



James Willie Reeder

June 26, 1938 - January 17, 2025

The Life and Legacy of James Willie Reeder

On June 26, 1938, as the sun rose over Spartanburg, SC, God bestowed a precious gift upon the world. Willie James and Pearl Theresa Gregg Reeder welcomed their firstborn and only son, a blessing they would cherish for a lifetime. This remarkable child, who later became a loving big brother to his only sibling Joan, was raised in a faith-filled home, learning from an early age what it meant to be a child of God. His unwavering faith and deep-rooted values would guide him throughout his life and be passed down to his own family.

Affectionately known as Jimmy, he grew into an exceptional young man. He received his education in the Spartanburg School System before furthering his studies at Claflin University in Orangeburg, SC. A talented musician, he played the trombone and possessed a rich baritone voice, which he showcased in high school and college.

During his college years, James found himself in what can only be described as “good trouble.” Inspired by his strong belief in justice, he joined Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in sit-ins and marches, advocating for civil rights. He also pledged Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

After college, he answered the call to serve his country, enlisting in the United

States Air Force. He was stationed at Tyndall AFB in Panama City, FL during his four-year tenure. It was there that fate intervened, leading him to the love of his life, Earlene Henderson. Their love story blossomed, and they were united in marriage on April 1, 1964. Their first son was born.

Following his honorable discharge in 1965, James and Earlene moved to Detroit, MI with their infant son, seeking new opportunities for their young family. He worked diligently in various jobs, including in a steel factory and as a teacher's aide, before securing his lifelong career in security at the General Motors Technical Center. During this time, he welcomed his second son, first daughter/niece, and second daughter into the world. His dedication and leadership earned him the rank of sergeant then lieutenant. He remained with GM for over 34 years. In Detroit, he forged a lifelong friendship with his best friend, Carl Mathis.

As their children grew, their home became a gathering place for friends, and he lovingly became known as "Pops" and "Papa Reeder." He was a guiding light in the lives of so many, embodying kindness, strength, and wisdom.

James and Earlene were members of St. Olaf Lutheran Church. He was also an elder of the Namaste Men's Group, which was established over 20 years ago.

After retiring, James and Earlene relocated to Lithonia, GA, where they embraced a new chapter of life filled with family, faith, and friendships. They joined St. Paul Lutheran Church before becoming charter members of A New Thing Christian Church, where they were affectionately known as "Mama Earl" and "Papa Reeder." He also found a kindred spirit in his dear friend Percy Clayton, and together they served in the church's feeding ministry, embodying the spirit of service and compassion.

James had a natural magnetism, especially with children; to know him was to

love him.

On January 17, 2025, the sunset on his earthly journey, and he gained his heavenly wings.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his beloved sister Joan Littlejohn. Left to cherish his memory are his devoted wife of over 60 years, Earlene; sons Renardus and Juan Reeder of Lithonia; daughter Danyelle Clark (Curtis) of Union City; and daughter/niece Latina Bryan (Michael) of Stone Mountain. He also leaves behind five grandsons, Clyde, Ricardo, DeJuan, Deontea, and Israel; three bonus grandsons, Michael, Kameron, and Jaden; five granddaughters, Reyanna, Aniya, Jayda, Paris, and Ivanna; nine great-grandchildren; two sisters-in-love, Selena Riley of Stone Mountain and Felicia Cunningham (Julius) of Pensacola, FL; a special sister/cousin, Sara Austin of Spartanburg, SC; as well as numerous nephews, nieces, cousins, friends, and a host of family members adopted by love.

James' life was of faith, love, and unwavering devotion to his family and community. His legacy will live on in the countless lives he touched and will forever be remembered as a man of integrity, warmth, and boundless love.

A Memorial Celebration of Life Service will be held on Saturday, March 1, 2025 11 AM at Rock of Age Lutheran Church 5135 Memorial Drive, Stone Mountain, GA 30083. Please express your condolences and memories here on our website. Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Home and Crematory, Inc. SOUTH DEKALB CHAPEL (404)241-5656.

Live Stream Link

<https://www.youtube.com/live/UbICsAJf35A?si=Hb8bjE779fNN8HUW>

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR 1. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Rock of Ages Lutheran Church
5135 Memorial Drive
Stone Mountain, GA 30083-3110

Tribute Wall



“ *Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory created a Tribute Video in memory of James Willie Reeder*



Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory, Inc. - February 25, 2025 at 06:21 PM



“ *Dear Reeder Family, You are in our hearts and prayers as you remember and give thanks for Jimmy's life of love and faith. He is deeply missed. I will always remember his kindness and warmth. God bless his loved ones with peace and comfort as we trust Jimmy to our Savior and look forward to the resurrection and reunion. With love, Janice and John Finn*



Janice Finn - February 25, 2025 at 09:00 PM



“ *May God Bless you during this time!*



Nadalie Brown - February 12, 2025 at 02:41 PM

EF

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with your family
May God comfort you through his word the Bible and the gift of
prayer. Thinking of you all.*

Evans family - January 23, 2025 at 09:43 AM