

**ACTIVE PALLBEARERS**

Higher Ground Ministries Deacon Board  
Quay Bailey  
Johnnie Bonner  
Zric Bradley, Jr.  
Kenny Gans  
K. Michael Jordan  
Steve Turner  
Edward Thomas  
Anthony Wooten

**HONORARY PALLBEARERS**

Barrett Bonner  
Corey Bonner, Sr.  
Corey Bonner, Jr.  
Kellan Bonner  
Nathaniel Canady  
Daniel Carr  
David Finney  
Rodney Johnson  
Harvey Joseph  
James Maye  
Louis Pritchett  
Christopher Shropshire

**ACTIVE FLOWER BEARERS**

Higher Ground Ministries  
Missionary Board  
  
Higher Ground Ministries  
Mothers' Board

**HONORARY FLOWER BEARERS**

Courtney Bonner  
Sallye Bonner  
Shannon Bonner  
Deborah Canady  
Charmin Johnson  
Zora Johnson  
Jasmin Maye  
Monice Morgan  
Sara Joseph  
Bethany Shropshire

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The family of Deacon Tommy Ray Bonner humbly and sincerely thank each of you for the love you have shown during our time of loss.

Your prayers, comforting words, visits, calls, and every act of kindness have truly carried us through moments when we needed strength the most. We have felt your love, and it has reminded us that we are not alone and God will give us strength in this season.

We extend a special, heartfelt thank you to the compassionate staff of the Cincinnati VA Medical Center for the care, dignity, and kindness shown to our loved one. We are also deeply grateful to our church family, Higher Ground Ministries, for your prayers, support, and unwavering love during this time.

Though our hearts are heavy, we are comforted knowing that God's grace is sufficient and His peace surrounds us. Your support has been a reflection of that grace, and we are deeply grateful.

**With love and heartfelt appreciation,**  
*The Bonner & Shropshire Families*

**THE INTERMENT**

*Monday, March 2, 2026*  
1:00PM

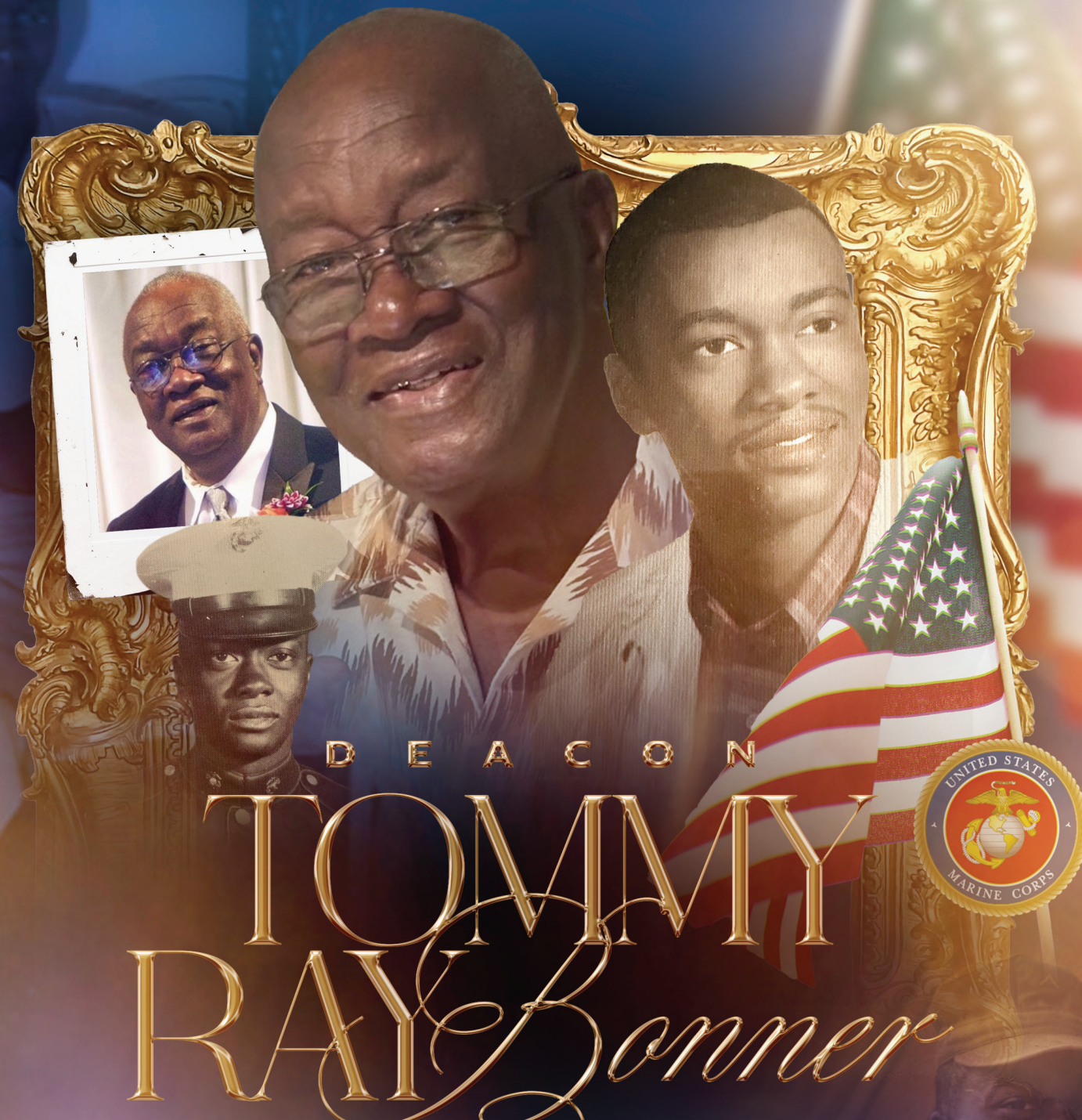
**Dayton National Cemetery**  
**4100 W. Third St. • Dayton, OH 45428**

