



Ralph Daniel Ruffin was born on August 16, 1944. He was the fourth of ten children born to Clarine and William Ruffin, Jr. While Mr. Ruffin grew up in Petersburg, he had ties to Dinwiddie County, which is where he met the future Mrs. Ruffin. Miss Emma J. Harris was just 13 years old when the two met, and her parents told Ralph she was too young to date. He waited patiently until she graduated from Southside High School. After a brief courtship, they married in 1964 and are about to celebrate their 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Initially living in Petersburg, the couple moved to Dinwiddie when it was time for their oldest child, Terry Ruffin (now deceased), to enter school. In 1969, Ralph Ruffin enlisted in the United States Army. He began his career as a combat engineer but transitioned into food service. He served a total of 16 years. During his career, he was assigned to Fort Bragg, South Carolina; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Fort Drum, New York; Leighton Barracks, Germany; and finally Fort Lee, Virginia.

Two of the Ruffin's three children are graduates of Dinwiddie County High School, and their youngest daughter, Donna Jean, graduated from Department of Defense Dependents Schools, in Wurtzburg, Germany, and now lives in Petersburg. Ralph Ruffin, Jr. joined the United States Army after graduation, and following his retirement, lives in Puerto Rico.

Following his honorable discharge from the United States Army, Mr. Ralph Ruffin has been busy. He has been a member of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Ford, VA for more than 40 years. He was ordained as a Deacon in 1975, and is currently Chairperson of the Trustee Ministry, and the Safety/Security Ministry.

"Papa Ruffin", as he is called by many, has been a member of the Dinwiddie County Sports Club for the past 12 years, and currently serves as president. He has been a member of the Dinwiddie County Cowbell Boosters for the past 6 years and currently serves as vice president. Ralph has been a member of the Dinwiddie County Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) for the past 10 years; and he has spent the past 18 years as a volunteer with Dinwiddie County Public Schools. Special recognition has been bestowed upon him by Southside Elementary, Dinwiddie Middle School, Dinwiddie Junior High School, and Dinwiddie High School.

Ralph Ruffin, Sr. was awarded a plaque from Dinwiddie High School in 2018 for "Appreciation for Outstanding Service and Dedication to the Dinwiddie Community". Coach Billy Mills also presented Mr. Ruffin with a playoff game ball in October of

2018. In 2017, he was presented the “12<sup>th</sup> Man Award” by Coach Mills. During his remarks, Mills stated “This award is given to the person who has been most influential to the Dinwiddie County High School football program during the past year. This individual is not directly affiliated with the day-to-day operations of the football program, but their contributions behind the scenes made a difference, and without their support the team would not have had the success we have enjoyed.”

Mr. Ruffin is a longtime member and Chaplain, of the Virginia Birdies Golf Club. This club is dedicated to supporting local charitable endeavors through purposeful golfing events. The Virginia Birdies support a variety of youth programs in the area, as well as the Virginia Baptist Children’s Home in Petersburg, the Salvation Army, and local families in need.

Mr. Ralph Ruffin has committed most of his adult life to serving our country with dignity and honor, and in his retirement works tirelessly serving the Dinwiddie County community with this same loyalty and disregard for self. He is a mentor to youth, and an example for all to follow.