



James Willhite

May 23, 1933 - May 7, 2021

James "Jim" Willhite, age 87 of Springfield, TN passed away Friday, May 7, 2021. A time of worship to God and celebration of his life will be at 10am, Wednesday, May 12th at Main Street Church of Christ in Springfield, TN with Edwin Willhite, Don Jenkins, Joe Rushing, Barry Throneberry and Daniel Rushing officiating. Burial will follow in Pleasant Valley Cemetery in Hurricane Mills, TN with Doyle Watson, John Watson, Philip Watson, Andy Willhite, Roger Youree, Glenn Hollandsworth, George Hilliard, Will Gaines and David Willhite serving as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers are the Main Street Church of Christ Elders, Don Jenkins, Jim Gray, Rick Ballard and Mike McMurray. The family will receive friends 4pm to 8pm on Tuesday, May 11th and 9am until the time of service on Wednesday at the church, 318 N. Main St.

Jim and his twin brother Joe were born June 23, 1933 in Hurricane Mills to the late Bell and Ollie Page Willhite. He was also preceded in death by his wife, Sara 'Ruth' Youree Willhite; sister, Ollie Bell Watson and brother, Dennis Willhite.

Jim was baptized into Christ as a teenager and was involved wherever he lived. In 1962, Jim and Ruth moved to Springfield where he served as a deacon for at least 15 years and a shepherd for 30 years with the Main Street Church of Christ.

Jim had a BS Degree in Animal Science and a Master's Degree in Animal Husbandry from the University of Tennessee. He met Ruth while doing 4-H Extension work in Maury County and married in Rutherford County. Jim was stationed at San Diego and the South Pacific while serving in the Navy.

In 1962, the Willhites moved to Springfield and Jim became the 4-H Agent with the Agriculture Extension Office. His humility and gregarious personality, endeared him to Robertson County parents and their children. As students they learned leadership, work ethic, public speaking skills that brought them success at all levels of competition and life.

When Mr. Willhite retired from 4-H, Commerce Union approached him about becoming a banker. His farming knowledge and people skills brought him success. He rode out the various banking mergers after Commerce Union was sold, eventually retiring with Bank of America.

During the banking years Jim served as President of the Springfield of Rotary Club. He served a term as President of the Robertson County Chamber of Commerce. He served on a number of boards including Springfield Housing Authority, Industrial Development, Draughon Foundation, Library Board, Freed Hardeman University Advisory, and Churches of Christ Disaster Relief.

As a master woodworker, every baby, graduate, or marriage connected with the church for the last 35 years was acknowledged with the gift of a handmade stool, bookend, tray, and clock. Children, grandchildren, and friends have treasured beds, desks, grandfather clocks, Jackson Presses, and serving trays made in his Pleasant Hill Drive workshop.

As a leader, Jim was able to rally Christians from a number of states to help brethren in Mexico and Africa build houses of worship. Over 180 brethren

from Springfield participated in at least one of thirty trips he helped plan and worked on himself. In his late 70's, Jim was up on a scaffold laying block for eight hours in the hot sun.

A lover of the outdoors, Jim made time to meet his brother Joe to fish on the Tennessee River. Inviting visitors from church over for fish fries was he and Ruth's favorite way of showing hospitality. Mentor is the word many of the Main Street elders, deacons, and ministers use to describe Jim Willhites' lasting legacy on their lives.

Mr. Willhite is survived by son, Edwin (Barbara) Willhite of Murfreesboro, TN; daughter, Adelia (Andy) Gaines of Coldwater, MS; twin-brother, Joe (Shirley) Willhite of Martin, TN; grandchildren, David (Kristina) Willhite, Andrea (Glenn) Hollingsworth, Paige Willhite, Rachel (George) Hilliard, Mary Kate Gaines, Will Gaines and great-grandchild, Barrett Hollingsworth.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Main Street Church of Christ Building Fund or the Church of Christ Disaster Relief Fund or Pleasant Valley Cemetery.

Mr. Willhite's service will be live streamed on mainstreetcoc.org.

