



Henry Watson Jr

February 3, 1932 - March 21, 2025

Henry "Hank" Watson, Alexandria, Va., March 21, 2025

Henry "Hank" Watson was born February 3, 1932, in Paterson, N.J., to the late Henry and Fanny Mae Watson. Growing up, he was called, "Junior," and learned a lot from his father, who was a master carpenter and an entrepreneur who owned a delivery service and a sandwich shop. Inspired by his friend's brother-boxing legend Rubin "Hurricane" Carter-Hank launched a career as an amateur boxer. He was also a talented artist and a drummer in a jazz band.

At age 20, Hank enlisted in the Army and served honorably during the Korean War before returning to civilian life. He took on various jobs until a friend encouraged him to apply to the Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant in Mahwah, N.J. There, he began a successful career, starting out as a lineman-where he applied windshields-rising to forklift operator, an achievement that he was proud of. Though he was offered the position of foreman, he declined to remain with the rank and file. Known for "telling it like it is," Hank became a respected mentor and advisor to many coworkers.

On August 24, 1957, Hank married Dolores Estelle Burton and embraced her three children as his own. The family moved from Paterson to Englewood, N.J., where Hank "never let grass grow under his feet." At home, he was a

skilled handyman, kept the lawn perfectly manicured and tended the garden alongside Dolores. They were known in the neighborhood for the beauty of their yard.

Hank gave his life to Christ at an early age and read his scriptures daily, even up to his final days. He was an active member of the Church of the Good Shepherd-pastored by his father-in-law, Rev. James Randolph Burton-where he served as an usher, trustee, and sang in the Voices of Hope choir and male quartet.

After retiring from Ford, Hank and Dolores moved to Whiting, N.J., in the mid-1980s. During those years, Hank enjoyed daily walks, gardening, keeping busy with odd jobs, and visiting with his children and grandchildren. He particularly loved trips to Seaside Heights and Cape May, playing checkers with his grandchildren and showing off how he could still do push-ups with a clap. He also loved watching old westerns-which he called, "shoot 'em ups"-and was glued to the TV during baseball season. He was a diehard New York Mets fan, despite their "sorry" performance-which was the only point of discord he had with Dolores, who loved the Yankees.

Hank's passion for automobiles was legendary. He could readily identify the make and model of any American car and loved reminiscing about his first vehicle-a 1931 two-tone Plymouth coupe. His most treasured car was a cream white and sky blue 1954 Chevy Bel Air with a full continental kit and dual exhaust. For many years, he operated a part-time business detailing and customizing cars, building a loyal clientele who returned for his exceptionally high-quality work-and "that ain't no lie."

In 2005, the Watsons relocated to Virginia to live with their daughter and son-in-law as Dolores' health declined. He always thanked Karen for helping him make the tough, but "best decision" to move to Virginia. He often said, "I don't

know what I'd do without my daughter." Following his wife's passing in 2006, Hank became an active member of Alfred Street Baptist Church, serving in the male usher ministry and singing in the men's day choir. He enjoyed traveling with his children, listening to the jazz greats and going on senior group day trips. He was known for making his pristinely kept silver Mustang "purr" as he drove to the waterfront in Old Town Alexandria where he would watch planes take off and land. In his later years, Hank cherished his Tuesday mornings with his son-in-law, Kenneth, which included breakfast at IHOP and their weekly trip to the grocery store. He especially enjoyed his Saturday adventures with his granddaughter, Kanika. Whether it was walking in the park or a workout at the gym, the outing always ended with lunch at one of his favorite spots.

While Hank's earthly journey has ended, he will live on through his children and in the hearts of all who knew him. He was preceded in death by his wife, Dolores Watson; great-granddaughter, Nylah Grant; great-grandson, Issaiah Amir Burton; and cousins Michael Roseborough Sr. and Lillian Roseborough. He is survived by his sons, James Burton (Hanne) and Ronald Grant (Barbara); daughter, Karen DeSandies (Kenneth); grandchildren, Amir Burton (Amy); Corey Burton (Cathy); Kisha Lester (Erren); Jaquetta Carrazana (Christian); Kanika DeSandies (James); great-grandchildren, Keondre Hall, Luke Burton, Grace Burton, Claire Burton, Tristan Carrazana, Ellington Lester, Maze Carrazana, and Charlotte Lester; and cousin Norma Sanderlin. He also leaves to mourn a cherished longtime companion, Carolyn Lewis, her son Woody and granddaughter, Sophia, as well as his beloved "little brother," Necholus "Nick" Ogden and his wife Gayle and their children Sydney and Tre.

This is not goodbye, but, "So long for now!"

Cemetery Details

Pleasant Valley Memorial Park

8420 Little River Turnpike
Annandale, VA 22003

Previous Events

Viewing

APR 9. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Alfred Street Baptist Church
301 S. Alfred Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Funeral Service

APR 9. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Alfred Street Baptist Church
301 S. Alfred Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Tribute Wall

LK

“ 3 files added to the album Henry "Hank" Watson at Alfred Street Baptist Church



Lois Kebe - April 09, 2025 at 11:58 AM