



Lionel Crawford Mitchell Jr.

January 28, 1949 - August 27, 2023

Lionel Crawford Mitchell Jr. of Haymarket, Va., passed away Aug. 27, 2023, in an automobile wreck in Maryland. He was 74.

He was a well-loved and respected son, father, husband, brother, grandfather and friend.

Mitchell was born Jan. 28, 1949, to Lionel Crawford Mitchell Sr., and Clydia Lucille (Thacker) Mitchell in Portersville, Ala. He was known in his family as “Brother,” a moniker given to him by his late father.

He grew up in Rainsville and Sylvania, Ala., graduating from Sylvania High School in 1967, lettering in football. He could still proudly wear his letterman’s sweater, even at 74. He received his associate degree from Northeast State Community College and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from Auburn University in 1971. He completed master's studies at Auburn in 1975.

Mitchell worked his way through school while at Auburn. One summer, he raised chickens to earn money for tuition and worked at grocery stores.

After graduation, he taught mathematics at West Virginia Tech University in Montgomery, W.Va., before settling in Northern Virginia in the early 1980s with

his wife, Nancy, also an Auburn graduate. They were married at the Chapel on the campus of Auburn University, Dec. 18, 1976.

Notably, he worked on the Hubble Space Telescope and the James Webb Telescope, garnering an award from NASA and presenting his work at the prestigious Oxford University in England. He worked in the aerospace industry as a NASA contractor for almost 40 years.

In the early 1980s, he designed and built his home based on Thomas Jefferson's eight-sided Monticello. Acting as his own sub-contractor, he oversaw its construction with his brother-in-law, Bruce Playle, an architect. Mitchell was featured in an article in the Washington Post. The home was the site of many gatherings for the Capital Triumph Register. A car enthusiast, Mitchell rebuilt the Triumph TR-6 he had bought in 1975. He was a former president and esteemed member of the car club.

A student of genealogy, Mitchell documented his family tree going back to the 1000s. Along with his son, Daniel, he worked on clearing the lost African American slave cemetery located on the grounds of Sweet Briar Plantation that was formerly owned by his ancestor Maria Crawford and her husband, Elijah Fletcher. "It's very important that the sacred burial site of these people be recognized and maintained in an honorable way," Mitchell said. A daughter of Fletcher bequeathed the former plantation land in the early 1900s on which Sweet Briar College, a women's college, was established. The college is in Amherst County, Virginia.

Mitchell was dearly loved by his family and friends. To his children, he was a source of strength and stability, encouraging their endeavors and development. To his wife, he was a solid rock and an encouraging husband for 47 years. To his grandchildren, a loving and doting grandfather, visiting with them either in Florida or at the home in Haymarket, Va. He loved taking

them on rides in the yard while they squealed with delight. Nothing was more important to him than spending time with family, whether on vacation or at family gatherings. Last Thanksgiving, he and his wife hosted their children and grandchildren for the holidays. Throughout his life, he focused on relationships and assisted in person during times of need and the celebrating of life events—a confidante, father, father-figure, brother, uncle and grandfather all rolled into one. He was best man at his brother's wedding, and in the wedding of his niece and great niece. He often traveled to his native Alabama to visit uncles and aunts, and cousins.

A child of the 60s, Mitchell loved all kinds of music and introduced people to folk, bluegrass and rock 'n roll. He was a walking encyclopedia of music and owned an impressive record collection. He and his wife, Nancy, enjoyed concerts at Wolf Trap in Northern Virginia. They also attended car shows, art shows and visited museums and traveled together.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Nancy Playle Mitchell of Haymarket, Va.; son, Daniel Crawford Mitchell (Kristi) of Panama City, Fla.; daughter, Laura Jane Mitchell (Victor Azucar); six grandchildren, Uriah Azucar, Charlotte Mitchell, Holden Mitchell, Mackenzie Mitchell, Kayden Azucar and Samantha Poston; aunt, Helen Spires of Panama City, Fla.; uncle, Edward Thacker (Margaret) of Fort Payne, Ala.; sister, Linda Diamantas (Michael) of Franklin, Tenn.; brothers, Cecil H. Yancy Jr. (Susan) of Memphis, Tenn., Mark Yancy of Clinton, Iowa; niece, Kim Payne (Robert) of Huntsville, Ala.; brother-in-law, Arthur Bruce Playle (You Lo Hsieh) of Davis, Calif.; nephew, Alro Playle, niece, Alma Playle; nieces, Sarah Zaldivar (Jorge) of Cottdale, Ala., and Chasity Yancy (Kane Knoerfel) of Davenport, Iowa; nephew, Elijah Yancy (Carina Hernandez) of Clinton, Iowa. Great nieces, Erin Dye (Clint) of Fayetteville, Tenn., and Emily McCay of Hunstville, Ala. One great-great

nephew and one great-great niece; several young great nieces and great nephews; and a host family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Lionel Crawford Mitchell Sr., mother, Clydia Lucille Thacker Mitchell (Yancy); grandparents, Reuben Dallas Mitchell and Lucy Morton Mitchell; Frank Smith Thacker and Clara Sharp Thacker; brother-in-law, Kenneth Harris; and stepfather, Cecil H. Yancy Sr.

In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations to the Foundation for the Assistance of Abandoned Children at FANA of WNY, 1100 Amherst St., Buffalo, NY 14216 or online at familiesoffana.org.

Pierce Funderal Home in Manassas, Va. is handling arrangements. A celebration of life will be announced later.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Rebecca Green Gory (aka Cheesecake) purchased the I Have You In My Heart Plush Blanket for the family of Lionel Crawford Mitchell Jr..*



Rebecca Green Gory (aka Cheesecake) - July 06, 2024 at 04:05 PM