



## Harris Raymond "Ray" Wilburn Jr.

September 17, 1944 - December 3, 2025

Harris Raymond "Ray" Wilburn, Jr., 81, of Allens Fresh, Maryland, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by family, on December 3rd, 2025 after battling ill health for some time.

Born on September 17th, 1944 in Washington, D.C. to the late Harris Raymond Wilburn, Sr. and the late Julia Belle Whitson Wilburn, Ray was raised on a small tobacco farm in Seat Pleasant, Maryland. He was a member of the first graduating class of Central High School in Prince George's County, Maryland in 1962. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Maryland in 1966, where he was a part of the Air Force ROTC program.

Ray commissioned in the United States Air Force, and graduated from pilot training at Laughlin Air Force Base in 1967. He served in the Vietnam Conflict from 1969-1970 as a captain in Forward Air Control, flying O-2s, directing fighter strikes on the Ho Chi Minh Trail to interdict troops, supplies, and weapons. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross as well as the Air Medal with twelve oak leaf clusters for his actions in combat. Upon return from Vietnam, he completed his time in the Air Force as a crew commander of the KC-135 and instructor pilot at Pease Air Force Base.

He continued his life of service with thirty-five years with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in Policy, Planning, Analysis, and Program

Coordination & Evaluation, where he worked tirelessly to improve the lives of veterans and their family members. His notable works during his career included directing the 1980 study on the health of Prisoners of War, directly leading to legislation to improve benefits, and earning him a place as an honorary member of the Defenders of Bataan & Corregidor. He was the VA representative to Vice President Gore's National Performance Review, later known as the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. He oversaw work after 9/11 for vulnerability assessments for over 120 VA facilities, resulting in risk management policy changes adopted across all of the federal government. He was honored to lead the official group of 100 World War II veterans and their families overseas for events commemorating the 60th anniversary of D-Day, where veterans were presented the French Legion of Honor, as well as the anniversary tour of the Battle of the Bulge. Prior to retirement, he served as the Executive Director for the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission, the first time revisited in the fifty years since the General Omar Bradley Commission. He dedicated himself to putting veterans first and directed programs to improve veterans education, dependents indemnity compensation, insurance, loan guaranty, pensions, healthcare, and preparedness. Even after retirement, he continued as a consultant, with Economic Systems, Inc., Centers for Naval Analyses, and SAG Corporation, working on projects directly related to improving care and compensation for veterans. He also was known to be a clutch player for many VA softball teams over the years.

Ray lived a life of service in his community, too. He was a Mason in the Seat Pleasant and then Patuxent Lodges. He served on the finance committee and was president of the Lake Braddock Community Association. He was an active parishioner of The Church of the Good Shepherd in Burke, Virginia, and continued his love for softball, playing for the church's team, affectionately known as "the COGs." He served in several roles on the vestry of his parish Christ Church Wayside in Newburg, Maryland.

Ray was a devoted husband to his late wife Marianne Cox Wilburn, and they enjoyed forty-eight years together. They both shared a love of history, reading, and travel. They traveled to countless state and national parks together, as well as Europe and the Caribbean. They also loved to share their adventures, taking many trips with their friends. Ray was a dedicated father to two children and spent his free time sharing his passions with them. Any free moment he had, he could be found with his wife and children, from teaching them how to ride horses, to exploring countless Civil War battlefields, to tent camping across the West, and even to sightseeing Rome in less than 24 hours. As they grew older, his service for community continued, supporting their endeavors in scouting and music, as he volunteered with Explorer Scouts and Girl Scouts and served as president of the Lake Braddock Band Boosters.

Ray retired with his family to a small farm in Allens Fresh, Maryland, and spent his remaining years devoted to his three grandchildren, passing on his knowledge and love for horses, gardening, farming, and baseball. There is nothing he loved more than his faith and his family.

He is survived by his two loving children, David Michael Wilburn of Alexandria, Virginia, and Sarah Wilburn MacMillan (Michael), of Allens Fresh, Maryland. He is also survived by his three adoring grandchildren, Sean Patrick MacMillan, Mary Catherine MacMillan, and Ronan James MacMillan, as well as many family and friends. He is preceded in death by his wife, Marianne, and his mother and father.

