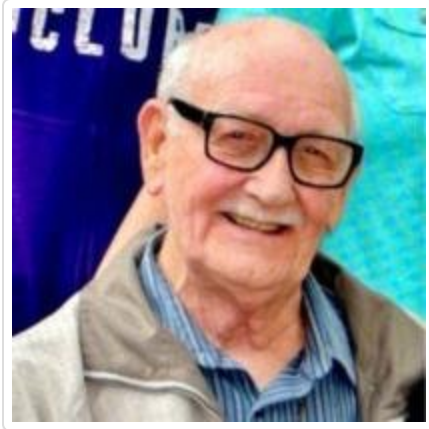




## Joseph M. Raley Jr.

June 19, 1931 - May 22, 2021

“If something doesn’t change, you’re going to end up dead or in jail. Like it or not, you’re going into the service!”

Through determination, a sharp mind and hard work, Mary Pearl Raley had overcome her own difficult childhood – much of which was spent in an orphanage. Now she was determined to keep Joe, her rambunctious 17-year-old son, from drifting farther down the wayward path he was traveling. So she signed the enlistment papers and shipped him off to boot camp as a member of the newly-minted United States Air Force.

It was 1948. Things were about to get interesting.

Joseph Manning Raley, Jr., was born on June 19, 1931. The fourth child of Joseph Manning Raley and his wife Mary, he had seven sisters and two younger brothers. To support this large Baltimore brood, his father worked several jobs, including as a bellhop at the Belvedere Hotel. Mary kept the family checkbook and found ingenious ways to squeeze pennies. One tactic was to pack up her ten kids – along with their reluctant but agreeable dad – and move into a better home with lower rent. This happened many times – whenever she could save a few quarters a month, they’d relocate down the block or across town.

Meanwhile, Joe adapted to his new surroundings. Whether sneaking into Memorial Stadium to watch a ball game or pulling pranks on friends and neighbors, he found ways to get into mischief no matter where they lived. He eventually dropped out of high school and was running a small seafood

business when Mary, unsatisfied, issued her join-the-service ultimatum.

Joe spent two of his four Air Force years stationed in the Philippines, which was still recovering from the ravages of WW2. His unit helped to rebuild the country. While on leave in Japan, he also saw how that nation had suffered from the conflict. It was on one such visit that orders reached Joe to cut his leave short and return to base – the Korean War had just broken out.

He was never sent to Korea, but supported the American effort in his role as a communications specialist in the Philippines. In 1952, Joe was discharged and returned to Baltimore a mature young man. Serving his country overseas was the first BEST thing to happen to him.

Joe's military experience helped him secure an installer's position with Western Electric, the equipment manufacturing arm of Ma Bell. His work involved travel around the Shore – and beyond. In the early 70s, he was part of an emergency team of skilled technicians from across the nation that worked around the clock to restore a major phone system in Manhattan.

During his 30-plus-year career he helped modernize the industry from party lines and rotary phones to computerization, fiber optics and satellites.

Early in his tenure with Western, Joe went to Salisbury on assignment. The next BEST thing to happen to him was waiting right around the corner.

Marian Ruth Hall grew up in the Somerset County village of Oriole. Just out of high school, she was hired as an operator for the Salisbury branch of the phone company. She and Joe met in the summer of 1956, fell in love, were married that November and soon settled down in Salisbury to raise their five children. (Also known as the five next BEST things to happen to Joe.)

The next, and definitely the VERY BEST thing that happened to Joe occurred in the early 1970s when he surrendered his heart to Jesus. Though raised in a church environment, Joe discovered for the first time what it meant to have a personal relationship with the Living God, and that changed everything. A striking transformation took place as the Lord chiseled away his bad habits and uneven temperament, producing in time a remarkably different man. God then began to redirect Joe's energy and leadership talent for His own

purposes. From that time forward, serving God and telling others about his Savior became the focus of Joe's life. And tell he did. Boldly.

He told the Good News overseas in places like Trinidad, Jamaica, Romania and Cuba. Locally, he talked to prisoners (at ECI and Wicomico Detention Center), to the homeless (as a cook and Bible study leader at Christian Shelter), to fellow campers whenever was on the road, to the sick (as a volunteer chaplain at PRMC) and to shoppers (as a Christmas season bell ringer for the Salvation Army).

And since he couldn't tell everyone, he gave generously so others could carry out the Lord's work, here and abroad.