**SERVICES ENTRUSTED TO**

Walker Funeral Home - *Walker - Walnut Hills*  
2625 Gilbert Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45206  
(513) 251-6200 | www.herbwalker.com  
*Antonio "AJ" Hughes, Sr., Funeral Director*

PROGRAMS DESIGNED BY: DUSTIN T. CLARIDY | SUITE1741@GMAIL.COM

CELEBRATING HIS  
*Life, Spirit & Ministry*



DEACON  
**TOMMY**  
**RAY Bonner**

OCTOBER 26, 1942 - FEBRUARY 14, 2026

*Saturday, February 28, 2026*  
Visitation: 10:00AM • Service: 12:00PM

**Higher Ground Ministries**  
1391 E. Crescentville Rd. • Cincinnati, OH 45246  
*Elder Earl D. Finney, Pastor & Eulogist*

# THE ORDER OF *Celebration*

**Pastor Rodney H. Posey, Officiating**  
Impact Worship Center - Cincinnati, OH

MUSICAL PRELUDE

PARTING VIEW ..... **The Family**

INVOCATION ..... **Elder Craig McGee, Sr.**

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE ..... **Deacon K. Michael Jordan**

NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE ..... **Elder Phillip Bailey**

MUSICAL SELECTION ..... **Voices of Favor Praise Team**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/RESOLUTIONS ..... **Evangelist Viney Smith**  
*Jurisdictional Secretary, Ohio North First Jurisdiction  
Church of God in Christ, Inc.*

SPECIAL TRIBUTES ..... **THE LIFE OF DEACON TOMMY BONNER**  
A Loyal Servant - **Pastor Joel James**  
*James Temple Church of God in Christ - Cincinnati, Ohio*

A Dedicated Deacon - **Pastor Eddie Walker**  
*Turning Point Ministries - Cincinnati, Ohio*

