

James Raymond Pretlow Jr.

Family-Submitted Biography

James Raymond Pretlow Jr. was a native of Isle of Wight County. He was educated in the county as well. James Raymond Pretlow was a prominent business man and very successful. He contributed his success in contracting to his father who taught him the craft at an early age. James R. Pretlow, Jr. was the owner of Pretlow and Pretlow General Contractors, of Smithfield, VA. Mr. Pretlow was a licensed and bonded general contractor in the state of Virginia. He was a perfectionist when it came to his contracting work. His creativity and affection for his skill of painting and building were evident in the pride he took with each job he completed. Most of his work was completed here in Isle of Wight County, however it was not just limited to the county. The rise to his success was when he signed a corporate contract in Newport News, VA to become the general contractor for a corporate entity. He would provide his professional services to several apartment complexes in Hampton Roads locality in the capacity of contracting. After this major opportunity, Pretlow and Pretlow General Contractors became one of the most successful self owned contracting businesses in Smithfield, VA . He remained faithful to his craft of painting and contracting until his demise. He would always state that success is right behind a closed door and all one had to do was open it. His philosophy of life was being “Better than the Best”, in which he lived his life. Some of his work can still be admired in Smithfield today.

James Raymond Pretlow Jr. was also very passionate about security. He was a decorated Captain, which he contributed to his hard work and attention to details. He was awarded many certificates and corporate recognitions for his accomplishments. His execution of exemplary high level security detail led to the reduction of theft under his leadership as captain at the Walmart and Target distribution warehouse in Chesapeake, VA. Mr. Pretlow was a registered security officer with the Department of Criminal Justice Services in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

James Raymond Pretlow, Jr. loved to give back to his community. He was a Cub Master for Pack 60, at Main Street Baptist, Church for years. There he help to reach many young boys by mentoring and helping them choose paths that were meaningful. JR saw a need for another Cub Scout Pack in Central Hill, and he was led to start a Boy Scout troop there. Due to his precise leadership, Boy Scouts of America, certified him as a trainer of aspiring Cub Masters and Den leaders. Mr. Pretlow has been a role model and father figure to so many. He enjoyed speaking and encouraging all that would listen to his profound voice of wisdom and knowledge. He would state, “I just want to help somebody along this journey.”

James R. Pretlow, Jr. believed that he was “Better than the Best”, and therefore lived his life as such. Because he thought he was the Best contractor, so he became; because he thought he was the Best security officer, so he became; because he thought he was the best Cub Master, so he became. Because he thought he was the best day, so he became. He has fulfilled his self prophesy, “I am what I think I am, and I have become what I thought I was, Better than the Best.” James Raymond Pretlow Jr. was one of the first to be honored as he took his final stroll through his home town Smithfield, VA, different than many others before him, on a horse drawn hearse, to let the town know that he was truly, not like the rest but “Better than the Best”. He leaves to continue his legacy his wife Anginetta Pretlow, son, Demetrius Pretlow, daughter, Shaneta Pretlow, and two grandchildren Shania Pretlow and Ava Pretlow.