



Markham, Lonnie Ray

1950-2023

By [Donna Bean](#) / Published on September 29, 2023

Sergeant Lonnie Ray Markham, 73, went home to be with Jesus on Sept. 9, 2023. Lonnie was a decorated veteran who served in the Vietnam war, as well as 14 years in active duty and another six years in the Army National Guard as supervisor over vehicle maintenance.

Lonnie was born on Jan 19, 1950, in Dallas to his parents, Lloyd and Ava. When he was just 16, he decided he wanted to join the Army. Lonnie would go on to serve in the Vietnam War. When he returned home, he soon married his high school sweetheart, Donna. Lonnie and Donna met in middle school and became engaged right before Lonnie left for Vietnam. Donna made her wedding dress and all the bridesmaid dresses in her home economics class while waiting for him to come home.

After serving in Vietnam, SSG Markham spent time in Alabama, Alaska, Texas, Georgia, and abroad in Germany. When they came back to the states, he served another couple of years in Oklahoma and then decided to settle in their hometown of Decatur.

Upon returning to Decatur, Lonnie and Donna started Markham's Auto where they built a successful business in the community. When he wasn't working,

which wasn't often, he loved taking care of his cattle, growing the biggest garden you've ever seen, driving a school bus and the church bus, playing canasta, fishing, and occasionally, a trip to the beach. In 1999 they chose to leave the quiet small town of Decatur and moved to the big city of Houston. Lonnie worked for many years at Dodge dealerships and ran circles around all the young mechanics.

After losing his first love and wife of 34 years following a long battle with ALS, he later met and fell in love with Vivian Hall. Lonnie and Vivian became involved in a dance club, the VFW, the Cooties (who would dress up and visit the VA hospital to cheer up veterans) and began a woodworking business making beautiful crosses and children's furniture. They kept very busy with craft shows and their volunteer work. After officially retiring from mechanics, his favorite thing to say was "every day is Saturday now to me!"

Lonnie also enjoyed fishing every chance he got. He would often send pictures to his daughter of the sunrise on the dock, showing his morning view while she was driving to work. Lonnie and Vivian were both involved in their neighborhood HOA and would often ride around the neighborhood on the golfcart visiting with all the neighbors. Lonnie is preceded in death by his parents, Lloyd Markham and Ava Toten Grimes; his first love, Donna Sue Markham; his second love, Vivian Ruth Markham; brothers, Anthony Markham and Gary Markham; nephews Gary Jr. and Tony; and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

Lonnie is survived by his daughter, Rebecca Markham Nichols and husband, Blake; his son, Lonnie Ray Markham Jr. and wife, Kelsey; stepson, Brandon Hall and wife, Quita, stepson, Damon Hall and wife, Shonda; grandchildren, Samantha Nichols, Taylor Ester, Sydnie Nichols, Carson Ester, SaraKate Nichols, Donna Shae Nichols, Lexton Markham and Zander Markham, Kevin Hall and wife, Carolyn, Nathan Hall and wife, Evelyn, Dillan Hall and wife, Abby, Matthew Hall, Kendall Hall and Olivia Hall; and great-grandchildren, Bryson, Ethan, Camden and Logan. He is also survived by cousins Wanda Foster, Arvel Toten Jr., Kathy Karpenski and Sandy Smith; and several nieces and nephews.

SSG Markham was an accomplished mechanic, a loving husband and father, a loyal friend, and a brave and honorable soldier. He will be greatly missed and always remembered. We look forward to seeing him again in heaven!

There will be a celebration of life held at Waller Baptist Church, 2520 Cherry St. Waller, Texas, on Oct. 7 at 11 a.m. The family welcomes any stories, photos, and memories that Lonnie's friends and family would like to offer. A graveside military tribute memorial will be held at the Oaklawn Cemetery in Decatur at a later date. Please contact Rebecca or Ray for details.