



## Mr. Ronnie Lee

February 15, 1944 - October 5, 2020

Deacon Ronnie Lee, 76, of Peoria, IL transitioned from this life to his heavenly home on Monday, October 5, 2020.

Ronnie was born February 15, 1944 in Peoria, IL to proud parents Horace Lee and Mary R. Gaines. He was the oldest of his brothers and sisters. His claim to fame was that he was a member of the last class of the old Manual Training High School and the first graduating class of the new Manual High School.

After High School in 1963, Ronnie worked odd jobs until he became employed at Caterpillar, Inc. In 1964 he joined the United States Air Force and became a crew chief on a C-130 aircraft. After his tour of duty in the military, Ronnie returned to Peoria to work with Caterpillar. During his 36-year career at CAT, he worked as a burr bench and wash tank operator, and a milling machine operator. He worked his way up the ladder becoming a Line Foreman and eventually a Line Manager mostly in Bldg LL. Ronnie retired from CAT on August 1, 1999.

Ronnie never lost sight that education is very important. He attended Illinois Central College for two years, majoring in Business Management. While at Caterpillar he took advantage of the courses the company had to offer as well as Dale Carnegie courses. He also became a member of the Illinois Air National Guard where he was a weapons loader for the OA-37 and F-16 aircraft. Later he transferred to the Base Safety Office. Ronnie was a graduate of the Air National Guard NCO Academy where he took many courses offered by the Air Force. He retired from the military on February 14, 2004 with 30

years of service to his country. Ronnie's military awards include the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, and the Humanitarian Service Medal. Because of his military service, Ronnie was able to travel to places like, England, South America, France, Antarctica, Turkey, Italy, Iceland, Korea, Norway, Spain, Germany, Africa, Hawaii, and Viet Nam.

Retired life was not for Ronnie, so he began employment at the Lincoln's Challenge Academy; first as an Administrative Assistant, lastly as a Case Manager. His jobs involved working with "at risk youth" as they journeyed to get their lives together and become successful adults. Ronnie was selected as a CIProud Hero praising him for his work with Lincoln's Challenge.

Alongside his wife, Ronnie and Lynnette opened and maintained for over 10 years a small business (World On Wheels Segway Tours and Bike Rides) that provides the Peoria area with an alternative recreation activity. Once Ronnie saw the vision that was placed on his wife, he proceeded to help make that dream possible by overseeing the mechanical and technical parts of the business. This business became a family endeavor.

Ronnie was the ultimate Star Trek fan and he also enjoyed wrestling, often times purchasing front row tickets to see a match. He was a creative cook, he loved cars, and he loved his Bradley Braves being a season ticket holder for over 30 years. He so enjoyed it when his grandchildren would accompany him to the games.

Ronnie was a faithful member of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church where he served as Chairman of the Deacon Board, Sunday School Teacher, coordinator of the Van Ministry, president of the Men's Bible Study, member of the kitchen committee, president of the nominating committee, and member of the Male Choir and the Mass Choir. Ronnie always described his participation as being "background noise" since he himself admitted he did not have a good singing voice and sang off key. But he enjoyed singing with them so much as another opportunity to praise the Lord. Ronnie was the first to volunteer as a member of Team Evangelize to go into the neighborhood spreading the word

of God, often times being the only one to accompany the Pastor. He had a concern for the finances of the church and for many years he coordinated the annual trip to the Chicago Auto Show as a fundraiser and an annual fishing trip. It was his vision to support the homeless in the Peoria area and he did so by developing a program at Mt. Zion to feed those in need during the holidays. He also coordinated the receipt of items from Lincoln's Challenge Academy such as clothing, boots and blankets to be distributed to the community. He also served as vice-president of the Laymen. Ronnie was also active in the Peoria Community. He served as an election judge and was a member of CPASA and the Princeville Drug Enforcement Coalition. He also served as President of the Manual High School Alumni Association whose main goal is to provide students with college scholarships. For many years he was also a member of the National Brotherhood of Skiers whose goal is to get minority youth involved in skiing at the Olympic level.

Ronnie married the late Lillie Boddie on December 7, 1966. To that union one daughter, the late Kimberly S. (Lee) Williams was born. Ronnie met Lynnette Johnson and they married on December 28, 1984. They have shared over 36 years of love and matrimony. He is survived by his wife Lynnette Lee, his mother, Mary R. Gaines; step-mother, Nadine Lee; mother-in-law Girline Johnson; one son, Vida (Aretha) Johnson; brothers Robert (Judy) Lee of Wilmington, NC; Timothy Lee; Corey (Marcy) Lee, Michael (Donna) Rutherford all of Peoria, IL; Bobby Rutherford of Grand Prairie, TX; Dean (Marcella) Rutherford of Madison, TN; Fred Green of Chicago, IL; Bernard Lee and Dennis Lee both of California; ...sisters Gail Lee of Wilmington, NC; Debra (Tim) Lee-Goodwin of Colorado Springs, CO; Freida Peary of Stockbridge, GA; Nancy Gayles; Becky Rutherford; and Bridgette (Carey) Stuckey all of Peoria, IL....8 grandchildren, Kariann, DaVante, Kharlee, Te'ylor, Imani, Arie, Jaida and Sydney; one great granddaughter, Khailee... a bonus daughter Iva Johnson and grandchildren Mona', NiZale, and Lynzie and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. He is preceded in

