



James George Wilburn Thompson

February 22, 1932 - October 10, 2018

Heaven got a little brighter on Wednesday, October 10, 2018. Jim Thompson arrived at the pearly gates and livened up the party, as he did so many times for us while he was here on Earth. He passed away peacefully around 10:15 PM, surrounded by his loved ones after a day full of laughter, tears, and memories shared. Marion, his beloved wife of 58 years, his “Old Gray Mare,” was there waiting for him. There probably aren’t any Earthly words to describe the music-filled reunion that they must be having.

James George Wilburn Thompson was born on February 22, 1932, to Charlie and Mary (Faught) Thompson. He ended up with two middle names because he was born on Washington’s birthday. The doctor insisted that he be named “George,” and snuck it onto his birth certificate despite his mother’s protests. He grew up and attended school in West Frankfort. When he was seventeen years old, Jim enlisted in the air force and moved to California. He spent four years there as a supply officer during the Korean War, returning to West Frankfort after his discharge. There he met Marian Griffin, when he went to get an Orville Burger at the 149 grill, a place where she worked waiting tables. They married on October 9, 1954. They were blessed with two children, Clay and Jaye, and spent the majority of their adult lives in West Frankfort.

After his time in the service, Jim started working with the West Frankfort water department. He operated the first backhoe purchased by the city. He recently found that original backhoe and stared in silence, looking at it like it was a prized possession. He spent the majority of his career in the coal mines, and eventually worked his way up to federal coal mine inspector. He always loved to sing old hymns and earned himself the nickname “the singing examiner.” Legend says that if he sang “Farther Along” during his inspection, then the mine was destined to receive a citation. He retired from the mines in 1993 after spending 12 years as a miner and 17 years as an inspector. He was a member of Harmony Free Will Baptist Church for 63 years. He loved to worship, especially through music, and served as the church’s song leader with Marian backing him up on the piano. He was also a Sunday school teacher and church trustee.

Jim and Marian blessed their entire family with many years full of love, music, laughter, worship and adventures. Their legacy will live on through the memories of those they leave behind. Jim is survived by his children, Clay Thompson and his wife Michelle, and

Jaye Palmer and her husband Randy, both of West Frankfort. He was also adored by seven grandchildren, Lori (Shannon) Parks of Crab Orchard, IL, Jason (Stacey) Palmer, of Troy, IL, Joni (Scott Mocaby) Holtz of Pittsburg, IL, Jessica (Roger) Antisdell of St. Louis, MO, Mikayla (Jared) Moake of Johnston City, IL, Hannah Melvin of West Frankfort, and Josh Melvin of West Frankfort. He also had six great-grandchildren, Cody Holtz, Levi and Emma Parks, Jake and Kenzie Palmer, and Morgan Antisdell. His sisters Rosemary Blackburn of West Frankfort and Janet (Jim) Turner of Hernando, FL, as well as many cousins, nieces, nephews also survive. His "chosen" family, Tim, Rhonda, Sarah, and Bethany Aldridge, were also very near and dear to his heart.

His wife, parents; brothers Ernie, Danny and Harold, and sister Blanche Miller preceded him in death.

In addition to his family, Jim loved many members of the community and his church family and never met a stranger. He loved everyone and he loved often; his heart was so big that there was enough to go around! His personality was one in a million, and no one who met him ever forgot him. He loved Subway, softball, Casey's pizza, crossword puzzles, and playing music with The Wood Shop Pickers Bluegrass Band, who met at his house every week for a jam session. Playing music with his buddies enriched his life and brought him so much joy. One of the highlights of his life was serving as Old King Coal in 2013.

Another was participating in the 2017 inaugural Veterans Honor Flight out of Marion, which flies veterans to Washington D.C. to visit the Korean War Memorial. He was so proud that, while there, he was chosen to present the wreath to the Korean War Memorial. Prior to this experience, he had never before been honored as a soldier.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to the staff at Veteran's Affairs Community Living Center, who cared for Jim in his final days and treated him as though he was family. They honored him with a Hero's Walk and flag folding ceremony after he took his last breath. Every experience at the VA went above and beyond expectations. Arrangements were entrusted to Stone Funeral Home, 1201 East Poplar St., West Frankfort, IL.

The time of visitation was from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 13th at Harmony Free Will Baptist Church, located at 14715 Harmony Church Road, West Frankfort. The visitation resumed on Sunday, October 14, 2018, from 1:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the church.

