



James "Jim" Norman Gilliam

July 6, 1942 - May 8, 2026

James (Jim) Norman Gilliam, 83, of Franklin, Tennessee, peacefully passed away at home on May 8, 2026, surrounded by loved ones, from complications associated with Alzheimer's.

James was born on July 6, 1942, to Isaac Howard and Lula Mae (Loveless) Gilliam in the small town of Manchester, Tennessee. After graduating from Hickman County High School in 1960, James went on to study Electrical Engineering at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, graduating in 1964.

Upon graduation from Vanderbilt, James began his career at Nashville Electric Service. He went on to work at the Arnold Engineering Development Complex at Arnold Air Force Base in Tullahoma, where he worked on the Apollo and Saturn Space Programs from 1966 to 1974. Longing to be back in the "big city," James moved his family back to the Nashville area, settling in Brentwood. Eventually, James' career path led him to Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon (now known as Barge), where he led the electrical engineering team and mentored countless others, served on the Board of Directors, and retired as Vice President. James absolutely loved what he did for a living, and was passionate about the engineering field, even serving as President of the Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers.

James had many hobbies and passions in life, especially Vanderbilt basketball

and football, Tennessee Titans football, music, and golf. He created many fond memories around these events, with family and friends.

No matter how you knew James, Jim, Dad, or Grandad, you knew his generous heart and the kindness he showed to everyone. He was often quiet, but when he spoke, people listened; his words carried pearls of wisdom and felt like a gift. He was always there for his family, even before they realized they needed him. James had an easy way of imparting knowledge, advice and guidance, while providing a safe space to make life decisions. Above all, he gave unconditional love and support to his family and friends.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn (Blackwell) Gilliam, sons Jim (Caryn) Gilliam of Tarpon Springs, Florida and Greg (Kelly) Gilliam of College Grove, Tennessee from his first marriage to Linda (Baker) Gilliam, grandchildren Jake (Annabel) Gilliam of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Gavin Gilliam of Tarpon Springs, Florida, Grayson Gilliam of College Grove, Tennessee, great-grandson Baxter Gilliam of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, brother Lonnie (Marilyn) Gilliam of Centerville, Tennessee, and sister Patricia Skelton of Centerville, Tennessee. James was preceded in death by his parents, Howard and Lula Mae Gilliam.

He is also survived by stepchildren Tracy (Brian) Rivers, Stacia (Dewayne) Dean, and Ginger Blackwell. Stepgrandchildren Justin, Cooper, Kennedy, Kristen, Gage, Jordin, Somara, and step great grand-children Nevaeh, Caysen and Kieran.

Jake Gilliam, Gavin Gilliam, Grayson Gilliam, Jon Gilliam, John Gromos, Brett Skelton and Cooper Dean will serve as pallbearers. Ken Todd, Pat Tichenor and Steve Putney will serve as honorary pallbearers.

The family would also like to thank his exceptional and compassionate

caregivers: Debbie Passmore, Angela Vaccaro and Patricia Sanders, as well as the Heart'n Soul Hospice team.

Visitation and services will be held at McDonald Funeral Home in Centerville, Tennessee on May 15, 2026, from 10am to 12pm, followed by interment at Memorial Gardens in Centerville. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Alzheimer's Association.

Cemetery Details

Memory Gardens

2833 Highway 100 E
Centerville, TN 37033

Upcoming Events

Visitation

MAY 15. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

McDonald Funeral Home, Inc. - Hickman County
102 West End Ave.
Centerville, TN 37033
(931) 729-3561

Funeral Service

MAY 15. 12:00 PM (CT)

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