



# Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020



Scan to Visit



**J.B. RHODES**  
Funeral Home & Cremations Inc

# Table of Contents

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| <b>Obituary</b> .....     | Page 3  |
| <b>Events</b> .....       | Page 4  |
| <b>Tribute Wall</b> ..... | Page 5  |
| <b>Media</b> .....        | Page 18 |



## **Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

**D**udley - Mr. Willie R. Thomas Jr., 67, passed on Monday, April 13, 2020 at home surrounded by his loving family. The celebration of his life will be held on Monday, April 20, 2020 at 11:00am at the J.B. Rhodes Funeral Home & Cremations, 1701 Wayne Memorial Drive, Goldsboro, NC, but you **MUST** have a ticket from the family to attend. He will be laid to rest at a later date at the Eastern Carolina State Veterans Cemetery, 164 Longs Plant Farm Road, Goldsboro, NC.

There will be public viewing held on Sunday, April 19, 2020 from 6:00pm to 7:00pm at the funeral home, but the family will not be present and we ask that you do not congregate after viewing and employ social distancing.

He was born on December 9, 1952 in Newark, NJ to Willie R. and Odessa Turner Thomas Sr. He is survived by his beloved wife, Dolores Baxter Thomas; children: Willie R. Thomas, III and LaTonia Thomas; three grandchildren and his sister, Deborah (Thera) Uzzell.

Services of compassionate and distinguished class entrusted to J.B. Rhodes Funeral Home & Cremations of Goldsboro.



## Events

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

### Public Viewing

 **Sunday**, April 19, 2020

 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM ET

 **J.B. Rhodes Funeral Home and Cremations, Inc.**

1701 Wayne Memorial Dr., Goldsboro NC 27534



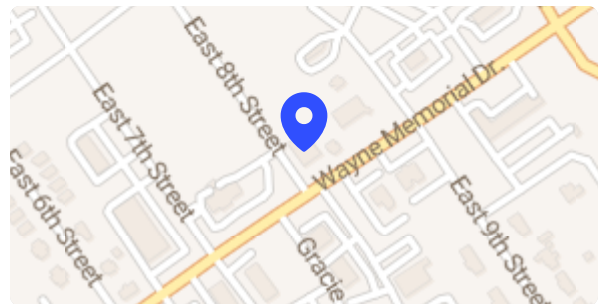
### Celebration of Life

 **Monday**, April 20, 2020


 11:00 AM ET

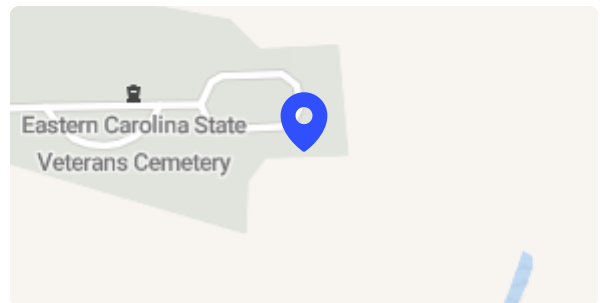
 **J.B. Rhodes Funeral Home and Cremations, Inc.**

1701 Wayne Memorial Dr., Goldsboro NC 27534



### Cemetery Details

 **Eastern Carolina State Veterans Cemetery**  
164 Longs Plant Farm Road, Goldsboro NC  
27534





## Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

TB

**Tammy Bell** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 28 at 8:49 AM



JS

**Joseph And Shelia Sawyer** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 25 at 5:23 AM



VD

**Vicki Deselms** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

LaTonia's Seymour Johnson Exchange family sends our deepest condolences to her and her family at this most difficult time.

