



Robert Esmond Cotton

November 29, 1934 - May 26, 2026

Robert Esmond “Sonny” Cotton, 91, of Apex passed away on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, with his family by his side.

Sonny was born on November 29, 1934, in the McCullers area of Wake County to Esmond Cotten and Margie Green Cotten. Shortly after his birth they moved to Morrisville. After graduating from Cary High School in 1953, Sonny joined the United State Air Force. It was only then discovered there was an error in his birth certificate. His last name was printed as Cotton instead of Cotten. The only way to correct this was for him to have a legal name change. Sonny decided it wasn't worth the effort and left it as is.

Sonny served in the United States Air Force proudly for twenty years. During this time, he was stationed in Spain, The Azores, Korea, Japan, Thailand and many bases stateside. His last duty station was at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. Sonny served on President Nixon's plane as a Communications Supervisor and earned many commendations for his exemplary service. He retired in 1974 as a Master Sergeant. The Wake County native returned home and settled into life with his wife and daughter in Apex. He went to work for the US Postal Service where he served another twenty years and retired as a postmaster in 1995.

Sonny was ordained as a Deacon in 1987, and he served the Lord faithfully

until his last breath. He was an avid reader who studied and read all he could about World War II. He loved bird watching and enjoyed seeing all kinds of wildlife on his daily walks on and around the greenway in Shepherd's Vineyard. He lived life to the absolute fullest.

Sonny is predeceased by his parents, Esmond and Margie Cotten and his nephew, Mike Cotten.

He is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Pat Cotton, his daughter Teri Riddle and son-in-law, Ronnie; his beloved granddaughter, Jana Riddle. Also, his brother, Nathan (Barbara) and his nieces, Allison, Angie, Anita and Jennifer. He also leaves behind several great nieces and nephews and many cousins and dear friends.

Services will be held on Saturday, June 6, 2026, at Apex Baptist Church. The family will receive friends from 12:00pm until 1:00pm and the memorial service will begin at 1:00pm. Following the service, burial will take place at the Clements/Green Family Cemetery in Morrisville.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to Transitions LifeCare in Wake County.

<https://www.transitionslifecare.org/donate/>

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUN 6. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Apex Baptist Church
110 S. Salem St
Apex, NC 27502

Memorial Service

JUN 6. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Apex Baptist Church
110 S. Salem St
Apex, NC 27502