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In Memory of Richard Dennis Gant

JULY 16TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

In Memory of Richard Dennis Gant

Richard Dennis Gant, son of the late Bruce Edward Gant and Beulah Mae (Maskill) Gant, was born Sept. 9, 1946, in Dudley, MO and departed this life at Mercy Hospital of Stoddard County in Dexter, MO on July 13, 2024, at the age of 77.

Richard was a lifelong resident of Stoddard County and was of the Protestant faith. He grew up on the family farm near Dudley, where he was a great help. Richard learned to drive a tractor at the age of six, worked the cotton fields and raised hogs to help support the family. He would later apply those early acquired skills as a farmer himself for several years in his early adulthood on the family's ground.

In 1964, he graduated from Dexter High School, where he proved himself as an exceptional athlete, most notably on the grid iron. Richard was proud to be a member of the legendary Bearcat football team of 1963, with an undefeated season and rankings as a top team in the state. His skill as a lineman earned him a four-year full ride scholarship to play football at Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, MO. Richard's former college football line coach, who went on to coach for the Miami Dolphins, was quoted to say "Richard Gant was one of the best lineman I had ever coached in my career".

Along with success on the field, Richard graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Education in 1968. Soon after graduation he began a teaching and coaching football and wrestling at his alma mater, DHS.

Richard was called "Coach" by many and was honored to serve in his role. At Dexter High School, Richard would continually strive to be a positive influence on the students he coached. He took pride in the life long relationships he developed with many of his former students and players. He will be remembered for serving as a teacher of the game but also of life, building the character of his players on and off the field. Some might say that Richard himself was quite a "character" himself. He was known by his former players as both fun loving and disciplined and encouraged that from all around him. His love of the game of football led him to help start the Youth Football program in Dexter which developed a love of the sport for many young men in the community. He and his wife Tracy were lifelong supporters of all Dexter High School sports, especially football and boys and girls' basketball. Richard was a familiar face in the DHS stands for decades.

Richard would eventually leave DHS and begin his own company, Gant Excavation. Referring to himself often as “just an old ditch digger”, he built a highly successful land moving operation whose clients included many local farmers, as well as the state of Missouri. He operated this business until his retirement over 25 years ago.

Retirement allowed Richard to travel and enjoy his keen interest in history. He enjoyed visiting numerous national parks and Civil War cemeteries over the years. Retirement also allowed him to devote more time to community service as a proud member of Dexter Elks Lodge #2439, which he joined in 1972. He could often be found in the Lodge enjoying the company of lifelong friends, a Crown Royal, and a good story.

On March 13, 1974, Richard married Arvella (Tracy) Wilson Halcomb in Poplar Bluff, MO. The two shared the beautiful ups and downs of 50 years of marriage together. Tracy survives at their home on E. Kenton Rd. in Dexter.

Survivors also include a stepson, Christopher Halcomb of Cape Girardeau; one sister, Donna Gant Barker of Dudley, MO; two sisters-in-law, Dorothy (Gary) Crites and Linda Wilson; nieces, Janelle Barker Gibson of Webster Groves, MO, Kim (John) Hiley and Pamela Wilson, both of Columbia, MO; and one nephew, Randy (Debbie) Desgranges of Claremont, FL. He is also survived by several great and great-great nieces and nephews and many cousins.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his in-laws, John, Jr. and Lola Wilson; two sisters, Sylvia Gant and Mary Gant Wagner; brothers-in-law, Richard Barker, Ed Wagner, Earl Wilson and Jim Wilson; and one sister-in-law, Florence Wilson.

Visitation will take place at Mathis Funeral Home in Dexter on Friday, July 19, 2024, from noon until 1:45 p.m. At 1:45 the Dexter Elks Lodge will provide a brief memorial service. The funeral service will begin at 2:00 p.m. Internment for Richard will take place at the Missouri State Veterans Cemetery in Bloomfield, MO at 10 a.m. on Monday, July 22.

Memorials may be made to the Dexter Elks Lodge #2439, PO Box 353, Dexter, MO 63841, to support their many community programs, or to a charity of one's choice in his name.

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In Memory of Linda Fay Palmer Merrit

JULY 14TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

In Memory of Linda Fay Palmer Merrit

Linda Fay Palmer Merrit daughter of the late John Wesley Palmer Jr. and Dorothy Beatrice Robinson Palmer was born on August 8, 1948 in Poplar Bluff, Missouri and departed this life on July 11, 2024 at her brothers residence in Bernie, Missouri, surrounded by her beloved family at the age of 75.

