



VETERANS

★★★ HALL OF FAME ★★★

WILLIE MCLAUGHLIN, JR.

Willie McLaughlin, Jr. was drafted into the United States Army in 1967 during the Vietnam War, serving until 1969, and achieving the rank of Private.

Since he was the only son to carry on his family's name, he wasn't sent to war, but stationed stateside instead. In his service to his country, he served as a Cook and a Gunner. As Cook, he served his fellow brethren soldiers breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day when it was not required of him to serve in other capacities. Mr. McLaughlin was also a Guard at Fort Knox.

Mr. McLaughlin cooked for high-ranking officers as well as colonels. After he had been promoted to Private 2nd Class, a rank which required all those serving to salute him, an incident occurred with a White soldier. Before passing Mr. McLaughlin, the soldier would not salute him. When he confronted the soldier, the White soldier called him the N-word. Mr. McLaughlin punched the soldier, which landed him in the stockade.

Because of his actions, he was to receive a dishonorable discharge, but a colonel who he had cooked for stepped up and assisted in his release from the stockade. He was then demoted to Private, and allowed to continue serving his country.

After completing his service, Mr. McLaughlin and his wife, Doris, moved to Queens where he began to serve his community. He became the building co-captain and tenant patrol co-captain, from 1977 until 2019. As a tenant patrol co-captain, he worked closely with the building captain, ensuring that the residents who lived in the building were safe.

Mr. McLaughlin implemented the planting of a community garden. Digging a trench, with the help of his wife and community members, he continued to help with the upkeep of the garden until Hurricane Sandy ravaged the borough. He worked tirelessly, along with his wife, during Hurricane Sandy, distributing food and water to the community.

Mr. McLaughlin participated in several marches, including the protest of killings of African American men and women, as well as to advocate against the privatization of unlicensed housing, and again during the 10-year commemoration of the 1965 March on Washington.



WILLIE MCLAUGHLIN, JR. IS HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY
AS A 2022 VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE BY
SENATOR JAMES SANDERS JR.

2022