



# Press



# Release

## **MARION MEREDITH BEAL** **AN ORIGINAL MONTFORD POINT MARINE**

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Original Montford Point Marine and Los Angeles resident Marion Meredith Beal (“Meredith”) passed on March 26, 2015, following a short illness. He was born October 4, 1922 in the rural area in Marion County, TX in east Texas. Both of his parents, Henry and Mattie Benton Beal, were educators who raised Meredith and his younger brother, Gerald Kenneth, in Marshall, TX. Meredith has led a life of service, ranging from being a Boy Scout, to a Marine, to serving his community, church, family, and receiving a Congressional Gold Medal. While in High School, he and his Boy Scout Troop participated in a World Jamboree held in Washington, D.C. They traveled from Marshall to Washington, D.C. on trains that were similar to Army troop trains. In a week’s time, he visited the interior of the White House, the Capital Building and walked to the top of the Washington Monument, leaving a lasting impression on him.



After graduating from High School at the age of 15, Meredith attended Bishop College and graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration in 1942, at the age of 19. He then returned to our nation’s capital, this time working at the Veteran’s Administration Central Office as a clerk typist where he was distinguished as the fastest typist. Then, in 1943, he was inducted into military service during World War II. He chose the Marine Corps, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt had issued a Presidential directive in 1942 allowing African Americans to be enlisted in the Marine Corps, the last branch of the military to become integrated. The Marine recruits were segregated and trained at Montford Point, in Point Lejeune, North Carolina. Meredith served during WWII as an original Montford Point Marine, in one of the platoons of those first to integrate the U.S. Marine Corps.

As a member of Platoon #326, he went through treacherous boot camp training and was voted “Honor Man” of his Platoon by his peers. He served as Chief Clerk, and was a Sergeant and served as Barracks Sergeant. He was also the first Black enlisted man to perform duty at the United States Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He was honorably discharged in November, 1945, following the end of World War II, however, he stayed and continued to work at the Headquarters for two years. In 1950, Meredith moved to Los Angeles and began working at the Veteran’s Administration Hospital. While at the V.A., he met the love of his life, Rohelia “Cherry” Beal and married her November 30, 1952. They have celebrated 63 years of marriage. They have two children: one son and one daughter. Their son, Meredith C., lives in Nairobi, Kenya and is engaged in telecommunication development throughout Africa. Their daughter, Michele Beal Bagneris, is the City Attorney/City Prosecutor for the City of Pasadena, CA, responsible for all civil and criminal legal matters in which the City is involved.

Meredith received his Master of Science Degree from Pepperdine University. He worked for the Los Angeles Unified School District from the early 1950’s until he retired in the mid-1980’s, in positions ranging from Financial Manager at Horace Mann, Jefferson, and Crenshaw High School from its opening, to ultimately being promoted to be the Assistant Supervisor of Student Body Finance for the entire School District. After his retirement, he assisted the School District as a retiree in temporary assignments involving finances, and also worked as a bookkeeper and accountant in his own small business.

He resided in the South Central area of Los Angeles since the 1950’s and lived with his family in their current home for about 55 years. He was a founding member, block captain and treasurer of the 78<sup>th</sup> Street Block Club. He organized a Little League Baseball Team, Cub Scout Troop and Boy Scout Troop, serving as Scout Master and role model to very active troops for many years. He is a long time member of Greater New Light Baptist Church in Los Angeles. He leaves to cherish his memory his wife of 63 years, Rohelia Cherry Beal, son, Meredith, daughter, Michele, son-in-law, Rev. Dr. Jules S. Bagneris, III, three grandchildren: Monet, graduate of the University of Southern California; Jules, IV, graduate of Arizona State University, graduating from Pepperdine University Law School; and Mariana, a 2015 graduate of Princeton University, and a host of other relatives. In June, 2012, he returned to Washington, D.C. to receive the Congressional Gold Medal as an Original Montford Point Marine. Marion Meredith Beal is an unsung hero, who always had a smile, helping without expecting anything in return. Homegoing Services are pending.

