



Obituary

Herman Willie Rhett, 87, died peacefully at Howard County General Hospital, Columbia, MD on Friday, August 1, 2014 after a brief illness. His memory is cherished by his loving wife of 63 years, Mary S. Rhett; his devoted children Vernon G. Rhett (wife, Sandra); Gwendelyn Rhett; Howard E. Rhett (wife, Claudia); adoring grandchildren Esi M. Rhett, Andrea B. Watson (husband, Mark), Angela M. Andrade (husband, Noe), Amandi J. Rhett, Anesha R. Berry (husband, Stephan), and Jason L. Rhett. He is also survived by his three great-grandchildren: Jevon, Sydney, and Madison and his sister Brenda Rhett Robinson (husband, Joseph).

A native of Charleston, South Carolina, he was raised by his mother, Lucille Smalls-Gilbert (deceased) in Boston, Massachusetts where he also received all of his formal education. In 1948, he joined the United States Marine Corps and was stationed in Camp Lejeune, Jacksonville, North Carolina with the historical, Montford Point where all African Americans were trained during that time of segregation. He married his wife, Mary in 1951 at her family home in Silver Spring, Maryland. They began their family life together while stationed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Following active duty in the Marine Corps, he returned home to Boston and joined the United States Marine Corps Reserve Units and completed his term with the rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant.

He had a very successful career which spanned over 30 years in both, the public and private sectors. He held graduate degrees in Computer Science, and Electronic Engineering. He held several different positions in the field of Information Technology, and was the recipient of many awards for his expertise in software programming and complex technological infrastructures. His former employers included National Aeronautical Space Agency (NASA), MITRE, U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).

He was a member of the Montford Point Marine Association, an organization about which, he was deeply passionate. On August 26, 2011, he was honored with other Montford Pointers by the Commandant of the Marine Corps Barracks (8th & I Streets), Washington, D.C. The event included a reception at the Commandant's residence at an evening parade and rifle-bayonet demonstration.

On June 27, 2012, he received the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor along with over 700 surviving Montford Point Marines at the United States Capital.

He thought it necessary that the Montford Point Marines be known and recognized. He in turn wrote and published a book entitled "FINAL ROLL CALL" to tell their story of being the first African Americans to serve in the Marine Corps. This book was a great contributing factor to receiving recognition by being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor.

A true gentleman, he was hard-working and honest. He is fondly remembered for his love of family, friends, computers, music, and driving Mary around in his cherry-red Mustang.

With love from the family