



Walter Whit Whitman Sr.

December 18, 1933 - September 20, 2025

Master Sergeant (Ret.) Walter Whitman Sr. was born on December 18, 1933, in Chicago, Illinois, to Excellene Stewart Whitman and John Cleveland Whitman. His mother passed away when he was just three months old, and he was lovingly raised and cared for by his grandmother, Fannie Cotton Stewart. He was the fifth son born to his parents and was preceded in death by them, as well as his siblings: Oscar, Milton, Micheal, John, and his sister, Teorra.

Walter attended Chicago Public Schools before beginning a remarkable journey of service that would define his life. He enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he proudly rose to the rank of Master Sergeant. His military career took him across the globe, and it was while serving overseas that he confessed his hope in Christ and was baptized, beginning a lifelong walk of faith.

Following his retirement from the Air Force, Walter continued his commitment to service through his work at Great Lakes Naval Base, where he later retired. A proud Master Mason, Walter was also a devoted member of Trinity United Church of Christ and New Covenant Church, where he faithfully served as an

usher. Known affectionately as “Whit,” he lived with dignity, humility, and faith, always giving his very best in every endeavor.

On December 31, 1956, Walter married the love of his life, Shirley Goins. Their union of nearly seven decades was a beautiful testament to devotion and love. Together they raised two sons:

Walter Whitman, Jr. and Mark Whitman (who preceded him in death), as well as a bonus son, Byron Cathey. His grandsons, Mark Whitman, Jr. and Marcus Whitman, brought him immeasurable and joy.

Though his military career required frequent moves, Walter especially treasured his years in Texas, particularly in Schertz and San Antonio, where he formed lifelong friendships. His best friend, Ken Crowder, remained a constant presence throughout his journey.

Walter enjoyed boxing in his younger years but later found bowling to be his favorite pastime. Always sharp, witty, and impeccably dressed, he embodied the phrase, “Giving you the best that I’ve got,” because his efforts were always exceeding expectations.

Even in the face of health challenges, he persevered with courage, often declaring: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in God.”

Having faithfully served his country, church, community, job, and family, Walter completed his journey with grace. On September 20, 2025, he transitioned from earth to glory, having fought the good fight, kept the faith, and finished his course. Walter will be remembered as a loving husband, devoted father and grandfather, faithful servant of God, and a true gentleman who gave his all. His life was a testimony of service, faith, and love—an example that will live on in all who knew him.

Walter leaves to cherish his memory: his devoted wife, Shirley Whitman; his beloved son, Walter Whitman, Jr.; his surrogate son/cousin, Byron Cathey (Alicia); his grandsons, Mark Whitman, Jr. and Marcus Whitman; nieces Michelle Williams (Tony) of Brownsville, TN, and Verna Whitman of Jackson, TN; nephews Larry Whitman (Athena), Oscar Whitman (Barbara), and Reginald Whitman of Jackson, TN; his best friend, Ken Crowder; cousins Clifton Goins (Renee) and Carey Goins; a special daughter, Arlene Bufford; and a host of other nieces, nephews, cousins, Masonic brothers, church family, and dear friends. The Whitman family would like to extend a heartfelt gratitude to his care team: Dr. Lang, CNAs Sonya, April, Dominique, and nurse Shawn—for their compassionate service.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 5. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church
754 East 77th Street
Chicago, IL 60619

Funeral Service

OCT 5. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church
754 East 77th Street
Chicago, IL 60619

Burial/Interment

OCT 6. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery
20953 W Hoff Rd
Elwood, IL 60421

Tribute Wall

WJ

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Walter. W. Whitman. Jr - October 08, 2025 at 09:10 PM

WJ

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Walter. W. Whitman. Jr - October 08, 2025 at 08:41 PM

WJ

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Walter. W. Whitman. Jr - October 08, 2025 at 08:41 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Walter. W. Whitman. Jr - October 08, 2025 at 08:39 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Walter Whit Whitman Sr..



October 02, 2025 at 07:51 PM



“ Garner family, Frankie

Frankie L. Garner - September 30, 2025 at 11:46 PM



“Whit...Whit" we love you and truly will miss you !!

Frankie L. Garner - September 30, 2025 at 11:51 PM