



Gary A James

July 13, 1941 - November 24, 2020

GARY A. JAMES

July 13, 1941 - November 24, 2020 Princeton, Illinois

The family of Gary A. James, 79, sadly shares the passing of their sweet husband and dad due to complications of the Covid virus. Gary and Pat began their journey of 53 years of marriage in 1967, a rookie cop and a naive preacher's kid. He proposed after three days but they had a two year courtship. When two daughters, Karen and Laura, were born, he parented them with unconditional love, wisdom, and was so proud of the fine women they became. His girls were so proud of their dad.

Gary was born in Oklahoma City to Alton and Eileen James on July 13, 1941. He was a graduate of U.S. Grant High School, after which he joined the U.S. Coast Guard. He later graduated from Central State University. As a teen, he was a proud cadet in the Civil Air Patrol which began a lifelong passion for aviation. He was still in touch with many friends from his CAP days. To say Gary loved aviation is a huge understatement! He was a WWII aviation photographer and historian, with over 50,000 slides of military aircraft which were meticulously researched and organized, and he traded slides with people all over the U.S. and the Netherlands. He and Pat spent hours at airports with the understanding that one airport equaled one antique store! He could smell an airport and would start sniffing when one was near! He was

also a member of the Oklahoma Air National Guard for twenty years.

In 1967, Gary joined the Oklahoma City Police Department and found his niche early-on in crime scene reconstruction. He was a supervisor in homicide, the head of white collar crime, and worked on special projects for the chief's office. In 1979, Gary was one of two OCPD forensic investigators chosen to study at Scotland Yard. This opportunity of a lifetime changed the trajectory of the rest of his career and the way in which the OCPD organized investigations.

After twenty one years, the state training agency for police, the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training, asked Gary to join their staff to teach crime scene reconstruction full-time. He traveled the state teaching, later moving into management. He would often take his classes outside, set up crime scenes, and was known for his expertise throughout the state. He was also an adjunct instructor for The University of Central Oklahoma.

After retiring from CLEET, he provided courtroom security for the U.S. Marshall Service. Gary ended his career working in safety and security for the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, where he also volunteered in the kitchen as chief dishwasher for the Wednesday evening meals. He also worked many years for the Affair of the Heart, a regional craft show.

His passion for aviation history was joined in recent years by a passion for woodcarving. Gary was a member of the First Baptist Church OKC Woodchippers and started a woodcarving group at the Methodist church in Princeton, IL. He carved in Bettendorf IA every week, and monthly in Ottawa, IL.

Gary was a longtime member of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City and was currently a member of First United Methodist Church of Princeton, IL

where Gary and Pat retired in 2014. He was unapologetic about his devout Christian faith and it was the guiding principle of his life.

Gary was preceded in death by his parents, Alton and Eileen James of Yukon, OK, Pat's sister, Nancy Liner of Moore, OK, and Pat's parents, Carl and Martha Nelson of Blanchard, OK.

He is survived by his wife, Pat James of Princeton, IL; his sister Trudy Lowell and her husband, Ron, of Norman, OK; his daughter Karen Kloeping, her husband Brett and his two grandchildren, Trent and Tricia Kloeping, all of Princeton, IL; his daughter Laura Spence and her husband, Mark Pickett of Martinsville, IN; Pat's sister, Becky Wood and her husband James of Choctaw, OK. There is a host of cherished nieces, nephews, cousins, and many friends who loved him like family. Gary was the rock of the extended family and was always there for them in time of need and for the many who sought his wisdom over the years. He had a multitude of lifelong dear friends but in recent years had a close personal friendship with Rick Alexander of Blue Hill, ME and Sam Escobedo of San Antonio, TX.

Gary was a quiet, humble man and would have probably never told you about his career achievements since they did not define who he was. He was blessed with such an interesting life and was quietly grateful to God for the doors that had opened for him. While he left his mark in his career, Gary was a loving husband, the best dad, a big brother, and a special friend. He loved his family and friends beyond words. And he was so easy to love. His heart was big enough to embrace anyone who crossed his path and he touched so many lives.

If you want to remember Gary, thank the police officers you see. And search the night skies for the brightest star, realizing that he would want you to know

it may be a plane.

“Some glad morning when this life is o’er,
I’ll fly away: To a home on God’s celestial shore,
I’ll fly away (fly away).
I’ll fly away, Oh Glory
I’ll fly away: (in the morning)
When I die, Hallelujah, by and by
I’ll fly away (fly away)”
Albert Brumley

Online condolences and memorials may be directed to www.norbergfh.com

Arrangements by Norberg Memorial Home, Inc. & Monuments.

Tribute Wall

SY

“ *Syndy lit a candle in memory of Gary A James*



Syndy - July 21, 2021 at 01:30 PM

SY

Dear Pat, Laura, Karen, and all those close to Gary James. We are very sorry for your loss. Gary was a faithful member to the American Aviation Historical Society and we are grateful that our organization helped his enjoyment of aviation history. We are also grateful for the donation of many of his beloved photo slides. Through this donation of his aviation collection, Gary will live on because many people will be able to enjoy his great eye for aviation photography! Thank you James family for thinking of AAHS to honor your husband, father, brother, and friend. God Bless you all.

