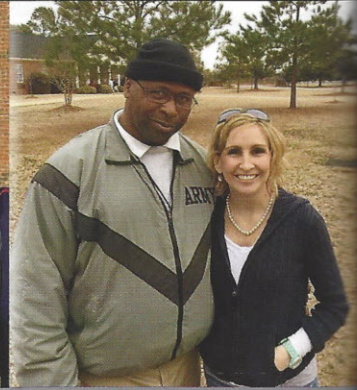
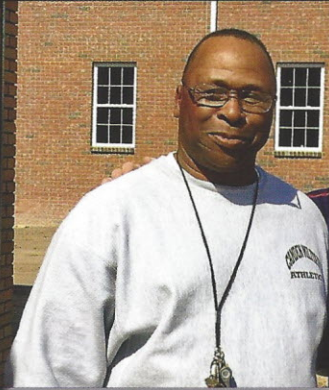


Dedication

Command Sergeant Major Vertis Wilder

January 30, 1955 - February 10, 2018



Heaven had a huge gain on February 10, 2018 - one of the most amazing, kind, generous, patient, intuitive and gentle souls ever known was called home. Command Sergeant Major Vertis Wilder passed away and his death has left a huge hole in the hearts of many. This man impacted and improved so many lives in his not-long-enough years on this earth. After serving our country for many years in the United States Army, he chose a second career at Camden Military Academy in which he could shape and mentor young men in the most turbulent years of their lives. CSM has had a profound impact on the lives of many young men throughout his tenure which began October 9, 2003 at CMA and the relationships that they shared reached into the depths of the hearts of them and their parents, grandparents, or guardians. As one of our parents said, "I feel the most immense gratitude for this man who has done more to help my son grow and learn than anyone else in the world since he became part of the Company for which CSM was responsible. When CSM and I communicated about my son, we referred to him as "our young cadet" because it truly felt as though we were raising him together."

"CSM Wilder taught my son to shave. He taught him how to use his strengths for good. He entrusted my son with leadership and responsibility for others in his company, creating confidence and motivation in him. He allowed him to make mistakes while holding the safety net close enough that no damage would be done...my son commented that "Wilder was the closest person in my life to being the father that I never had." What a profound statement for my almost 16 year old son."

"As for me, having been a single mother for the better part of both of my children's lives, having someone to support me, strategize with me, make suggestions to me, take some of the weight off my shoulders, know how to handle things that were beyond my ability and CARE for my child as much as I do was one of the most remarkable gifts I could imagine being given. I couldn't possibly be more grateful for this."

The cadets here at the academy, as well as all of the faculty and staff could hardly describe our feelings about CSM Wilder as did the parent shown above. For those of us who knew him, our hearts continue to hurt and our memories will always be filled with the outstanding man who was working endlessly around campus, not only in the regular school year, but also the summer school program with the young campers.

We are so appreciative to his family that they shared his life with ours and the many, many young men whose lives he has touched over the years. We know that he has moved into a peaceful place and is free of pain.

We salute you, CSM Vertis Wilder, for your life of dedication to our country and our academy and we can think of no one more deserving of dedication of this 2018 *Excalibur* Yearbook.