Wherever he saw a chance to serve, Joe jumped right in. Often he helped organize events and outreaches, like the D.C. March for Jesus in the 80s. He served in leadership positions in his church, at WOLC Christian radio, and with Full Gospel Men's Fellowship (as a regional director). He faithfully attended weekly breakfasts in Salisbury and Seaford, where believers from many churches prayed for the local community.

Though weakened in his final days, Joe's faith never dimmed. His zest for life, wry sense of humor, infectious laugh and vibrant storytelling were all still on display. His habit of seeing the best in others remained intact. He constantly expressed his gratitude to those who cared for him – and his concern for their spiritual health. All who inquired as to his condition were greeted enthusiastically: "I am blessed and highly favored!" And in short order, he would reframe the conversation by asking "How are you doing?"

As of the afternoon of Sat., May 22, Joseph Manning Raley, Jr., is doing just fine, thank you. Because the VERY, VERY BEST THING EVER happened to him. By God's grace, while surrounded by the love of his life, his five children and spouses, his brother Tommy and sister Donna, Joe stepped peacefully out of this world and into the arms of his Faithful Redeemer.

His legacy will be the countless people touched by a life lived to bring to others the same forgiveness and joy that he had discovered in Christ.

Joe is survived by his wife Marian; children Joe Raley III (Stacy), Steve (Karen), Sheila (Maury Fields), Jennifer (BJ Corbin) & Melanie (Billy Burke); grandchildren Joe Raley IV (Valerie), Kelsey, (Israel) Lance (Angie), Michelle, Austin, Daniel, Anson, Billy & Boquet; great-grandchildren AJ, Lily, Zach, Derek & Madison.

Services will be held at Living Stones Church, Salisbury on Sat., May 29: visitation begins at 11:30 a.m., funeral at 12:30. Interment with military honors will follow the service at Wicomico Memorial Park in Salisbury. In lieu of flowers the family suggests making a donation in Joe's honor to Young Life, the Christian Shelter or Coastal Hospice.

Arrangements are in the care of Short Funeral Home in Delmar.

# Cemetery Details

## Wicomico Memorial Park

721 Snow Hill Road  
Salisbury, MD 21802

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY **29**. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Living Stones Church  
31695 Winterplace Park  
Salisbury, MD 21804

## Service

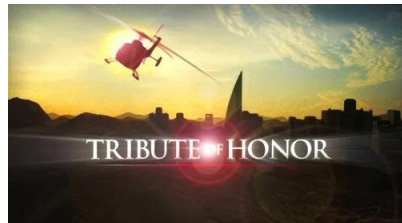
MAY **29**. 12:30 PM (ET)

Living Stones Church  
31695 Winterplace Park  
Salisbury, MD 21804

# Tribute Wall



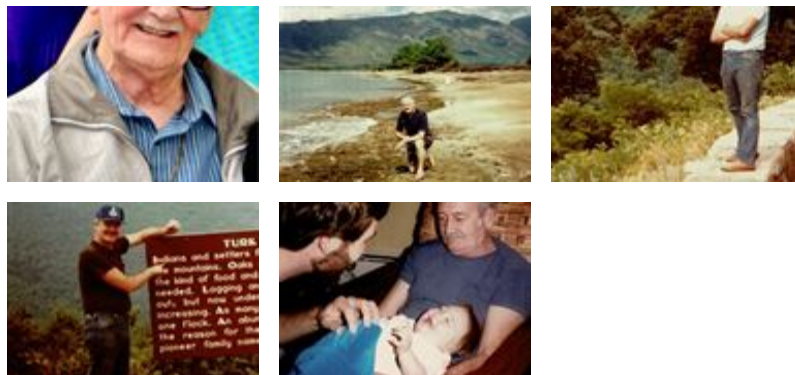
“ *Short Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Joseph M. Raley Jr.*



Short Funeral Home - May 29, 2021 at 04:09 PM



“ *99 files added to the album Life Tributes*



Short Funeral Home - May 28, 2021 at 02:19 PM

BL

“ *My sympathies to the entire family. He was a friend of my father (Levin Adkins) and of mine (when I was working at Nationwide Insurance). I am glad you have inner peace and joy that you can be assured of his BESTEST forever home! I am sorry for your loss.*  
*Betty Harris Latourney*

Betty Latourney - May 27, 2021 at 04:35 PM

CT

“ *Steve and family,*

*We are so sorry to hear of the loss of your father but what a beautiful tribute to his life and legacy. May God wrap you in his arms as you complete this last step in his journey home.*

*Connie and Tom Taylor*

---

**Connie Taylor** - May 26, 2021 at 06:44 AM