Visitation is on Monday, December 22nd from 2:00 until 4:00 PM and again from 6:00 until 8:00 PM, with prayers at 7:00 PM at Raymond Funeral Home, 5635 Washington Avenue, La Plata, MD 20646. Funeral is to be held on Tuesday, December 23rd at 10:00 AM at Christ Church Wayside, 13050 Rock

Point Road, Newburg, Maryland 20664 with a repast immediately following in the Parish Hall. Burial will be private at Fort Lincoln Cemetery in Brentwood, Maryland 20722.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to Wayside Food Bank, 15848 Rock Point Road, Newburg, MD 20664, or to Disabled American Veterans, PO Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250.

# Cemetery Details

## Fort Lincoln Cemetery

3401 Bladensburg Road  
Brentwood, MD 20722  
[https://www.dignitymemorial.com/funeral-homes/maryland/brentwood/fort-lincoln-funeral-home/9737?utm\\_source=google\\_my\\_business&utm\\_medium=organic](https://www.dignitymemorial.com/funeral-homes/maryland/brentwood/fort-lincoln-funeral-home/9737?utm_source=google_my_business&utm_medium=organic)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **22**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Raymond Funeral Service , P.A.  
5635 Washington Avenue  
La Plata, MD 20646

*and from 6:00PM to 8:00PM with Prayers at 7:00PM.*

## Service

DEC **23**. 10:00 AM (ET)




Christ Church ~ Wayside  
13050 Rock Point Road  
Newburg, MD 20664

# Tribute Wall

VF

“ *Harris Raymond Wilburn Jr was an American Hero. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross by our country. He was a loyal and loving husband to his beloved wife Marianne Cox Wilburn (in memory). He was the beloved father of Sarah Wilburn MacMillan and David Wilburn. He was the beloved father-in-law of Michael MacMillan and the cherished Grandfather to Sean, Mary Catherine and Rohan Macmillan.*

*Ray was a special friend to the Vagianos Family for many years beginning in the neighborhood of Dalby Lane Burke Va and into retirement 1984 -2025. The memories are plentiful.. a joy to have known this kind man with so many fun times. He was a humble man and as loyal as they come. A professional's professional and dedicated his life serving our country and the veteran's administration. We could never repay him for the support he gave our family during our darkest moments. Ray was always there for us... always.*

*Although his body has died his soul and memory will live within us forever... May His Memory Be Eternal +++   *

*John Diana and Mike Vagianos   *

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**Vagianos Family** - December 23, 2025 at 04:39 PM

DC

“ *David and Sarah and family  
Though I never met your father , I knew him through your mother  
my classmate.*

*My prayers and thoughts are with you .*

*If you pass through Scranton again, I would love to meet you*

*Donna Cook*

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**Donna Cook** - December 17, 2025 at 10:51 PM

JE

“ Dearest Sarah and family, we send our heartfelt condolences, love, thoughts and prayers on the loss of your father. It was a pleasure to visit with both of you at Captain John's in the Fall. May God bless you with strength on this difficult journey. Keech & Joyce



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**Joyce Edelen** - December 17, 2025 at 08:41 PM

NO

“ My deepest sympathies to everyone feeling this significant loss. My fondest memory of Ray was tackling the carpet removal project at Dave's house. Although the main floor wasn't an expansive area, there were so many nails and tack strips that needed to be removed without damaging the floor. Ray showed up and endured the monotonous task without a complaint. It was my introduction to Ray and the first time I was able to witness his love and devotion for his family. Since then I've had the honor of sharing many meals and even a Christmas with Ray and he's always been a gracious host. He will be missed, but I'm glad that he is no longer suffering from any illness.

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**Noreen** - December 14, 2025 at 07:10 PM



“ Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Harris Raymond "Ray" Wilburn Jr..



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December 13, 2025 at 06:04 PM



“ *Elissa M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harris Raymond "Ray" Wilburn Jr..*

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**Elissa M.** - December 13, 2025 at 05:57 PM