



Commander Leonard Merriman III

October 19, 2023

Commander Leonard Merriman III was born on September 27, 1953 in New Orleans, LA and was the only child of Mr. Leonard Merriman Jr. and Mrs. Alberta Slocum Merriman. When the family moved to a new home in Pontchartrain Park, the Merriman family joined Bethany United Methodist Church which remained his home church throughout his life.

Leonard attended Mary D. Coghill Elementary School. He went on to attend the prestigious St. Augustine High School (“St. Aug”), where he excelled and became a member of the football and track & field teams. Leonard quickly gained a reputation at school for his various competitive endeavors as a tough, never give up, and fearless guy. This was never more on display than when Leonard would speed off to school at St. Aug on his motorcycle at 16 years old. Leonard would go on to graduate from St. Aug. with the class of 1971 and later that same year, he joined the U.S. Navy. The Navy gave Leonard the adventure he craved and the structure that he needed. For Leonard, the Navy allowed him the opportunity to attend the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland as a “Midshipman.” While at the Academy, Leonard also played football and became a world class boxer in his weight class. He then attended the University of North Carolina Central where he earned his undergraduate degree.

Leonard always had a dream of flying. Going fast and flying high was always his undisputed first love. While still in high school Leonard learned to fly by becoming friends with a Black Pilot who worked at Lakefront Airport near

Pontchartrain Park. Armed with this knowledge, when Leonard joined the Navy, he was presented with a golden opportunity. He was presented with the choice of being assigned to attend law school or Navy Flight School at NAS Pensacola. With that choice in hand, Leonard decided to attend flight school and became a Naval Aviator. He was then assigned for duty aboard the USS Coral Sea aircraft carrier. While in the Navy Leonard piloted the A-7 Corsair and the F-18 Hornet aircrafts. During his service, he would achieve the rank of Commander and serve as the Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Mobile Maintenance Facility 0582. In his civilian career Leonard decided to continue to fly for commercial airlines as a pilot for TWA, MESA, U.S. Airways, and American, just to name a few.

Leonard was involved in many activities and organizations. Some of these include, being a member of Progress Lodge No.16, Prince Hall Affiliate, the National Black Pilot Association, Son of a Saint, The St. Augustine High School Alumni Association, The Silverback Society, the National Rifle Association (NRA), and Director of the Future Airline Pilots of New Orleans. On October 19, 2023, Leonard went to be with his Heavenly Father. He was predeceased in death by his parents Mr. And Mrs. Leonard Merriman Jr. He leaves behind three children: his eldest son, Leonard "Lenny" Merriman IV, and his wife Jeanine Young Merriman; daughter Lucretia Merriman, and his youngest son Leonard "Leo" Merriman IV. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Charlotte Merriman and Myles Leonard Merriman, who were the absolute apples of his eye, and a host of other relatives and friends too countless to mention.

His legacy will live on through the bonds of friendship he made over the years, and all those whose lives he touched. He will be remembered as a man who would defend you to the last, was never too busy to help others, would strike up a conversation with almost anyone, and a Naval circumnavigator twice over.

Celebration of life will be held on November 3, 2023, at Bethany United

Methodist Church 4533 Mendez St. New Orleans, LA 70126. Visitation will begin at 10:00 a.m. with a service at 11:00 a.m. Private Interment at Southeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery. Arrangements entrusted by D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave., New Orleans, LA 70125. Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the online guestbook, share memories, and condolences to the family.

Cemetery Details

Southeast LA. Veterans Cemetery

34888 Grantham College Dr, Slidell, LA
70460
Slidell, LA 70460

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV 3. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Bethany United Methodist Church
4533 Mendez St
New Orleans, LA 70126
(504) 324-5057

Funeral Service

NOV 3. 11:00 AM (CT)

Bethany United Methodist Church
4533 Mendez St
New Orleans, LA 70126
(504) 324-5057

Tribute Wall

RB

“ I am so sorry I was not able to attend the funeral. Leonard dated Trudy Barthe Charles for many years, and Trudy was our beloved cousin. The love they had for each other was incredible and he promised he would stay with her until the very end and he did. Praying God's mercy on his soul and he was an incredible man. He came in uniform and spoke at my son's wedding reception, and he always had a outstanding commanding presence. You will be missed.

Robenia Bayer-Barthe' - March 22, 2024 at 01:57 AM

DS

“ Condolences to the family, the Merriman Jr. family were our next door neighbor on Mexico St. in Pontchartrain Park, Leonard was a friendly,happy, enthusiastic, energetic kid, Leonard would come to the house and ask my Grandmother to help her make biscuits, he would visit for a while and off to another neighbor, my Grandfather would say that kid take off like an airplane (if my Grandfather was alive to witness Leonard becoming an airplane pilot), i wonder what he would think), all the neighbors enjoyed Leonard, those are some of the unique memories I had of Leonard Dorothy Bell Sloan and family

Dorothy Bell Sloan - November 11, 2023 at 08:29 PM

HJ

“ hazel johnson lit a candle in memory of Commander Leonard Merriman



hazel ashby johnson - November 09, 2023 at 06:42 AM

JB

“ Condolences to the family of a very remarkable person who left lots of memories to all. Will always remember how we first met through the recovery of helping the Pontchartrain Park and Gentilly Woods neighborhoods come back strong after hurricane Katrina. We all will miss a wonderful person gone too soon. 🙏🏾🙏🏾🙏🏾🙏🏾🙏🏾

Jacqueline Blossom - November 02, 2023 at 12:31 PM

SG

“ Condolences to the Merriman family. My twin and I will remember Leonard from our days at Mary Dora Coghill School in Pontchartrain Park. Rest in Peace. Sincerely, Sykina Gaston.

Sykina Gaston - November 02, 2023 at 10:32 AM

TF

“ The Parham Family purchased the America the Beautiful for the family of Commander Leonard Merriman III.



The Parham Family - November 01, 2023 at 02:29 PM