During the time of visitation a "Reflection of Life" DVD Memorial Tribute featuring special people, places and events in Jim's life was presented to the family and friends.

Following the time of visitation the funeral service was at 2:00 p.m. with Pastor Curtis Smith and Pastor Roger Teal presiding.

The prelude and postlude musical selections were presented by Jim's grandson, Jason Palmer. Special congregational hymns presenter during the service were "God Will Take Care of You" and "It Is Well With My Soul" with pianist Jason Palmer accompanying. Also

presented was the recorded vocal musical selection “Celebrate Me Home” by The Perrys. Interment followed next to his wife in Harmony Free Will Baptist Church Cemetery located there at the church.

Pallbearers were Jason Palmer, Josh Melvin, Roger Antisdell, Jared Moake, Tim Aldridge and Cody Holtz. Honorary pallbearers were Levi Parks and Shannon Parks.

Military honors were accorded at the graveside by members of the American Legion Post No. 1961 of Orient and American Legion Post No. 177 of Zeigler and members of the Air Force Funeral Honors Detail.

Following the comittal service at the graveside the family and friends gathered back at the church for a meal and continued time of fellowship and support.

For those who preferred, memorial contributions were made to either or both; “Veteran’s Honor Flight” and/or “Harmony Free Will Baptist Church” and mailed in care of Stone Funeral Home, 1201 East Poplar St., West Frankfort, IL 62896. Memorial envelopes were available at the funeral home and the church.

For additional information please call the funeral home at 618-932-2161.

Cemetery

Harmony Free Will Baptist Church Cemetery

14715 Harmony Church Road
West Frankfort, IL, 62896

Events

OCT 13 Visitation 04:00PM - 07:00PM

Harmony Free Will Baptist Church
14715 Harmony Church Road, West Frankfort,
IL, US, 62896

OCT 14 Visitation 01:00PM - 02:00PM

Harmony Free Will Baptist Church
14715 Harmony Church Road, West Frankfort,
IL, US, 62896

OCT 14 Funeral Service 02:00PM

Harmony Free Will Baptist Church
14715 Harmony Church Road, West Frankfort,
IL, US, 62896

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



Stone Funeral Home - October 12, 2018 at 02:54 PM



“ I will miss you so much! You made me smile every time I saw you!! The light of God shone thru you like a light brighter than most I see! I am glad I met you, and even more so was able to be one of your girls at the church. Good ol uncle jay bird fly high! It is well with your soul!!!

Myranda - October 16, 2018 at 01:24 AM



“ Mr. T will always hold a special place in my heart. To St. Peter's helper now at the gate. Know you are there singing and praising God. "The Barron"

Alice F Barron - October 14, 2018 at 08:51 AM



“ Jim was a man of God and he showed kindness and friendship to anyone who came within his path. He was always full of hope and joy. He will be greatly missed by so many people that knew him. We pray for his family and for strength to endure this loss. We know he is happy and with his creator and singing and praising the Lord. God Bless him and all his family. Love and Blessings.....Dennis and Denise Slater



Dennis Slater - October 13, 2018 at 09:43 PM



“ So many times in this wonderful video Bro. Jim had his arms around someone holding them close. Now he is in the arms of his wonderful Lord. Jane Harmon, Rescue FWB.

Jane Harmon - October 13, 2018 at 03:53 PM



“ Such a wonderful, sweet, sweet Godly man! He never forgot your name once he met you ! Always a smile on his face! So blessed to of known him! RIP sweet friend & tell our friend Joey hello !

Jennifer Eader - October 13, 2018 at 02:14 PM



“ Jaye, i am so sorry to hear of the passing of your father. i know he has left you with many wonderful memories and that he is happy to be with your mother once again. keeping your family in prayer.

sally holland - October 13, 2018 at 01:00 AM



“ Jim always had a smile on his face. He would always greet me with "how's Ronnie?" My earliest memories at Harmony always included Jim and Marion. Marion playing the piano and Jim leading the song service. My thoughts and prayers go out to their families.
Ron Walker

Ron Walker - October 12, 2018 at 12:17 PM



“ Dads buddy...he was a great man!! Sorry for your loss!! Mike, Lora and Sandy Blades



Michael Blades - October 12, 2018 at 10:39 AM



“ Stone Funeral Home lit a candle in memory of James George Wilburn Thompson



Stone Funeral Home - October 11, 2018 at 05:11 PM