William Alfred Tucker

April 17, 2021

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William Alfred Tucker passed away peacefully surrounded by family on Saturday, April 17th, 2021, at the age of 92. Born in Greenville, North Carolina on September 15th, 1928, William was the fourth child of Robert Lee and Retha (Bell) Tucker both of Greenville, North Carolina. He accepted Christ at an early age and was baptized at Sycamore Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Greenville, a church his great grandfather the Reverend Austin F. Flood once served as pastor. At the time of his death, he was a member of Ivy Baptist Church in Newport News, Virginia.

William, better known as *"Peter Rabbit"* or *"Pete"* in his hometown, lived in the downtown area. After the death of his mother at age 7, William became a man-child early in life when he decided to up his age and join the Navy during WWll. He trained at Great Lakes Illinois. Camp Robert Smalls Naval Station in 1943. He took great pride in the fact that he was among the first group of African Americans who trained as seamen at a time when the Navy was still segregated. He was assigned the Pacific Theater during the war and shared many stories about his experiences with his children and grandchildren. He returned to Greenville after the war to continue his education at Epps High School where he played football.

During this period, he would meet the love of his life. In 1949 William Tucker married Helen Louise Hemby of Greenville, NC. He said it was love at first sight and it became an enduring love that lasted 71 years. To raise his budding family, William subsequently enlisted served in the United States Air Force from 1952 to 1974. He had a very distinguished career in the Air Force where he received numerous awards and citations for his expertise. Some of the highlights of his career in the Air Force included being among the first group of loadmasters, accumulating more than 6000 air miles, receiving several overseas assignments included a four year stay with his family at Tachikawa, Tokyo, Japan. After William and his family returned from Tokyo, Japan, he was assigned to Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, VA. In 1963 he decided to move to the Scones Park neighborhood within the Greater Aberdeen

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to become a longshoreman where he also served as president of the Newport News, Virginia International Longshoreman Association Local #846 from 1988-1992, and retired 1994.

As a retiree, he spent time with his family traveling, attending sporting events, and graduations. He was very proud of the accomplishments of his children and grandchildren. Nevertheless, he remained very active and devoted his time and resources to organizations he believed such as The Veterans of Foreign Wars *(VFW)* which he helped to start in Hampton, VA, The Disabled American Veterans *(DAV)*, The Non-Commissioned Officers Association *(NCOA)*, and The Hampton Chapter of the Tuskegee Airman Association. As a member of the DAV Murray Rhea Chapter 6, William was most proud of establishing the first *"Veteran's Stand Down"* in Hampton for homeless and at-risk Veterans. His friend Charlie Kraft of DAV Chapter 13 joined him in this effort.

Anyone who knew William also knows that he loved politics and was a dedicated community activist in the Hampton Roads/Newport News area. He served on the Executive Board of the Hampton Roads Democratic Party. One of the great honors of his life was to lead the Pledge of Allegiance during a campaign stop in Hampton of President Barak Obama who also gave him a handshake and salutes for his service. William also received appointments from 3 Virginia governors. In 1994, he was appointed to the Virginia State Board of Correctional

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GRAVESIDE

Albert G. Horton Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery

Friday, April 23, 2021
11:00 AM
Email Details
5310 Milners Roads
Suffolk, VA 23434

DIRECTIONS >

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Express your condolences with flowers sent to William's family

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