



# James (Jimmy) Willis Gates

JUN 8, 1937 - APR 16, 2023



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MEMORIAL PARK  
Funeral Home & Cemetery

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# James (Jimmy) Willis Gates

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**J**ames (Jimmy) Willis Gates, 85, of Memphis, TN, passed away on April 16, 2023 after a brief illness.

Jimmy was born on June 8, 1937, to Charles Harry Gates and Gladys Curlee Banks in Fry's Mill near Lepanto AR. He graduated from Humes High School in Memphis, TN, in 1956. During High School, he worked as the train and merry-go-round operator at the Memphis Zoo. He was a hard worker spending most of his younger years working in manufacturing, heavy equipment, and 23 years in prefabricated concrete on President's Island. In his later years, following a back injury, he enjoyed working as a security guard until his eventual retirement.

In 1958, he was introduced to Rebecca May Smith by his mother. They hit it off as friends and started dating soon after. Once married, they embarked on a journey that would include raising 6 children and almost 65 years of marriage. Jimmy was a loving father to: James D. Gates of Bountiful, UT, Jeffry W. Gates of Springdale, AR, Judith E. Payne of Las Cruces, NM, Johnathan H. Gates, Deceased, Joseph D. Gates, of San Tan Valley, AZ, and Jenae R. Miller of Elsberry, MO. Jimmy is Grandfather to 18, and Great Grandfather to 12 with 2 more on the way.

A friend to everyone, Jimmy was loved by all. His sense of humor created lighthearted laughter everywhere he went. Some of his favorite hobbies through the years were softball, bowling, fishing, golfing, and he loved going out on his pontoon boat with his wife. He also loved watching westerns, mysteries, comedies, and football. A Jack of all trades, he could fix just about anything. He was patriotic and cared about his country. On Sundays, he could always be found attending church with his family. As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, he believed families are forever.

He was a great example of moral values and work ethic. Never late for anything, always early, and doing an exceptional job at whatever he did. He was compassionate, always willing to help another in any way he could. On top of all that, you'd never meet a more humble man.



## Obituary

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Jimmy was predeceased by all of his siblings; 3 brothers and 4 sisters: Ruby, Charles, Cecil, Bessie, Kittie, Bernice, and Wesley who passed shortly after birth.

The visitation will be held from 9:00 a.m., until the service time at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, May 6, 2023 at Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery. Interment will be in Memorial Park Cemetery.



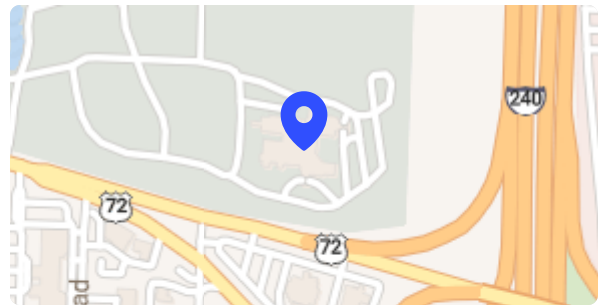
# Events

**James (Jimmy) Willis Gates**

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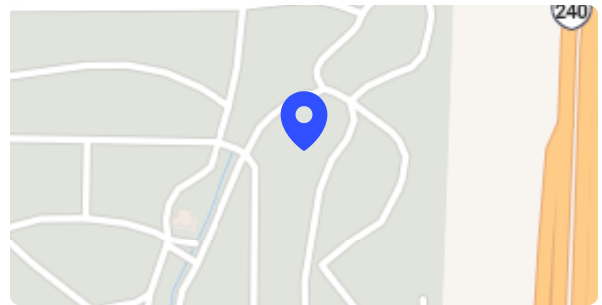
## Visitation

- Saturday**, May 6, 2023
- 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM CT
- Memorial Park Funeral Home**  
5668 Poplar Ave, Memphis TN 38119



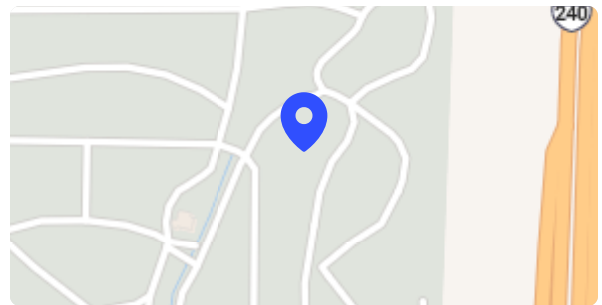
## Funeral

- Saturday**, May 6, 2023
- 11:00 AM CT
- Memorial Park Funeral Home & Cemetery**  
5668 Poplar Ave, Memphis TN 38119



## Cemetery Details

- Memorial Park Cemetery**  
5668 Poplar Ave, Memphis TN 38119
- (901) 445-8475**





## Tribute Wall

**James (Jimmy) Willis Gates**

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**Anonymous** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Gates family.



May 5 at 4:56 AM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring James (Jimmy) by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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