Linda Fay was a member of the Community of Christ Church in Bernie and was a resident of Bernie. She was the matriarch of the Palmer family. She treated all her nieces and nephews, and great-nieces and great-nephews as her own children and grandchildren. She was a wealth of knowledge and the valedictorian of her graduating class. Her family enjoyed sitting around a table with her, and listening to her recall family stories and memories. She constantly researched her family ancestry and would share that information with the rest of her family. She enjoyed traveling and learning about the local history and customs of the places she visited, in her younger years with her husband.

She was united in marriage to Frank Burnside Merritt on January 8, 1974 in Arlington, Virginia. Mr. Merritt preceded her in death on July 15, 2015.

She is survived by her brothers, Larry Palmer of Bloomfield, Missouri, John Palmer and wife Sheri of Bernie, Missouri, and Randy Palmer and wife Vivian of Tampa, Florida; by her sisters, Sandra Kay Cryts and Sally Cloninger both of Bernie, Missouri, and Brenda Smith and husband Larry of Bloomfield, Missouri; by her granddaughter, Savannah Merritt of Poplar Bluff, Missouri; and she was the beloved Aunt to many nieces, nephews and great nieces and great-nephews; and by many more extended family and friends.

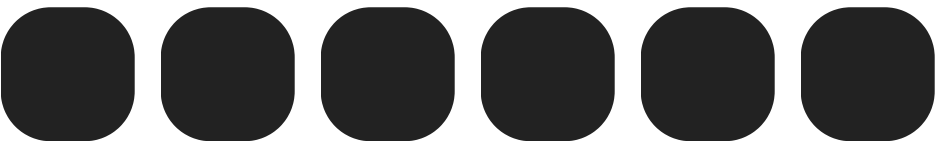
Other than by her husband and parents, she was preceded in death by her son, Jeremy Merritt; by two brothers, Ronald Gene Palmer Sr., and Jackie Wayne Palmer Sr.; by three sisters, Rita Burch, Linda Jane Ford, and Debra Kay Palmer; and by her step mother, Annie Lee Farr Palmer.

A Celebration of Life service will be conducted at a later date. Mathis Funeral Home in Bernie, Missouri is assisting the family with arrangements.

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In Memory of Ricky James Long

JULY 14TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

In Memory of Ricky James Long

Ricky James Long, son of the late Rodney and Margaret Long, was born on July 4th, 1953, in Stoddard County, Advance, Missouri, and departed this life on July 11, 2024, at Memory Lane in Dexter, Missouri, at the age of 71 years.

Ricky was an affectionate, dedicated, hard-working man who excelled as a guitarist, musician, gospel singer, artist, and a devoted worshiper of God, who always put the needs of others ahead of his own.

Ricky is survived by his daughter Katherine Willard of Dexter, Missouri; by his step-son, Dustin Ladd and wife Jennifer of Springfield, Missouri; by his adopted son, Wendall Anderson Long; by his mother,

Margret Long of Chaffee, Missouri; by his brothers, Randy and Ronald Long of Bell City, Missouri; by two sisters, Mary Beth Long of Scott City, Missouri, and Tammy Long of Chaffee, Missouri; by three grandchildren, Cara Weathers and husband Jessie, Rebecca Mattison and husband Brett, and Wendall Ladd; and by three great-grandchildren, Sophia Fuget, Elena Fuget, and Roper Fuget.

He was preceded in death by his Father, Rodney Long; by his sister, Deborah Surface; by his wife, Betty Ann Long.

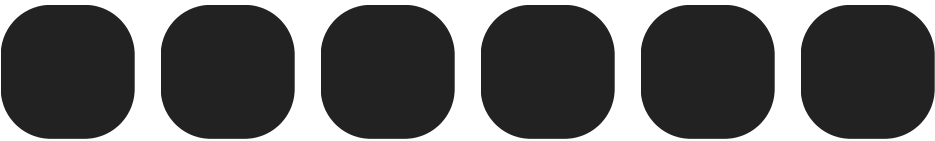
Visitation will be held at Mathis Funeral Home in Dexter on Monday July 15, 2024, from 1:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. Funeral services will then be conducted at Mathis Funeral Home in Dexter on Monday July 15, at 2:00 p.m. with Bro. Dale Holman officiating. Interment will follow in the Morgan Memorial Park Cemetery in Advance, Missouri.