**Steve Turner**  
*Higher Ground Ministries - Cincinnati, Ohio*

A Devoted Coworker - **Malcolm Timmons**  
*Queen City Metro*

A Proud Nephew - **Deacon David Finney**

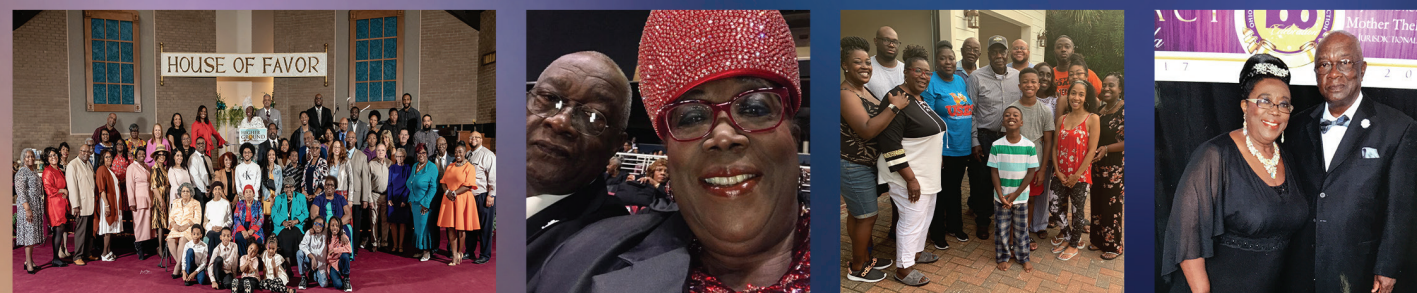
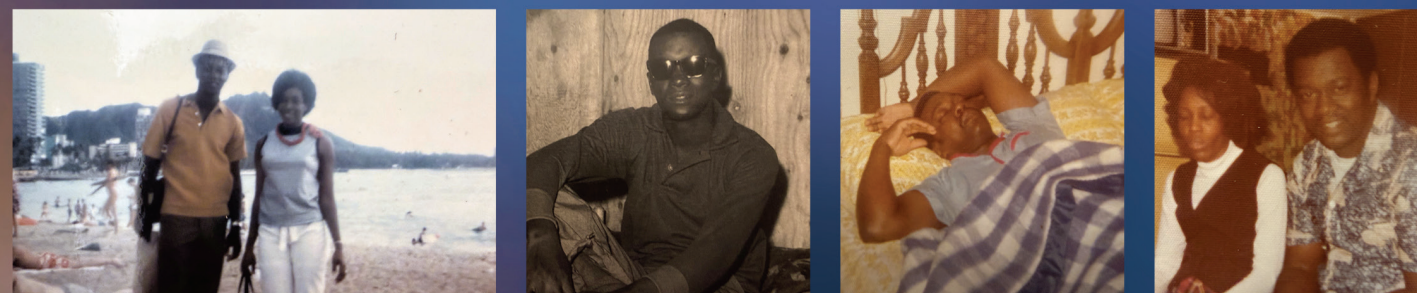
OBITUARY ..... *Read Silently*

SERMONIC SELECTION ..... **Pastor Rodney H. Posey**  
*Impact Worship Center - Cincinnati, Ohio*

EULOGY ..... **Pastor Earl D. Finney**  
*Higher Ground Ministries - Cincinnati, Ohio*  
*Assistant Superintendent, Greater Cincinnati District  
Ohio North First Jurisdiction, Church of God in Christ, Inc.*

BENEDICTION ..... **Pastor Earl D. Finney**

RECESSIONAL ..... **Walker Funeral Home**



## A CHERISHED GRANDFATHER

My Poppy, where do I begin? I never imagined I would have to stand here and say goodbye to you so soon. A life without you is something I can't possibly fathom. You have been such a constant in my life and losing you has left a space in my heart that can never be filled. There are so many things I wish I had the chance to tell you, so many moments I wish I could relive just one more time. Oh, how comforting it was to know that you were always in my corner. Your love was steady, patient, and unconditional. They say there is nothing like a grandfather's love, and I was blessed enough to experience that kind of love every single day. From walking me to and from the bus stop as a little girl, to making me breakfast every morning at 7 a.m. before school, you showed your love in the quiet, ordinary moments that meant everything to me. Those mornings, those walks, those simple acts of care are now some of my most treasured memories. Poppy was one of the strongest men I have ever known. Not just in strength, but in heart. He never hesitated to show love, never hesitated to be there when we needed him. His greatest soft spot was always my brothers and I. He called me "Cookie Wookie". Hearing him say that made me feel so special and loved. He never hesitated to compliment or tell me how pretty I looked. In his eyes, I was always enough. He made us feel safe. He made us feel protected. He made us feel loved in a way that only he could. What hurts the most is knowing I can't hug you again, hear your voice, or hear you call my name. But even in this pain, I find comfort in knowing that your love did not leave with you. Your love lives on in me. It lives on in the lessons you taught me, in the strength you gave me, and in every memory we shared. Your wish was always for me to keep striving and to never give up. I promise you that I will finish school and become someone you are proud of. I will carry you with me in everything I do. I know you will be beside me in every moment, guiding me, protecting me, and loving me just as you always have. Thank you for loving me so deeply. Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for being my Poppy. I will miss you for the rest of my life. I love you forever.