April 24 at 8:15 AM



JR

**James And Ann Rowe** posted:

Brother Willie, thanks for all the memories we shared when I worked at the city. What a great brother and friend you was. Your laughter, jokes and that big smile will be missed. Sleeping in the arms of Jesus James and Ann Rowe

April 22 at 5:06 PM

DJ

**Deborah Johnson** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

Our world will really never be the same. Big Will with the big voice, big smile and even bigger heart filled every day with love and laughter everywhere he could. We meet in high school then I married his best friend and he married my best friend making us family for life. Always calling, visiting and loving our families made life so fun. We will love you forever my brother and miss you terribly and our families will continue to lift each other. RIL Big Will ❤️

April 20 at 3:06 PM





## Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

EJ

**Edwina Jackson** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

We will always remember how He made us laugh. We will remember the love He had for family and others. Praying that He is with all of the others that have gone before. We will meet Him on the other side. Rest in the arms of the Lord. From The Baxter and Jackson Families



April 20 at 4:55 AM

JH

**John Howard** posted:

Went to High school with him ,as kids we would be up at the football field while they were at practice, I believe me and one of my high school best friend started calling he big Will if my memory serve me right. He was fun and a good friend gentle giant, he will be miss

April 19 at 5:43 PM

KT

**Ken Turcotte** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

Farewell my brother in Christ. R.I.P.Ken Turcotte



April 19 at 5:31 PM

BT

**Barbara Turner** posted:

Cousin Will, you will be missed by many. Always a kind heart and a gentle soul. You loved your family and I have always been proud to be a part of the family. RPIH.

April 19 at 6:01 AM

SW

**Selvin "Chipper" White** posted:

It is with a heavy heart that I submit this to The Weequahic High School Indian Nation. We have lost a Great Chief "BIG WILL" Thomas! For me Selvin " Chipper" White, James Williams, Forrest "Butch" Cousins, Nate Granger, L.B. Connerly & Rick Little we were his original Church League Championship Basketball Team. He & his father natured us, taught us & willed us to be Champions for 3 consecutive years! We owe "BIG WILL" a debt of gratitude that we could never repay. Our lives as men today are wrapped in the lessons he taught us and we all are better men for it."BIG WILL" was a dominating Center for our WHS Indian Nation Football Team and because of him, so did I. For all of us I want to say thank you "BIG WILL" for a job well done, a life well lived and for being a Weequahic High School Football Legend! 😞

April 19 at 12:07 AM



# Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020



**Phillips** posted:

I first met Willie when I worked at Brogden Junior in Dudley, NC. His son attended there in middle school. We continued our friendship. He was a fantastic man and had a big heart. I worked with his brother, Ron at GHS. Willie worked with me at school functions. He always gave a helping hand whenever needed. He will be missed. My condolences and prayers are with the family. May God be with you and give you strength and peace.

April 18 at 2:44 PM



**Joe Powell** sent a virtual gift in honor of Willie.

If you check your dictionary for the definition of a gentleman you will find the picture a big Willie. A fierce competitor, a loyal friend, and a man you could trust with your life. Rest in peace my dear friend for you will forever be missed



April 18 at 4:21 AM



**Teresa Joyner** April 19 at 2:46 PM

For many years, Officer Thomas made a positive impact on the students of Wayne County Public Schools through the DARE program. His knowledge, commitment and love for children helped to direct many from the ills of drugs and alcohol. He was truly loved by the students he influenced and highly appreciated by the staff of many schools in the Central Attendance Area. Rest well Officer Thomas and our sincere condolences to your family.--Teresa Joyner Former Teacher, School St. Elementary School



**Connie Bandy** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

I loved working with Willie at GPD. He was a special guy..... a gentle giant with a big heart. I have not seen him in years, but loved his facebook posts. I will miss those, but heaven has gained a beautiful soul. My condolences to his family...Nurse Connie



April 17 at 6:35 PM



## Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

KB

**Kemyetta Battle** lit a candle in honor of Willie.



April 17 at 6:21 PM

LJ

**Linda Jenkins** April 19 at 1:43 PM

One of the nicest brother I had the pleasure to know. You will be missed my brother R.I.P  
Sister Linda Jenkins

GJ

**Gilbert Jenkins** sent a virtual gift in honor of Willie.

It was a pleasure playing high school football with big Will. May his soul rest in peace. Gil Jenkins