death by his father; daughter; son, Vilancio Johnson; two sisters Pamela Lee and Constance Moody; and brother Horace Lee, Jr.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 am on Friday, October 16, 2020 at Mt. Zion Baptist Church with a two-hour visitation beginning at 8:00 am. Pastor Alphonso Lyons, Jr. will bring words of comfort to the family. Ronnie will be laid to rest at Camp Butler National Cemetery, Springfield, IL.

Simons Mortuary is entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences may be made at [SimonsMortuary.com](https://www.SimonsMortuary.com). In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his honor to Mt. Zion Baptist Church; the Manual Alumni Association; Lincoln's Challenge Academy, Rantoul, IL; or Carver Community Center.

The funeral service will be live-streamed on Simons Mortuary's Website or Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Simons-Mortuary-232095303487150> promptly at the time of the service.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, social distancing and attendance limits will be observed. The sanctuary can socially distance and seat a limit of 50 or less people. All others will be able to flow through and view prior to beginning the Celebration of Life Ceremony.

As the States begin re-opening in response to the Global Coronavirus Pandemic, some people are returning to their previous normal living standards. Unfortunately, we are now in our new normal as unreal and sometimes uncomfortable as the socially distancing and continuous use of protective masks may feel.

\*In an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, we ask that everyone in attendance: wear a face mask and refrain from hugging, kissing and shaking hands (as hard as it is to see someone you care about and not touch them).

Thanks in advance for your cooperation!

\*It is our responsibility as Funeral Directors, to do everything we can to advise families in order to honor our beloved Families and to keep everyone as safe as possible.

# Cemetery Details

## Camp Butler National Cemetery

5063 Camp Butler Road, RR1  
Springfield, IL 62707

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **16**. 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church  
305 S. MADISON PARK TERRACE  
Peoria, IL 61605  
(309) 674-4379

## Celebration of Life

OCT **16**. 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church  
305 S. MADISON PARK TERRACE  
Peoria, IL 61605  
(309) 674-4379

# Tribute Wall



“ *Simons Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Mr. Ronnie Lee*

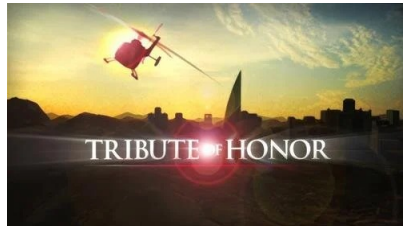


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**Simons Mortuary** - October 21, 2020 at 10:52 AM



“ *Simons Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Mr. Ronnie Lee*



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**Simons Mortuary** - October 15, 2020 at 06:31 PM

**JB**

*Well done.*

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**James Berger** - October 17, 2020 at 10:11 AM



“ *Mr. Ronnie Lee*

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January 29, 2023 at 06:10 AM



“ *Mr. Ronnie Lee*

January 29, 2023 at 03:12 AM



“ *Gregg Randle lit a candle in memory of Mr. Ronnie Lee*



**Gregg Randle** - November 22, 2020 at 06:01 PM



“ *Robert (Judith) & Family - Please accept my belated expression of sympathy for the loss of Ronnie. I send you my love & prayers as you continue to contend with your loss.*



**Vickie & James King** - November 17, 2020 at 10:38 AM



“ *10 files added to the album Ronnie Lee Funeral Program*



**Simons Mortuary** - October 21, 2020 at 11:05 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *Burial at Camp Butler Nat'l Cemetery, Springfield, IL*



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**Simons Mortuary** - October 21, 2020 at 10:56 AM



“ *Holy Tabernacle COGIC lit a candle in memory of Mr. Ronnie Lee*



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**Holy Tabernacle COGIC** - October 19, 2020 at 12:46 PM



Bridgette Stuckey

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



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**Bridgette Stuckey** - October 17, 2020 at 03:42 PM



*My sincere condolences. Mr. Lee was a gentlemen n beautiful person well love by many. RIH. 🙏🏻🌹*

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**Madeline Randle** - October 20, 2020 at 12:02 AM

JB

“ It was a pleasure to have served with Ronnie. He truly will be missed. Our condolences and prayers go out to his family.

