



## James Raymond Bennett

April 24, 1929 - October 2, 2020

Obituary for James Raymond Bennett, Sr.

Born April 24, 1929 – Passed October 2, 2020

Ray was born in Spotsylvania, Va. on April 24, 1929 to his beloved mother, Annie Irene (Covington) Bennett and father Hershel Bennett. The third of 5 children, he was raised in and around Fredericksburg, Va. Older brothers were Edward and Freeman Bennett, (both deceased). His younger sister was Arlene Bennett Reeve, (deceased) His youngest brother, Hershel Bennett still resides in Fredericksburg. The family was raised at the time of the Great Depression in America and it was hard times for Annie and her 5 children. She was a wonderful mother and all the children remained devoted to her throughout her long life. She passed in 1979.

Ray met and married Rose Marie Ciccarelli and they moved to the Washington, DC area in the early 50s. They had two sons and were eventually divorced in 1974.

February 5, 1952 Ray was inducted into the U.S. Army and served for two years during the Korean War era. He was with the 947th Medical CLR. Co. and was stationed in Austria near Zelem Zee. He served with honor until January 20, 1954. He always talked happily of his military days and often wished he had stayed in the Army.

When he returned home from his Army years, Ray resumed learning the ceramic tile trade, a trade that served him well until his retirement in 1991. He formed several companies throughout his work life career ending with Bennett Ceramic Tile, Inc. He was fond of pointing out all the houses in the DC, MD, VA area that had tilework done by his company and crews.

You could truthfully say that he began a second life in 1966 when after many years of problem drinking he found recovery from alcoholism in Alcoholics Anonymous. He was a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous and was sober over 53 years when he passed. Over those many years, he helped many men find sobriety and a sober way of life and was an inspiration to many men and women. He was a gifted speaker and shared at many meetings and conventions all over the area and the United States. He was happiest though just going to his regular meetings 4 or 5 times a week and quietly sharing his message of hope with any new man that he saw. He believed strongly that God had saved him and that it was his purpose in life to help others in any way that he could.

I (Linda) met Ray in 1975 and in 1977 we began dating, eventually becoming engaged and we were married on January 26th, 1980. I am writing this today, the day after his passing, and I am feeling blessed and grateful for his life and for our life together all these years. He was and is the love of my life and he always said the same about me. Ray was very ill this last year and his memory failed more with each passing day. But he never forgot to tell me numerous times a day that he loved me. He was a profoundly simple and faithful man, loved his God, loved his country, loved his family, his children and grandchildren and loved me. He believed that "God is Love" and that the only message we were given by Jesus was to "Love one another as I have loved you".

He leaves his beloved wife of 40 years, Linda.

His sons: James R. Bennett, Jr. (Cheryl) and John F. Bennett. His stepsons, Steven Esser (Robin) and Jeffrey Esser (Junko). His stepdaughter, Jennifer Esser (Alan).

His grandchildren: James R. Bennett III (Holly), Amy Bennett, Tiffanie Hastie (Andrew), Katelynn Bennett, John Bennett Jr., Kyle Bennett, Savannah Bennett, Natasha Levine, Ema Esser.

His great grandchildren: William, Amelia and Elijah Hastie

His surviving brother, Hershel Bennett and many nieces and nephews

The family request that in lieu of flowers, Memorial contributions be made to Hospice of Charles County, 2505 Davis Road, Waldorf, MD 20603.

At this time all services will be private.

# Cemetery

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## **Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery**

11301 Crain Hwy

Cheltenham, MD, 20623

# Comments

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“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you Linda and the rest of the family. Ray was definitely one of a kind. His hand to help went out to everyone. He will be greatly missed.

**Patty Mattingly** - October 19, 2020 at 04:41 PM

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“ Linda, I'm deeply sorry to learn of Ray's passing. He was an inspiration to so many, and Ed learned a lot from him. I hope they are hitting meetings together again in the great beyond. My deepest condolences.

**Becky Quinlan** - October 06, 2020 at 11:35 AM

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“ "God is Love"

**Kim Hutton** - October 04, 2020 at 06:09 PM



“ Ray was so liveable and inspirational...he touched so many lives. He made the world a little better for so many! Goodbye, Ray...see you one day in that meeting in the sky!

**Anne and Louie Machetto** - October 05, 2020 at 08:42 AM



“ loveable, that is!

**Anne and Louie Machetto** - October 05, 2020 at 08:43 AM

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“ Sharon Kalinowski lit a candle in memory of James Raymond Bennett



**Sharon Kalinowski** - October 04, 2020 at 12:02 PM

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“ Theresa Ferguson lit a candle in memory of James Raymond Bennett



**Theresa Ferguson** - October 04, 2020 at 09:58 AM



“ Ray was a one of kind for sure. Always made me feel welcome at the Waldorf Group, even when I went missing for months a time. A great friend and confidant. You will be sorely missed by many.

**Theresa** - October 04, 2020 at 09:59 AM



“ So sorry he has gone, but know he is in a better place. I am so grateful Ray was in my life. He was all about helping others. I remember when I first met him decades ago that he was someone to emulate. Thank you, Ray...and thanks for sharing your wife with me, too!  
Goodbye, dear Ray!

**Anne Marie Machetto** - October 05, 2020 at 04:16 PM

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“ Gos is Love

**Michele B.** - October 03, 2020 at 09:30 PM

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“Stay away from these smelly men!”  
An unforgettable gift from God to my life. An inspiration to too many to count. Does Ray have a charity of choice for donation?



lauren richardson - October 03, 2020 at 08:57 PM



“ Charles Co. Hospice House

Linda Bennett - October 03, 2020 at 10:27 PM



“ Thanks! I just saw that. They were so great to my grandmother and my family. That is a wonderful way to contribute.

lauren richardson - October 04, 2020 at 12:22 AM

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“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of James Raymond Bennett.



October 03, 2020 at 07:45 PM

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“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of James Raymond Bennett.



October 03, 2020 at 05:00 PM