April 17 at 5:38 PM

JS

**Jena Snyder** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

Daniel and Jena Snyder



April 17 at 5:01 PM

SL

**Steve Lusk** lit a candle in honor of Willie.



April 17 at 3:39 PM

JB

**John Brooks~Bloomfield Nj** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Coach Thomas was a great leader and mentor to me when I played semi-professional football with the New Jersey Bears #RestEasyCoachJohn Brooks



April 17 at 3:07 PM



## Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020



**Lamar Bundy** posted:

I always looked up to Willie. He was a very good police officer and a good man and friend. Always a kind word and always fair. God bless his family and I know he is in heaven with my dad and a few others patrolling the streets of gold in the presence of lord.

April 17 at 11:38 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Thomas family.



April 17 at 11:11 AM



**Anita Griswold Hamilton** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

Willie was a true friend/brother for many years. R.I.P. Brother



April 17 at 10:24 AM



**William Southerland Jr** April 17 at 2:53 PM

Will and I were teammates at Weequahic High School, Newark Nj. Together we won a city championship in football in 1968. Since our high school days we remain friends and was in touch constantly, in fact my last communication with him was April 4, 2020. His text was usually, " Good Morning my brother has a blessed day or enjoy the day God sent you. Orange and Brown 4EVER ". I'm going to miss you my brother. Rest in Paradise forever. William Southerland. Weequahic High School, Class of 1969



**Earlene Cherry Hobbs** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

While employed at the Goldsboro Police Department, I had several special friends, and Willie Thomas was one of them. His attitude and mild-mannered personality said a lot about his character. Encouraging words to the family: Sometimes in our lives, the clouds get low and some rain must fall, but Jesus is always there for us to lean on his everlasting arms. Sorrowfully Submitted, Earlene Cherry Hobbs



April 17 at 9:42 AM



# Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020



**Keith Vinson** posted:

Sincere condolences to the family. Keith Vinson and family.

April 17 at 9:41 AM



**Ollie Lofton** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

He was a gently giant. Praying for the Family.

April 17 at 8:37 AM



**Sharon Roberson** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 17 at 8:16 AM



**Janet D Barnes** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

A candle was lit in memory of Officer Willie Thomas, Jr. who was a great man and who was well respected. Before his retirement, he worked many events for Dillard/Goldsboro Alumni. May he rest in peace

April 16 at 4:23 PM



**Cynthia Broadhurst Jones** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 16 at 10:31 AM



**The Goldsboro Police Department** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Thomas family.

April 15 at 7:50 AM





## Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

NB

**Nyneika Bunn** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

Lit a candle for one of the coolest, realest, and straight forward officer of the DARE program while attending school... My condolences and prayers are with the family. He was definitely an inspiration to many many people and love his DARE Program kids as well as a humble man.. May your soul rest easy and you will never be forgotten Mr. Thomas!! ❤️❤️

April 15 at 7:44 AM



LS

**Lee Szatkowski** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 15 at 7:41 AM



DL

**Don & Gloria Lewis** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 15 at 7:15 AM



TS

**Theresa Speight** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

He was a great man with a big heart. He loved children, community, and his family. He will be missed by many. Hugs and prayers for the family. Love y'all.

April 15 at 4:12 AM



WJ

**Willemina Barnes Johnson** posted:

Rest in heaven cousin, prayers are with the family. Estelle & Daughter's

April 15 at 1:45 AM



## Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

DW

**Donnesha Whitfield** posted:

I met Mr. Thomas while in school through the DARE Program. He was one of the best Officers I've ever met. Prayers to your family and friends. Heaven has gained another angel.

April 14 at 8:42 PM

GB

**Greg Batts** April 15 at 4:59 AM

Was a good person,coach.laugh,how many flags was use on him.he loved the referee and we love to call his game.miss you

LR

**Lavern Ruffin** lit a candle in honor of Willie.



April 14 at 8:08 PM

GK

**Gloria Kenon** lit a candle in honor of Willie.



April 14 at 7:34 PM

TH

**Taishon Hooks** lit a candle in honor of Willie.



April 14 at 7:04 PM

RA

**Renee' Artis** lit a candle in honor of Willie.



April 14 at 6:44 PM



## Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

MG

**Marie Gavin** posted:

Willie was a man with a big heart. I remember when he first started at the GPD, we became friends. We both had a love for 70 music R&B at that time, and Willie would key the mic when a favorite oldie would play on the radio when we were on the night shift. We shared many laughs, he told stories about growing up in Jersey. Willie loved his wife and children. I am blessed to have known him for more than twenty years. RIP my friend.