*Jim Berger*

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**James Berger** - October 17, 2020 at 10:10 AM

MS

“ Sending Condolences to Lynnette and Family from Fred M. and Royce Danage and Family.

*Michelle D. Danage-Sanders*

*Sharon Danage-Hines*

*F. Mark Danage*



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**Michelle Sanders** - October 16, 2020 at 11:29 AM

JH

“ JOYCE KENNEDY HOWARD lit a candle in memory of Mr. Ronnie Lee



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**JOYCE KENNEDY HOWARD** - October 15, 2020 at 09:01 PM

LS

“ I met Ronnie years ago when my family moved to Peoria. In the brief encounters I had with Ronnie he was always upbeat and kind. My last time seeing Ronnie was at my 50th year alumni graduation event and as usual Ronnie was a motivating and positive influence for students and alums. Peace and blessings to his family.

*Lola and Lyle Smith*

*North Las Vegas Nevada*

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**Lyle Smith** - October 15, 2020 at 02:45 PM

CW

“ Catherine Randle Watson lit a candle in memory of Mr. Ronnie Lee



Catherine Randle Watson - October 15, 2020 at 12:49 PM

KA

“ My condolences to the family of Mr. Ronnie Lee I had the honor of meeting Ronnie when he was married to Ms. Lillie Lee I use to babysit Kem and had wonderful day with them on Millman St. I live next door. I truly miss Lillie & Kem so much. Well Ronnie is now safe in God arms. So sorry for your loss. God bless 🙏🕯️

Karen Ashby - October 15, 2020 at 12:31 PM

CB

“ What an awesome testimony of Deacon Lee's life. It was such an honor and blessing to know him. He helped the Buckner/Scott/Johnson family in many ways which will never be forgotten. He was also always a joy to work with at church. Super dependable, very knowledgeable and always willing to help others and "serve" in any capacity he could. Sincere condolences to Sis Lynette, his hard-working wife and friend of our family for many years, and the entire family during this difficult time.

CC Buckner - October 15, 2020 at 10:03 AM

RP

“ Lynette, I am so sorry to learn of Ronnie's passing. What a nice and kind man. My thoughts are with your family.

Roberta Parks - October 15, 2020 at 08:56 AM

WF

“ So very sorry for your loss. We worked with Ronnie Lee at Caterpillar. He was my foreman and Richards foreman. He was the best to work for a great guy. Our prayers are with you and family.  
*Richard & Watseka Farney*

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**Watseka Farney** - October 13, 2020 at 08:47 PM

EW

“ I worked with Ronnie as his timekeeper in building LL at Caterpillar. He was such a joy and a pleasure to work with. We had many conversations about many different topics .Even after retirement we would keep in touch. My prayers go out to MRS Lee and her family. I know Ronnie is resting in Heaven right now.

*Ernie Whited*

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**ERNIE WHITED** - October 13, 2020 at 07:24 PM



“ My prayers are with you all. I met Ronnie in 2010 when I joined the Manual Alumni Scholarship Association. He is one of the kindest and respectful people I have known. I am going to miss his leadership and guidance in the association.  
*Erica Hanley*

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**Erica Hanley** - October 13, 2020 at 09:27 AM

LH

“ Sending prayers and comfort to Lynette Lee and family.



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**Linda Hardy** - October 12, 2020 at 08:29 PM

RG

“ I work with Ronnie a Caterpillar building LL for many years. He and I both served on the management team. Ronnie was an outstanding member of that team. He was a proud veteran as am I. I was always proud to call him one of my comrades. Ronnie was respected by the employees in building LL. My condolences prayers go out to Ronnie's family. May he rest in peace, job well done.

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**Ron Griffith** - October 10, 2020 at 04:39 PM

SC

“ Our Prayers with heartfelt condolences and deepest Sympathy! Deacon Lee will be greatly missed. Praying for Lynette and the entire Family.  
Sherry Carter-Allen and Family



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**Sherry Carter-Allen** - October 10, 2020 at 04:09 PM

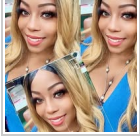
RW

“ Richard And Theresa Walker lit a candle in memory of Mr. Ronnie Lee



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**Richard and Theresa Walker** - October 10, 2020 at 01:56 PM



“ *We Will Miss You So Much. We Love Uncle Ronnie. THIS IS SO HARD.*



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**Joy Mccann** - October 10, 2020 at 12:11 PM

RP

“ *To Lynette and the Lee Family sorry for your loss and May God's Angel's Wings spread around you all and bring you all comfort during this time of sorrow!! R.I.P. Ronnie!!*



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**Renee Linwood Peoria,IL.** - October 10, 2020 at 09:35 AM

BC

*Knew Ronnie from Manual H.S. and Alumni Assoc. So sorry to hear about his passing. R.I.P. Bill Coker Peoria*

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**bill coker** - October 12, 2020 at 01:00 PM