



Alvin "Black Jack" Bowens

July 23, 1934 - February 5, 2026

On the morning of February 5, 2026, the sun rose gently over Hamilton, New Jersey, as if it understood that a great man had taken his final rest. Alvin Bowens, lovingly known to so many as “Black Jack,” departed this life at the age of 91—leaving behind a legacy of strength, courage, laughter, and unwavering determination.

Alvin’s story began on July 23, 1934, in Mullins, South Carolina. Born to Joseph and Anna Jane Singleton Bowens, he was raised with Southern roots, strong values, and a work ethic that would shape the course of his long and meaningful life. Educated in the Mullins, South Carolina Board of Education System, Alvin showed early signs of independence and boldness. At just 16 years old, he made a life-changing decision to leave his hometown and travel north to Ocean City, New Jersey. That step marked the beginning of a journey defined by bravery and vision.

Eventually settling in Trenton, New Jersey, Alvin made another courageous choice—he answered the call to serve his country. He enlisted in the United States Army and proudly served for eight years. During his time in the military, he fought in the Korean War in 1950, demonstrating the same grit and resilience that would characterize his entire life. He was honorably discharged, carrying with him the discipline and honor of a soldier.

After his service, Alvin began his career as a welder at the U.S. Steel Mill, where his strong hands and steadfast spirit built more than steel—they built a future. During this season of life, he married his first wife Minnie, and together they blended their family to have five children. Years later, in 1978, destiny introduced him to the love of his life, Maxine Connors. Together they blended their family to have three more children. They created a home filled with strength, love, and resilience.

Alvin worked faithfully at the Steel Mill until his retirement in 2010. But retirement, as those who knew him can attest, did not mean slowing down. True to his bold nature, he stepped into entrepreneurship and opened Black Jack's Lounge. For many years, Black Jack's Lounge became a cornerstone of South Trenton—a place where music flowed, laughter echoed, and community thrived. He was known for his famous ribs and secret barbecue sauce, flavors that became legendary in their own right. He sponsored charitable events, hosted lively parties, and participated in downtown jazz festivals. It wasn't just a lounge; it was a gathering place where memories were made and culture was celebrated. And at the center of it all stood Alvin—steady, proud, and welcoming.

In 2012, he officially retired from running the lounge—but sitting still was never his style. He began working at Manheim as an auction car driver three days a week, and on the other two days, he served as a lunch aide at Klockner Elementary School. Those little faces brought him a special kind of joy. Their smiles were the highlight of his day, and in many ways, he became a gentle grandfather figure to many.

Alvin was also a devoted fan of the Philadelphia Eagles, cheering passionately as they battled on the field and sharing that joy with family and friends.

In addition to his community roles, Alvin was a member of the Masonic

Temple—a fraternal brotherhood committed to brotherly love, charity, and community service through shared traditions and fellowship.

Alvin also served as Treasurer of the National United Alcohol Beverage Association. In this role, he was instrumental in advancing the organization's mission of giving back. The association provided scholarships, hosted community dinners, and organized annual book bag drives to support families. Through his leadership and tireless fundraising efforts, Alvin helped raise millions of dollars to assist three scholarship recipients each year with the cost of room and board and textbooks—ensuring that young scholars had the support they needed to pursue higher education. His commitment to education and opportunity reflected his lifelong belief in hard work, access, and building a better future for the next generation.

Alvin was a strong, hardworking man whose determination never wavered. Even when his legs began to weaken, he refused to surrender his independence. He practiced walking daily, pushing himself so he could continue standing on his own two feet—just as he had done all his life.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his eight siblings—Joseph, Deana, Rebecca, Margaret, Jean, Anna Louise, Ida Bell, and David; and his beloved daughter, Sharon Renee Bowens Smith. He now rejoices in reunion with them.

He leaves behind to cherish his memory the love of his life, Maxine Connors; his loving children, Dorothy Jones, Darrell Williams (Brenda), Katrina Bowens (Lamont), Sharmane Fleming (Glenn), Megan Bowens-Byrd, Jamil Connors (Dana), and Dominique Connors; 16 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; and 5 great-great-grandchildren; along with a host of nephews, nieces, cousins, extended family members, and dear friends.