April 14 at 6:10 PM

VI

**Visha** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

I will miss you Coach Thomas.. my buddy.. Forever in the hearts of your Greenwood Team and certainly Malette and I.. love you forever and extended prayers to the family..I know you are holding on tight to your beloved baby girl ❤️

April 14 at 6:00 PM



CC

**Carolyn Chapman** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 14 at 5:50 PM



KM

**Karimah McNair** posted:

My heart felt condolences to the Thomas family. I met aka Big Will about five decades ago, plus Debra, and Mr. & Mrs. Thomas. We lived on the same street, Weequahic Ave in Newark, NJ. My family the Grantham's remained friends through the years. We all ended up in NC, look at God's plan! Big Will you will be sorrowful missed. To the family may you find God's grace, strength, peace, and comfort during this time of bereavement! Karimah McNair and family

April 14 at 5:35 PM

PD

**Priscilla Dawson** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 14 at 5:25 PM





## Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

WW

**Wanda Weeks** posted:

My condolences to the family. Willie was a very outstanding person on and off the force. He influenced so many young people and I am so glad that during my life journey, I had the pleasure to meet him. Go ahead and take your rest and thank you for all you done. Wanda Weeks

April 14 at 5:21 PM

CC

**Chief Todd Coring** posted:

One of the best. Reached out to me early in my career as a DARE officer. We served together on the NC DARE Officers Association together many years. What a great man. Rest easy friend. Until we meet again. Chief Todd Coring, Southport Police Department.

April 14 at 5:14 PM

TW

**Thea Williams** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

Officer Thomas was a Great Dare Policeman. He knew how to work with children. I told him how Special he was to the children. God rest his soul.

April 14 at 4:24 PM



GR

**George Raecher** posted:

Willie Thomas was a great Police Officer and friend. Prayers go out to his wife and children. May you Rest in Peace my friend!George Raecher

April 14 at 2:30 PM

HS

**Howie Shaw** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

What a friend Willie was to all and he meant a lot to me through our relationship in emergency service! You will be missed my friend!

April 14 at 10:55 AM



MG

**Major Greenfield** April 14 at 5:07 PM

What an outstanding law enforcement officer MrThomas was respectable ,good honest and a very humble lawenforce Officer he will be missed



# Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020



**Michael West** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 14 at 10:54 AM



**Ellen Hobbs** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 14 at 10:16 AM



**EH Ellen Hobbs** April 15 at 6:47 AM

I met Willie when I first began working at the GPD. Will was a great friend & brother and was one who never met a stranger. He was always friendly & helpful to everyone. We will surely miss you, my brother. To Delores, Tonia & Wink: We love you and continue to pray for you as we mourn and celebrate a great husband, Dad, Grand-Dad, brother & friend.



**Janice Sharp** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 14 at 10:15 AM



**JS Janice Sharp** April 14 at 10:21 AM

I along with Perry have good memories of Willie from working with him at Goldsboro Police department. He was a fun loving guy that we never forgot. We pray for his wife and kids. Perry and Janice Lane Sharp



**Anonymous** sent an Arrive in Style to the Thomas family.

April 14 at 9:23 AM





# Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020

LP

**Lamont Pickett** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

Coach Thomas changed my my life more than he could ever know. When I was struggling to find my way way and purpose he introduced me to football, and his coaching about the game and about life helped shape we into who I am today. My life could have gone a completely different way if he hadn't believed in me and supported me as I matured into a young man. With all the people I came in contact with and situations that could have brought me to be just another statistic his guidance saved my life and molded into the person I am so that I could influence other young black men to to want more and do more. Lamont Pickett and the Pickett Family will always love you and yours and appreciate the love you showed us and other families.



