson as “Pop.”


He departed this life on the evening of Friday, December 2, 2016, after a long battle with dementia and leukemia.

He is survived by his devoted wife of sixty-eight years, Ruth, whom he affectionately called “Kid;” three children, Erle Stanley Roach (Pearl) of Bronx, NY, Thelma Rebecca Roach-Serry (Henry) of Richmond, VA, and Dana Kevin Roach of Harrisburg, PA; five grandchildren, Aprile Candace Serry-Brown (Greg) of Midlothian, VA, Armand Patrice Serry (Chantel) of Woodstock, VA, Irving Jamal Rose of Bronx, NY, Kyle Sterling Roach of New York City, NY, and Adrian Alexander Serry of Petersburg, VA; one great-grandchild, Armand Patrice Serry, Jr., of Richmond, VA; three siblings, Oliver L. Roach (Gaynelle) of Alloway, NJ, Kenneth O. Roach (Lois) and Joyce G. Roach-Bradshaw, all of

Harrisburg; a close brother-in-law, James E. Walden (Mary) of Hampton, VA; two special cousins, Johnny Spann of Harrisburg, and Donald Cohen of Montclair, NJ; countless cousins, nieces, nephews, neighbors and friends.  
Lovingly Submitted, The Family

His life will be celebrated at 11 a.m., Saturday, December 10, 2016, at The First Baptist Church of Steelton, 1850 S. 19th Street, Harrisburg, with viewing/visitation 10-11 a.m. Interment will be 11:30 A.M., Monday, December 12th, at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery. Memorial gifts may be made to the Alzheimer's Association and/or the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Flowers may be delivered to the church 8:30-9 a.m., Saturday, 12/10.

# Tribute Wall

 Duvall  
Taylor

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Duvall Taylor** - December 09, 2016 at 04:30 PM

BR

“ I will always remember how proud he was when Aprile was presented at the AKA event in her senior year I believe. He beamed with pride. God bless you all as you recall memories of your husband, father, and grandfather. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you.

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**Beverly Ross** - December 09, 2016 at 04:09 PM

WS

“ I will always have a fond memory of Thelma's Dad as he made some to the Best Chicken Salad I have ever eaten! So even though he is gone, I will always have the memory every time I have chicken salad and comparing it the more Famous version I have had in the past. My thoughts and prayers will be with all of you during this time and after. Continue to think of the fond memories you shared with your Dad/Husband and bless each of you.

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**Wanda Simmons** - December 07, 2016 at 08:58 AM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mr. John Burchelle Roach.*



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December 06, 2016 at 09:24 PM



“ *My grandfather John Roach aka "Pop". As I kid, I remember riding with him and asking where were we going. He never failed to reply "Diddy-Wa-Diddy". Aha Wherever that was. He said it so much, I thought it was a real place.*

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**Adrian Serry** - December 06, 2016 at 08:16 PM



*Thelma, my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this time. I pray that God will be with you all in a mighty way as you celebrate your Dad's life. I'm wearing his favorite color again today.*

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**Belinda Swecker** - December 09, 2016 at 10:45 AM



*To MiMi and Thelma,  
Keep the fond memories of your love one close within your heart, The Healer(Jesus) is always with each of you and he will calmly do His part, For there is never any rain without a few wet place in life, whether you are that adorable child or even a beautiful understanding wife, So chin up and show those smiles of righteous strength, Trust in Him for comfort I know that is your intent. Be bless we love all of you. Monty, Jr., Brooklyn, Laveon, Estelle and Melvin Bray  
(Your other family)*

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**Estelle Jones Bray** - December 09, 2016 at 01:00 PM

KR

*Dod,  
Your presence is sorely missed. Thank you for your strength,  
intelligence, guidance and support. I shall miss you and Mom every  
day...until I see you both again. Rest in peace.*

*Love,  
Kevin*

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**K Roach** - June 14, 2017 at 01:46 AM

ER

*What a Great Father, Leader and Teacher; everything that I am is  
because of you and Mom's Teachings thank you for leading on the right  
course.*

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**Erle Roach** - December 13, 2024 at 11:56 PM