Austin & Bell Funeral Home in Springfield is in charge of these arrangements.
AUSTIN & BELL FUNERAL HOME, 509 WALNUT STREET, SPRINGFIELD,
TN 37172
(615) 384-1000

Cemetery Details

Pleasant Valley Cemetery

Hurricane Mills, TN

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 11. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Main Street Church of Christ
318 N Main Street
Springfield, TN 37172

Visitation

MAY 12. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Main Street Church of Christ
318 Main Street
Springfield, TN 37172

Funeral Service

MAY 12. 10:00 AM (CT)

Main Street Church of Christ
318 Main Street
Springfield, TN 37172

Tribute Wall

DS

“ *Mr. Willhite always had a smile on his face. He would lead the 4-H meetings when I was a student at Jo Byrns then he became my co-worker and mentor at the bank. He truly had a servant heart. I will be praying for the family in this difficult time.*

Deborah B. Strasser

Deborah B. Strasser - May 11, 2021 at 05:10 PM

NS

“ *Mr. Jim Willhite was always involved and interested in good works to help others. He would look for me to say hello and have a brief chat while working Disaster Relief assembly line. He and brother, Joe were consistent workers. Mrs. Ruth was very much like the Youree Family, willing and able for many years.*

My condolences to the family.

Katy Sublett

Hohenwald, TN

Naomi (Katy) Sublett - May 11, 2021 at 03:05 PM

NS

“ *Mr. Jim Willhite was always a friend who came to find me working the assembly line at Disaster Relief just to say hello and talk briefly. He and Mrs. Ruth were dear Christians who worked in every capacity possible. He will surely be missed. My condolences to the family.*

Katy Sublett

Hohenwald, TN

Naomi (Katy) Sublett - May 11, 2021 at 02:59 PM

YF

“ *Your Tate County 4-H Family purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of James Willhite.*



Your Tate County 4-H Family - May 11, 2021 at 12:13 PM

RO

“ *Rick and Sherry Owens purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of James Willhite.*



Rick and Sherry Owens - May 11, 2021 at 11:08 AM



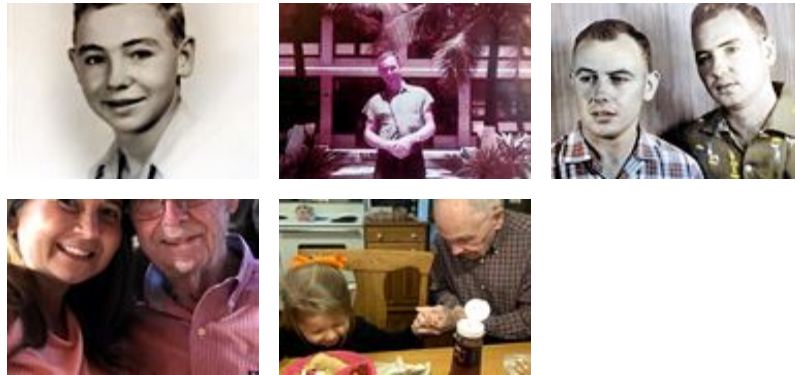
“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of James Willhite.*



May 11, 2021 at 09:19 AM



“ 290 files added to the album LifeTributes



Austin & Bell Funeral Home - May 10, 2021 at 05:48 PM

JB

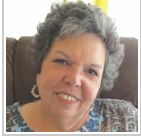
“ From 1967 to 1981, it was my privilege to be Jim's Co-Worker with the UT Extension Service. We were responsible for the 4-H Club Program in Robertson County. He and Ruth treated me like family. It was such Fun to watch Edwin and Adelia grow up during that time. Jim loved his family, his church and helping people. He was a Compassionate Gentle Man with a ready Smile and a Very Talented Woodworker. I will always be Grateful for his Friendship. My Love to Adelia, Edwin and their Families. May you find comfort and peace. Joan Billings

Joan Billings - May 09, 2021 at 07:17 PM

LC

“ While I have not seen Mr. Wilhite for many years, his leadership through the 4-H programs helped to make me the person I am today. So very sorry for your loss and most appreciative of the time he spent with us during our youth.

Lee Ann Chambers - May 09, 2021 at 08:06 AM



“ *Mr Willhite was a fine gentleman who was respected by those who knew him. I've known him since he moved to Robertson County. I regret I am unable to attend the services due to living in an assisted living facility in Nashville.. God bless you as you go forth with your lives.*



Nancy Lewis - May 09, 2021 at 01:21 AM