April 14 at 7:45 AM

CD

**Crystal Daniels** posted:

I have so many wonderful memories of Mr. Thomas and the Thomas family. Growing up in Southern Plaza allowed me to personally know a GREAT man and an awesome family. I know that he is now well!! My love, prayers and condolences to the Thomas family.

April 14 at 6:54 AM

VA

**Veronica Allen** lit a candle in honor of Willie.



April 14 at 6:36 AM

TW

**Tomekia Waters** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

DMS Athletic Department Coaching Staff: Robert Grant & Tomekia Waters



April 13 at 7:11 PM

SW

**Syreeta Worrells** lit a candle in honor of Willie.



April 13 at 4:19 PM



## Tribute Wall

**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020



**Charles & Clarissa Jacobs** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 13 at 3:21 PM



**Shiril Jackson** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

April 13 at 2:29 PM



**James D. Sharpless** posted:

I alway enjoyed being around brother T homas we enjoyed laughing & joking.He would call me big money. He fought a good fight I never witness him giving up doing his period of illness. "May the Fatherof all mercies, and the God of all comfort" be with your family. James D. Sharpless Garner N. C.

April 13 at 12:41 PM



**Evon & Doris Rowe Lassiter** lit a candle in honor of Willie.

Sorry for the loss of your love one. Praying that God's sustaining grace will strengthen you and your family. Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

April 13 at 10:35 AM





**Media**

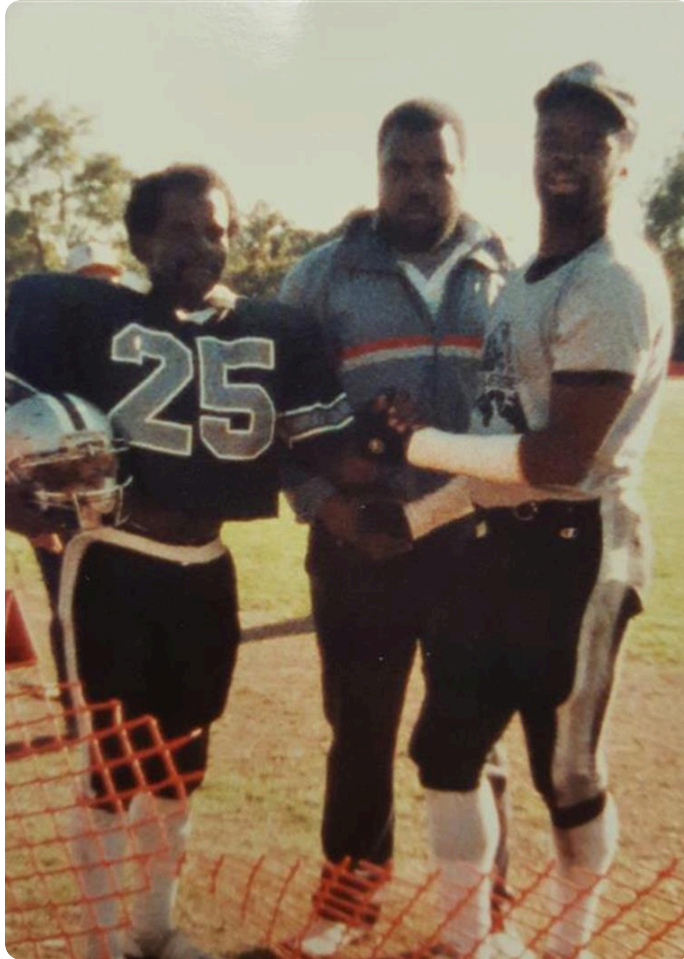
**Mr. Willie Ralph Thomas Jr.**

DEC 9, 1952 - APR 13, 2020



John Brooks~Bloomfield Nj shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

April 17 at 3:07 PM





# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Willie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit



**J.B. RHODES**  
Funeral Home & Cremations Inc