



Jimmy Southerland

January 26, 1934 - May 13, 2017

James H. Southerland, 83, passed away peacefully on May 14, 2017, after a valiant year-long battle with brain cancer. "Whispering Jim" was a lifelong resident of Cobb County, and grew up in Elizabeth. His nickname derived from his soft whispering voice that was a result of a childhood vocal chord malady.

Jimmy graduated from Acworth High School and enlisted in the U.S. Army shortly thereafter. Upon his return from the Army, he attended and graduated Woodrow Wilson College of Law in Atlanta. He worked at Lockheed for over 40 years, spending his last years in the Field Service Division traveling the world. With wife, Betty, he lived in Gabon, Africa for a year in the early 1980s. Jimmy was the Pied Piper of their small village. The children flocked to him and he loved reading to them and letting them ride in his car. Many of the children had never seen a car until the Southerlands arrived.

Throughout a 40 year timeframe, Jimmy also worked with the Cobb County Police Department and for the Cobb County Sheriff. He remained active in the Army National Guard, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, ultimately retiring from the Air Force Reserve in 1993. He received numerous honors, medals and Meritorious Service Awards. He was a very strong advocate for our military. Both his sons, Tommy and James, were Air Guardsmen, as well. After retirement from Lockheed, Jimmy worked several more years in the Cobb Sheriff's office and truly enjoyed the camaraderie around the courthouse.

Jimmy was a very talented musician. He played any stringed instrument by ear, and was totally self-taught. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he was in several local musical groups and bands and was very well-known for almost breaking it big into the country music field. Up until his ending days, he was passionate about his music and even resisted moving to Tranquility at Kennesaw Mountain hospice because he was afraid he could not take his guitar with him. By the time he did move, he could no longer play, but his passion for playing never waned.

Jimmy will be remembered for his friendliness and kindness and above all his love of God. He was always ready to tell a story, share a memory, or ten, and never failed to tell you he loved you and that God loves you.

Jimmy was predeceased by his wife of 55 years, Betty L. Keys.

He is survived by his daughter, Dora Allen and her husband, Donny; Sons, James D.

Southerland and his wife, Mary Ansley, and Tommy Southerland and his wife, Crystal; six grandchildren: Chris Allen, Jennifer Reid and her husband, Brandon, Rosser Southerland, Georgia Southerland, Hunter Southerland and Shelley Belknap and her husband, Jon; one great-grandson, Jordan Reid; and several nieces and nephews.

Interment will take place at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, May 17, 2017 at the Georgia National Cemetery in Canton. Memorial Service will be at 4 p.m. at Mayes Ward-Dobbins Funeral Home Chapel in Marietta. The family will receive friends immediately following the service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you honor Jimmy's memory with a donation to the Southerland Endowment Fund – Marietta Schools Foundation, 144 Polk Street, Marietta, GA 30060 or WellStar Foundation for Tranquility at Kennesaw Mountain's Garden, 805 Sandy Plains Road, Suite 100, Marietta, Georgia 30066.

Events

MAY **Graveside Service** 10:30AM
17

Georgia National Cemetery
2025 Mount Carmel Church Lane, Canton, GA, US, 30114

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



Mayes Ward-Dobbins Funeral Home - May 17, 2017 at 11:08 AM



“ James and family....I am so sorry for your loss. He was indeed a special man and James I must said you inherited his special ways. God bless you all at this time and always. Thoughts and prayers.

The Barnes Family
Michael and Julie
(previously Julie Wigley)

Julie Barnes - May 17, 2017 at 02:08 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Jimmy Southerland.



May 16, 2017 at 06:54 PM



“ Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Jimmy Southerland.



May 16, 2017 at 06:41 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Jimmy Southerland.



May 16, 2017 at 01:13 PM



“ To the children:

I read about your father's death in the paper. I send my condolences and prayers. Jimmy was a good friend to my late father Gene Croft. They grew up together in the Elizabeth area and my mother still owns a home on Roselane. Your father visited my family often throughout the years, and he attended his funeral in 2011. My father also died of brain cancer, so I know the struggle is real. May peace be with you.

Lisa Cherry (Croft)

Lisa Cherry - May 16, 2017 at 10:41 AM