From Mullins to Trenton, from soldier to steelworker, from businessman to driver and school aide, Alvin “Black Jack” Bowens lived fully and fearlessly. He built, he served, he loved, and he gave. His life was not measured merely in years—but in impact.

Ninety-one years of courage.

Ninety-one years of provision.

Ninety-one years of legacy.

And though he has taken his rest, the story of Alvin Bowens will continue to be told—in the strength of his wife and children, in the heartbeat of the community he helped shape, and in every life he touched along the way.

Cemetery Details

Brig. Gn. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery

350 Province Line Road
Wrightstown, NJ 08562

Previous Events

Viewing

FEB 17. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

The Glory of God Church
471 Parkway Avenue
Trenton, NJ 08618

Celebration Of Life Gathering

FEB 17. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

The Glory of God Church
471 Parkway Avenue
Trenton, NJ 08618

Tribute Wall

GB

“ Al was always there for me. I will miss talking with him, getting his powerful advice and good counsel for the rest of my life. If you read this Maxine, I want you to know he was as good a friend to me as I have ever had. He was a role model for me. I will always regret that we never were able to make that trip down to that restaurant in Virginia. May God hold you in the palm of His mighty hand. Should you ever have the occasion to think of me, I would ask that you remember I aimed to be Al's good friend. I have been physically challenged for the past several years since I spoke with you, but I continue to move toward a day when I am reunited with my loved ones and my savior. Let me know, if you think of it, how Al's grandson, I believe, is doing in basketball. May God bless and keep all of Al's loved ones in good stead.

George Martin Bauman - March 26 at 10:29 AM

LG

“ Condolences to the family with blessings and prayers. Blackjack was a wonderful human being and an amazing boss. I appreciated and respected him greatly. Rest in peace ,Bossman.

Linda Glosson - February 23 at 07:54 PM

DM

“ Heartfelt condolences
Deborah Mcconnaughey (Howard)
Sonya Howard-Saunders

Deborah mcconnaughey - February 16 at 09:29 PM

PE

“ *Blackjack was an inspiration for me during my 15 years as a salesman you meet people from all walks of life and you find who your true friends are once you step into the real world and have to depend on someone who has the sole control of one's livelihood you then find out who your true friends are rest in peace my friend.*

Preston Brady Evers - February 11 at 10:19 PM

PE

Loads of memories @ Blackjack's Lounge

Preston Brady Evers - February 11 at 10:22 PM

EW

*I was a frequent customer at Black Jack's 50 years ago. He befriended me almost immediately and that friendship lasts forever. When I quit my bartending job at the Candlelight he offered me a job immediately. I worked there off and on until finding full time employment. There isn't enough room in the comments to tell all the stories I attribute to my times in his company. My condolences to all his family and friends.
Eric (JC) Walker*

Eric Walker - February 13 at 12:52 PM

CR

*Our Heartfelt Sympathy to the Family and Friends of
"Black Jack" a Legend to the Trenton Community. God Blessed him with a long life. You are gone but never forgotten. "To Be Absent From The Body Is To Be Present With The Lord" 🙏 .
Carol-Blakely-Reading and Family*

carol Reading - February 14 at 12:05 PM

JL

Having read Black Jack's obituary its eloquence and description leave little room to convene only prayers of condolences to his loving family. His was indeed a life well lived. God bless you all the world has truly lost one who lived, loved and made a difference. I encourage the family despite the sorrow to remember God's Promise that one day you will be together again.

Jermaine Scriven Lee - February 14 at 01:06 PM

KL

*My condolences to the Family
May God Bless You during your time of bereavement. May precious
memories give you comfort. You are in my thoughts and prayers.*
Kim Scriven-Laramore

Kim Laramore - February 15 at 02:45 PM

HW

My sympathy and prayer is with the family

howard williams - February 16 at 07:36 PM