Mathis Funeral Home in Dexter is assisting with arrangements.

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In Memory of James Henry Cook

JULY 14TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

In Memory of James Henry Cook

James Henry Cook, son of Frank Cook of Bernie, Missouri and the late Estell Manes Cook was born on June 22, 1955, in Arkansas and departed this life on July 11, 2024, at the age of 69.

James had driven a truck most of his life and enjoyed his work. He loved watching football, especially local high school football and the Tennessee Titans.

On November 1, 2008, in Sikeston, Missouri he was united in marriage to Georgia Melton. Mrs. Cook survives of their home in Sikeston.

Other than by his wife and father he is survived by two sons, James Thomas Cook and Jordan Melton both of Sikeston, Missouri; by his daughter, Michelle Carter of Sikeston, Missouri; by two brothers, Robert Cook and his wife Mona of New Madrid, Missouri and Paul Cook and his wife Kim of Malden, Missouri; by his sister, Linda Fowler and her husband John of Modesto, California; by eight grandchildren, Alysa Cook, Anthony Cook, David Carter, Nicolas Carter and wife Paige, Jordan Melton Jr., Nathaniel Melton, Karinna Melton and Jaylen Carter; and by two great-grandchildren, Kehlani Russell and Easton Carter.

Other than by his mother, he was preceded in death by his first wife, Debbie Cook on October 20, 2002; and by two sisters in infancy, Brenda and Sue Cook.

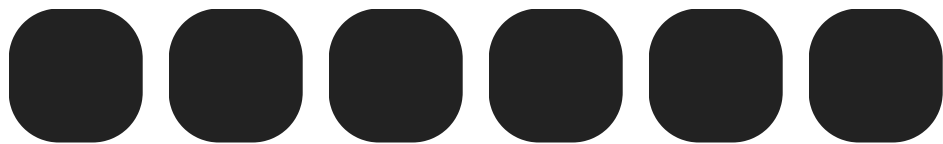
A Celebration of Life service will be planned for a later date.

Mathis Funeral Home in Dexter, Missouri is assisting the family with arrangements.

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In Memory of Edward Lee Kersey

JULY 14TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

In Memory of Edward Lee Kersey

Mr. Edward Lee Kersey, a beloved resident of Springfield, Missouri, passed away on June 30, 2024, at his home. He was born on February 14, 1945, in Dexter, Missouri, to Ray Edward and Dorothy Faye (Black) Kersey.

Edward married Patricia Elaine Jarrell and remained married until the time of her passing in December of 2013.

Edward was known for his fun and outgoing personality that extended him to everyone he met. He proudly served in the United States Army, leaving a lasting impact on all who served alongside him.

Edward was an avid outdoorsman, he found joy in hunting, fishing, gardening, planting trees, and playing in the river. His love for music was showcased through his talent in playing the guitar. One of his proudest accomplishments was attaining a first-degree black belt.

Edward is survived by his two daughters, Mara Li Craig of Bolivar, Missouri, and Laura Lane Kutz of Rogersville, Missouri. He is also survived by his two brothers: Terry Jerrell of Phoenix, Arizona; Verlin Kersey of Colorado Springs, Colorado; and two sisters: Anita Billingsley of Lowndes, Missouri; Loretta Mitchell of Little Rock, Arkansas. Additionally surviving him are two grandchildren and one great-grandchild. A host of extended family members and friends also mourn the loss of this remarkable individual.

He was predeceased in death by his parents, his wife, and one brother Wayne.

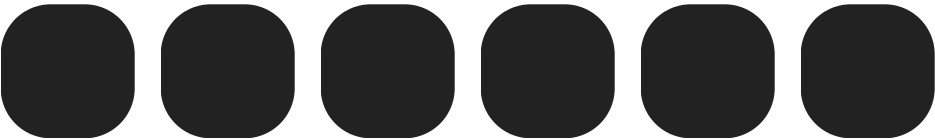
Services to celebrate the life of Edward Lee Kersey will be held on July 12, 2024. A visitation will take place at Watkins Funeral Homes - Dexter starting at 12:00 PM followed by a Memorial Service at Missouri State Veterans Cemetery in Bloomfield at 2:00 PM.

In honoring Edward's memory, we remember a man who touched many lives with his warmth and kind spirit. He will be deeply missed but forever cherished by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

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