Syndy - July 21, 2021 at 01:34 PM

MJ

“ I met Gary in 1956 as a 14 year old kid wanting to be part of the Civil Air Patrol at Downtown Airpark on Western Avenue. (If you can believe it, I still have my CAP Cadet ID card.) Little did I know at the time, of the memories and continued relationships, that would flow from this life enhancing event.

Even after 64 years the names still come through strong... Gary James, Melvin Stonebraker, Wayne Brown, David Mizirl, Stephen Humphrey, Al Langford, Andre' Snodgrass... Mr. Huckleby, Mr. Brock (the only one-eyed pilot I ever flew with), and even a female senior member "PAT" (LNU) who drove a Studebaker.

Upon graduation from high school, we all went our separate ways initially, but always returning home and looking up "ole" buddies of our youth. Following my retirement from the Army (23 years) I returned to OU, got a degree, and went to work for the FDIC stationed in OKC.

The last time I saw Gary was shortly after he had retired from OKCPD. We had a leisurely lunch on the north side of town and "drank a lot of yesterday's wine". Both of us... happy in our skins, feeling good about the lives we had lived, and looking forward to more adventures in our waning years.

David Mizirl and I frequently meet for lunch and complain about the rampaging of the COVID virus, but... we have to leave that battle up to the followers of our youth.

Sleep well buddy... it was a pleasure to share life with you.

MORRIS JACKSON
US ARMY (R)
FDIC (R)

512 NIGHT HAWK DR.

NORMAN, OK

405-740-3692

Morris Jackson - December 16, 2020 at 03:57 PM

RG

“ So many great memories, Gary.
First meeting in Jr. High, when I joined the Civil Air Patrol. The start of a lifelong friendship.
Our many years as cadets in CAP OC #2 Squadron.
Serving together in the Oklahoma Air National Guard for over 20 years.
Our kids growing up together. We were Uncle Gary and Uncle Bob. Building scale models and being "ramp rats." Sharing our passion for military aviation and air shows.
Walking the beat with you when you were a young OKC police officer.
The memories go on and on.
You will never be forgotten. You were so much a part of my life.

R. W. "Bob" Green

R. W. "Bob" Green - December 10, 2020 at 04:21 PM

SH

“ *Pat and the James Family.*

Please know that our hearts ache for you and that you are on our minds and in our prayers.

We have been privileged to know Gary since the Civil Air Patrol days.

He was an outstanding Christian, husband, father, police officer, and good friend !

Steve and Shirley Humphrey

Steve Humphrey - December 07, 2020 at 06:24 PM

BR

“ I was at OBU during that "two year courtship" and was dating one of Pat's good friends and future suite-mates. Consequently, when Gary could get away from OKC and come to campus to visit Pat, I got the chance to play innkeeper. On those occasions, Gary would often grab the spare mattress Ed Martin and I secreted in our room to save him the long drive back to the city. Who would have thought back then that the friendship would last decades as we all kept in touch and eventually send both of our family's first born daughters back to OBU, to be roommates, in the same dorm where Mary and Pat met.

As mentioned by many, it was easy to be friends with Gary, it was also easy to admire a man with his commitment and integrity. As a teacher, though, I was humbled by Gary's dedication, focus, perseverance and sacrifice to achieve his goal of getting his undergraduate degree and expand his opportunities with the OCPD. Only people who attempt to complete a degree program while working full time understand the complexities and sacrifices that Gary and his family endured. I often used Gary as a role model for my students to illustrate what it often takes to build a dream.

We have all been blessed by knowing Gary. I am sure that when we finally get to enjoy our big Family reunion, we will be intrigued to learn of the conversations had between this humble woodcarver and the Master Carpenter. I know I'm borrowing a line from a movie, but, Gary "...thank you for being a friend".

*Butch and Mary Roberts
Choctaw, Oklahoma*

Butch Roberts - December 05, 2020 at 12:26 AM

JL

“ Jim and Susan Liner purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Gary A James.



Jim and Susan Liner - December 04, 2020 at 05:02 PM

KM

“ I wish to convey my deepest sympathies to the family. I knew Gary through the Ottawa carving club. I will always remember Gary as a kind and caring person who went out of his way to help me as a beginning carver.

*Ken Majher
Streator, Illinois*

Ken Majher - December 03, 2020 at 03:46 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Gary A James.



December 02, 2020 at 08:01 PM



“ Red Poinsettia (Silk Cemetery Flowers) was purchased for the family of Gary A James.



December 02, 2020 at 06:24 PM

DA

“ I worked for Gary at the police department in the early 80s in the Homicide Unit. Gary was so far ahead of his time in crime scene investigation and the investigation of violent crime. I remember him with such great fondness and respect. He did so much in furthering the professionalism of the department. He was fair and always was there to help with the “hard work” of wading through evidence at scenes. When I reflect on my 43 year career there were several individuals who I believe had such a positive impact on my career. Gary was one of those. RIP Gary. You fought the good fight and I pray eternal rest and joy for you.

David

David - December 02, 2020 at 05:40 PM

JD

“ Pat,
I am so sorry to hear of Gary's passing. He was such a good person, always friendly, and quick to help. He will be missed by many.

Jackie Davis

jackie davis - December 02, 2020 at 01:44 PM

VH

“ Karen,
I am so sorry for your lose. You and your family are in my thoughts. Your dad sounded like a wonderful man!!

Vanessa Hoffeditz

Vanessa Hoffeditz - December 02, 2020 at 01:06 PM