



James "Big Jim" R Willhite

November 28, 1931 - March 4, 2019

Oswego, IL – James “Big Jim” Willhite, 87, of Oswego, IL passed away at his home, surrounded by loved ones, on Monday, March 4, 2019.

Jim was born on November 28, 1931, in Wyanet, IL to the late Garland and Doris (Marshall) Willhite. He was a graduate of Princeton High School, Class of 1950. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps from 1951 to 1955 and was a veteran of the Korean War. He was stationed on the front lines, in Tent City on the 38th Parallel. After being honorably discharged, he attended Western Illinois University and then moved to Chicago, IL. While living in Chicago, he found his love of music. He was able to see many of the greats in small clubs in down town Chicago, such as Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday, just to name a few. Once he returned home to Princeton to working on the family farm, he met and married the late Doris Lenihan of Princeton on September 6, 1960. He owned Schwingles Sales and Services, before going to work for the Bureau County School District, wearing many hats working at the schools, from custodian to bus driver, he retired in 1996. He also worked at Pioneer Seed Corn seasonally, celebrating his 25th year working for them in 2017. After retirement, he worked at Eagle Foods, until they closed in September of 2003.

He enjoyed reading a good book and collecting antiques. You could often find him at an antique shop or estate sale on weekends, or hanging out with

friends at the P.I. Big Jim enjoyed being involved in the community. He was a jack-of-all-trades and did many things from painting houses to working on the farm. He loved to do crossword puzzles and sudoku challenges, but found his greatest joy in spending time with his grandchildren.

Jim is survived by his two daughters, Jennifer Hand of Downers Grove, IL and Jamison Glinski of Princeton, IL; two granddaughters, Kimberly (Justin) Hand-Harris of Oswego, IL and Kennedy Hand of Downers Grove, IL; two grandsons, Austin (Amanda) Glinski of Bloomington, IL and Micah Glinski of Denver, CO; two great-grandchildren, Milo Harris and Veda Harris of Oswego, IL; one stepson, Joe (Mary) Weller of Elgin, IL; and a special surrogate son, John (Lori) Engstrom of Wyandot, IL; one step-granddaughter, Michele (Carlos) Vaca of Mundelein, IL; and one sister, Betty Jean (Arnold) Johnson of Pahrump, NV; as well as many nieces, nephews and cousins.

He is preceded in death by his parents; wife, Doris Willhite; four sisters, Evelyn Willhite, Shirley Thompson, Patricia Manning, and Marian Houch.

The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Norberg Memorial Home on Saturday, March 23, 2019.

A funeral service for James will be held at Norberg Memorial Home on Saturday, March 23, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. officiated by Reverend Leon McClimans. Followed by a graveside service at Elm Lawn Cemetery, Princeton, IL.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the family for charitable distribution.

Arrangements by Norberg Memorial Home, Princeton, IL.

Cemetery Details

Elm Lawn Memorial Park

Knox St
Princeton, IL 61356

Tribute Wall



“ i have very fond memories of the time Jim and I shared while working together at Logan Jr. High School. He was always ready to tackle any job and was great with the staff and students. After retirement, I enjoyed those times when we would meet out and about, and share a conversation! I am sorry that my current heath condition prevents me from attending Jim's funeral, but I wanted you to know that I thought a great deal about him. My thoughts and prayers are with your family.

Judson Lusher

Judson Lusher - March 23, 2019 at 01:49 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of James "Big Jim" R Willhite.



March 21, 2019 at 06:37 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of James "Big Jim" R Willhite.



March 20, 2019 at 12:22 AM

CJ

“ Jamie and Jennifer! I'm so sorry for the loss of your dad. I have so many memories of you and your parents showing horses, at the fair. He was a wonderful man! I loved running into him in Princeton and we would always talk about the "good ole days". He would always be willing to lend a helping hand. My thoughts and prayers are with you all during this time.

Charisse Baxter Jesiolowski

Charisse Jesiolowski - March 07, 2019 at 09:14 PM

 Scott Bickett

“ Why isn't his time as owner of schwingles sales mentioned? He did that for years and it was there Jim had the biggest impact me as a teenager. He was a great guy and will miss him dearly. Taught me a lot and was a great father figure. God bless Mr. Wilhite.

Scott Bickett - March 07, 2019 at 01:34 PM

KH

Thank you for your condolences, Scott. I apologize for not listing that, I only listed the jobs from which he retired. Grandpa was one of the hardest working men I've ever known, had I listed all of his work efforts, I may have had to have a book published. He absolutely was the greatest father figure and he always spoke highly of you.

kimberly hand - March 07, 2019 at 02:32 PM

LS

“ Was just thinking of you last week. RIP my good friend...we had good times at Eagle. thanks for bringing me those porch goodies when I lived on Crown Street... your good friend,Linda Pierce

Linda Shofner--Pierce - March 07, 2019 at 12:58 PM