**Your granddaughter,** Courtney Justine Bonner *"Cookie Wookie"*

Poppy, words cannot express what you meant to me and the impact you've had on my life. From the day I was born, you are one of the reasons I stand where I am today. The impact you've had on my life I am forever grateful for. From the early morning breakfasts before school to telling me how proud you were of me graduating going on to college. You may be gone but you will never be forgotten. All your hard work and sacrifice will pay off, as I know you're watching from above as I make you proud. I know you live through me and will forever be by my side watching. As you always said keep going, and I will all the way to the finish line. Greatness is ahead because of you, and we are far from done. Love you and fly high. **Your grandson,** Corey Justin Bonner, Jr. *"Brother"*

Poppy, it is an honor to be your grandson. I am thankful for all the breakfast you made me every day. You always made sure I was okay and would never let me leave the house hungry. I will forever appreciate the love you showed me, truly one of a kind. I am so thankful for all the lessons you taught me. I will never forget them. Poppy, you were the best grandfather I could ask for. I'm sad I must live the rest of my life without you by my side. But, I know you will be with me every step of the way. I wish we had more time together, but all good things come to an end to make room for a new beginning. I want you to know I will forever appreciate all the sacrifices you made for me. I love you, Poppy. Rest in peace. Gone but never forgotten. **Love,** Kellan Johnson Bonner *"Macho"*

## A LOVING FATHER-IN-LOVE

"Poppy". The remnants of a great man are not found in the money he acquires or the titles he obtains. Instead, his greatness is seen through the mirror of one's reflection—not necessarily the image he sees looking back at himself, but the reflection of his children. Thank you, Poppy, for one of your greatest achievements: creating a remarkable son. The legacy you have built will continue generations to come. Thank you for your hard work, felt by your calloused hands, and your commanding presence; heard in every word spoken. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to your family, ensuring they never wanted for anything. Poppy, know that your spirit lives on in your son, who has inherited your hard work ethic, dedication, and unshakable allegiance to God and his family. Your legacy is also evident in your grandsons, who serve as daily reminders that Bonner men are strong, resilient, and confident. Of course, they even inherited the habit of keeping their hands in their pockets. Rest Easy, Poppy. You're a winner at the finish line; your race has ended, but your light remains. Just as the sun sets in the west, only to rise again in the east, your legacy and memory will continue to shine ever so brightly! I love you!

**Your daughter-in-love,** Shan

Deacon Poppy, my Senior Deacon. I'm proud of the man you are and how you raised your children, especially my Muffin. You have been an inspiration of what a man is supposed to be, how to be, accept responsibility, and always keep God first. From day one, you've been a testament of what hard work, determination, and a love for God can bring to one's life. I'll always thank you for being that testament because even though you never met my father, you instilled those same traits he had. I'll always remember asking you and Nana for Muffin's hand in marriage (you should have warned me she was so spoiled), the talks we shared, not only leading up to our marriage, but after we worked in ministry as Deacons. You've been a Deacon longer than I've been alive! You showed me and many others how to serve the Pastor and church. I'll always strive to be more like you each day as a family man & Deacon. I've always given respect to you, because you served your country and community without expecting anything in return. Although we won't come pass this way again, I'm glad that we took family trips to Cancún, Florida, and Alabama. I enjoyed conversing about the history lessons you gave me on being raised in the South. I can go on and on about the many life lessons you've taught me that echoed the same sentiments of my father – love God, trust God, and always hold on to your family. Last but not least, don't ever give up on God, because he won't give up on you! **I'll always love you, Poppy.** *Your Deacon,* Chris

## HIS LIFE *Story*

Tommy Ray Bonner was born in Carrollton, Alabama, to the union of Lonnie and Virginia Bonner. After graduating from Pickens County Training School, he relocated to Cincinnati and enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. Shortly thereafter, he met the love of his life, Sallye Harris, and they were united in marriage on March 17, 1968. A proud Marine, he served in the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion and received numerous commendations, including the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Following an honorable discharge from the U.S. Marine Corps, he joined James Temple Church of God in Christ under the pastorate of the late Bishop William Morgan James. Upon his appointment as Deacon, he served the ministry with immense zeal and conviction. He deeply admired Bishop James, who was instrumental in his spiritual maturity. After Bishop James' passing, he continued his ministerial service under the leadership of Pastor Joel James, until the founding of Higher Ground Ministries in 2002 by his brother-in-love, Pastor Earl D. Finney. Deacon Bonner was deeply honored and committed to serving Pastor and Lady Finney as well as the entire congregation. He truly enjoyed an unyielding connection with his Higher Ground Family.

Driven by his love for the ministry, he was appointed Deacon Chairman, a role he performed with great passion and enthusiasm. In recognition of his exemplary dedication, he was awarded the Higher Ground Ministries' Humanitarian Award. He epitomized the deacon described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, *"Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their*

*own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

Deacon Bonner was employed at OPW Dover Corporation and later Queen City Metro for 31 years. He truly enjoyed his profession, as it afforded him the opportunity to meet new friends and utilize his skills in training transit operators. He was a proud member of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 627 and the Metro Share Committee.

He was very excited to welcome retirement, during which he took on new roles in gardening and traveling. Most of all, he enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, whom he adored. He proudly created "Poppy's Snack Shop," which he kept supplied with premium beverages and goodies for his grandchildren, visitors, and even his special neighborhood four-legged friends.

