



## Wilbur Lewis Sr.

August 18, 1931 - May 26, 2025

For God, Family & Country

Wilbur Lewis Sr. was born on August 18, 1931, in Earle, Arkansas—the firstborn child of Joe and Carmen Lewis. From an early age, Wilbur demonstrated a sense of responsibility and courage. During his childhood, the Lewis family relocated first to St. Louis, Missouri, and then settled permanently in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A tough and adventurous boy, Wilbur proudly took on the role of protector for his mother and younger sister, Lillian. He attended local elementary school alongside his sister and cousins, and was known for his athleticism and bravery. He often recalled the bitter cold Milwaukee winters and how he never let Lillian walk to school alone, even in blizzard-like conditions.

As a teenager, the family moved once more—this time to Toledo, Ohio. Wilbur attended Gunckel and Libbey High Schools, where his athletic pursuits continued. He participated in basketball, baseball, swimming, and boxing. During this time, Wilbur also gave his life to Christ and became a member of Phillips Temple C.M.E. Driven by a spirit of adventure and service, Wilbur enlisted in the U.S. Army and was assigned the distinguished role of Paratrooper. He served honorably during the Korean War, where he earned a Purple Heart and, later in life, was awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroically saving the life of a fellow soldier whose parachute had failed to deploy.

After returning home and much prayer, Wilbur was blessed to meet the love of his life, Odestia Gardner. The two were married on December 7, 1961. Their union was a joyful and enduring one, blessed with five children, thirteen grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren.

Wilbur built a life of hard work and service in Toledo, holding two long-standing careers—first as a driver and supervisor for the City of Toledo's Refuge Department, and later as a bus driver for Toledo Public Schools. He was a devoted and faithful member of Bethlehem Baptist Church for 54 years, serving as a deacon and taking on various leadership roles under pastors Z.L. Jones, Fred R. Blanton, and Dr. Derek Arnold.

Known for his ability to form meaningful connections, Wilbur was a pillar of strength and wisdom to many. As a father, he was both a guide and a role model—stern yet compassionate. He coached baseball teams and was a regular presence in his children's activities, often extending his fatherly care to others in the community.

Wilbur Lewis Sr. was preceded in death by his beloved parents Joe and Carmen (Thomas) Lewis; his sister, Lillian Macer; and his grandsons, Robert and Deonte' Lewis.

He leaves to cherish his memory: his devoted wife, Odestia Lewis; his children, Joyce (Jan) Lewis-Johnston, Gloria, Robert (Sylvia), Wilbur Jr. (Ingrid), and Jennifer Lewis; his grandchildren, DeLorean, Christopher (Summer), Jovon (Tara), Jake, Danielle, John, Amri, Elia, Joshua, and Destia; and his great-grandchildren, Ramiah, D'Lorien, Lo Elle, Aubrielle, Terrell, Josiah, Amohn, Grant, Rowan, Ka'lelle, and Elle.

He is also survived by his in-laws, Richard Macer, Willie Roy (Lynn), Tommy Lee (Morris), Arthur, and Betty Gardner; his beloved godchildren, Mac Mitchell

and Patricia Murphy; and a host of cherished nephews, nieces, cousins, an aunt, and many dear friends.

Wilbur Lewis Sr.'s life was a testament to faith, family, and service—a legacy that will live on in all who knew and loved him.

# Cemetery Details

## Historic Woodlawn Cemetery

1502 West Central Avenue  
Toledo, OH

# Previous Events

## Wake Service

JUN 6. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Bethlehem Baptist Church  
1430 West Bancroft Street  
Toledo, OH 43606

## Funeral Service

JUN 6. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Bethlehem Baptist Church  
1430 West Bancroft Street  
Toledo, OH 43606

# Tribute Wall

BN

“ *Barbara Nichols lit a candle in memory of Wilbur Lewis*



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**Barbara Nichols** - June 03, 2025 at 07:13 PM

MR

“ *So sorry for your loss, prayers for comfort and peace*



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**Mary Ragan** - June 03, 2025 at 10:23 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Wilbur Lewis Sr..*

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June 02, 2025 at 03:06 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Wilbur Lewis Sr..*



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June 02, 2025 at 03:06 PM

SF

“ Sundermeier family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Wilbur Lewis Sr..



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**Sundermeier family** - June 02, 2025 at 12:24 PM

FL

“ From Melvin & Linda planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wilbur Lewis Sr..

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**From Melvin & Linda** - June 01, 2025 at 05:44 PM

FL

“ From Melvin & Linda purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Wilbur Lewis Sr..



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**From Melvin & Linda** - June 01, 2025 at 05:44 PM

CS

“ Casey family Big Fella & Sheryl. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wilbur Lewis Sr..

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**Casey family Big Fella & Sheryl.** - May 31, 2025 at 10:27 PM

CS

“ Casey family Big Fella & Sheryl. purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Wilbur Lewis Sr..



Casey family Big Fella & Sheryl. - May 31, 2025 at 10:27 PM

TF

“ The Campbell Family purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Wilbur Lewis Sr..



The Campbell Family - May 31, 2025 at 08:41 PM

GJ

“ May your heart find comfort knowing that your love one is at home with the Lord  
Love Gwendolyn E.March Jones and Family



Gwendolyn E.March Jones - May 30, 2025 at 08:12 PM

GJ

“ May your heart find comfort knowing that your love one is at home with the Lord  
Love Gwendolyn E.March Jones and Family



Gwendolyn E.March Jones - May 30, 2025 at 07:05 PM