
Obituary

On Wednesday, April 2, 2014, Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr. of Richmond, Virginia entered into eternal rest following a brief illness. He was born on January 10, 1926 in Philadelphia, PA to the late Willie Hopkins and Grace Wynn Hopkins.

He received his education at Virginia Randolph School and Armstrong High School. Sam accepted Christ at an early age and was an active member of the Westwood Baptist Church where he sang in the choir and regularly attended Bible Study.

In one of his life's early acts of service and sacrifice, Sam joined the United States Marine Corps as a teenager to provide financial assistance for his family. He was among the first African Americans to join the Marines after President Franklin D. Roosevelt's mandate to integrate the armed forces during World War II. Despite being committed to freedom and democracy around the world, Sam and other young men received basic training at a segregated facility called Montford Point and even after returning from fighting, continued to face discrimination at home. To recognize this experience, the United States Congress awarded Sam and the Montford Point Marines the Congressional Gold Medal in 2012. In 2013, the State Senate of Virginia further commended him for his service and presented him with Senate Joint Resolution No 320. The bill was introduced by Senator Donald McEachin.

After the war, Sam used his fierce work ethic, self-determination, and commitment to serve to start his own business. With Hopkins Refuse, he provided hauling services to West End residents for over 50 years, even until his final days. To his customers he was also a trusted friend. He took pride in doing his job well and passed those values on to his children and the generations that have followed.

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Sam Hopkins loved his family, his community, and he adored children. If it takes a village to raise a child, Sam Hopkins was the person who looked after the village. He will be remembered for how deeply he cared for the Westwood community, where he would check in daily on elders including his younger sister Kathleen. Not only did he look out for Westwood but his care and concern extended to regular visits to check in on his granddaughter and great grand children. He always made sure that all the children had spending change and delivered flowers to many others. He was an avid reader and made weekly visits to deliver *Richmond Voice* and *Richmond Free Press* newspapers to family and friends around the West End.

Sam was an insightful man, kind hearted with a spirited sense of humor. To know him was to love him. He genuinely loved the Lord and shared his faith as an inspiration to others.

Sam Hopkins leaves to cherish and sustain his memory his loving wife of 63 years, Nora A. Hopkins, a daughter, Charlene Y. Hopkins, 3 sons, Samuel W. Jr. (Kimberly), Michael J. (Josephine) and Stanley E. Hopkins; 4 grandchildren Larry, Shelby, Erica and Adrian; 9 great grandchildren; 4 great great grandchildren; 2 sisters, Kathleen Valentine and LaVerne Robinson; devoted nephew, Johnnie Valentine; devoted niece, Kathy Coffiel; 4 sisters-in-law, Shirley, Barbara, Julia & Betty Hopkins; devoted friends Cullen and Carl Belton, William Green, William Gordon & Todd Wood.