Deacon Bonner's enduring legacy will forever be cherished by his wife of nearly 58 years, Sallye Harris Bonner; his son, Corey Justin Bonner, Sr. (Shannon); his daughter, Bethany Joy Shropshire (Christopher); and his three grandchildren: Courtney, Corey, Jr., and Kellan. He is also survived by his brothers-in-love, Pastor Earl Finney, Ollie Welch, and Willie Frank Ivey; and his sisters-in-love, Evang. Dorothy Finney, Gussie Mae Welch, and Verna Dean Harris; special nieces and nephews extending exceptional love: Hope Finney, Esq., David Finney, Dr. Lisa Welch, Rebecca Ivey, Travious Ivey, Wanda Mitchell, Claudia Dobson, Dara Williams, as well as a host of additional nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, and devoted friends.

Deacon Bonner frequently reminded his wife and children, *"I'm not worried, I'm in God's hands!"* His faith never wavered.

***Take your well-deserved rest, Brave Soldier!***



CELEBRATING 58 YEARS OF LOVE

I thought if I caressed your hand tight enough, you would find the strength to stay. We shared almost 58 years, and I wish we could have enjoyed more time together. Your absence has left a void that will never be filled. I miss your voice, laughter, and presence in my life. I miss you preparing breakfast. I miss you explaining football plays and rolling your eyes when I didn't understand. I miss you rushing me to go places. I miss you saying "nighty-night" at bedtime. You were an awesome husband, and your love penetrated my being in a way that I don't have words to explain. I'll trust God to lead, guide, and mend my shattered heart. You have earned your reward to rest in your Savior's care.

*I will love you forever... until we meet again!*

AN EVERLASTING LOVE

# TOMMY & SALLYE



A REMARKABLE FATHER

Daddy, to the man that taught me everything I know. You are the greatest man I will ever know. I thank God for allowing me to be your son. You exemplified what it means to be a Father, Grandfather, Deacon, Man of God, Friend and a Man. You have been an exemplary example of how to take care of a family, and your work ethic was second to none. Thank you for always being there for me and for teaching me how to handle any obstacles that came my way. Your giving spirit and selfless acts touched people from all walks of life, and you never expected anything in return. You taught me how to lead by example and stand up for what's right no matter what. I will miss us talking every day and the love for dogs that we shared. I will miss seeing you every morning before I go to work no matter how early it was. I promise to take the things you've shown and taught me and continue to lead and keep your legacy alive for as long as I live. Your legacy will live on through Bonner men and others you have influenced for generations to come. Take your rest, Daddy - know that you made a difference in so many lives and left a lasting impression that will never be forgotten. Tommy Ray Bonner lives on in me, Corey Jr. (Brother), Kellan (Macho), and future Bonner men FOREVER!

I Love you, DADDY! I'll see you again - until then I will take it from here.

*Your Oldest Child,  
Corey Justin Bonner, Sr.*

To my first love, my hero, my favorite guy, my Daddy – The purest love of a father is defined by quiet sacrifice, unwavering protection, unconditional support, and a guiding light through life's joys and sorrows. A profoundly, selfless bond that serves as a foundation of strength, security, wisdom, and a lasting legacy. Daddy, you surpassed every part of the definition. The ultimate superman without flaw. We had a bond like no other! At just three months old, you created the well-known nickname "Muffin" that has followed me from childhood to adulthood creating a version of spoiled that was unheard of. You held the blame for spoiling me like a badge of honor. Christopher still says, "What have I gotten myself in to?" You tried to tell him – whatever Muffin wants, she gets. Plain & simple! We didn't park our cars next to others, we spent hours making grocery store runs, anything I had at my house you wanted for yours – whatever it was we were on the same accord. Mommy said we were "two peas in a pod". I'll miss the days when you called me to come get my bowl of fresh cut watermelon while Momma mumbled under her breath, "He doesn't cut watermelon for me." You were dedicated to having the best cut grass at your house and mine. There were days I didn't need an alarm as you woke the neighborhood by revving up one of your many lawnmowers. Your reassurance that I would be alright without you came with such confidence and optimism. Your belief in me made me feel invincible – I could conquer anything in your eyes! You made me promise to finish school – no matter what! I'll remember that promise on the days your absence is too much to bear. I'll remember the supernatural confidence you said I had. My life has been blessed beyond measure to have a father like you. I'll love you forever & a day, Boo.

Always & Forever,  
**Your baby girl, Muff**  
*The Future Dr. Bethany Joy Shropshire*

