



James Lee Downing Sr

February 27, 1948 - March 27, 2018

James Lee Downing Sr., 70, of Laurel, passed March 27, 2018, at South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel.

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m. Friday at Memory Chapel Funeral Home with burial in Lake Park Cemetery West. Reverend Marty Fields will officiate.

A native of Laurel, he graduated from R.H. Watkins High School and attended the University of Mississippi.

He was the proprietor of The Downing Building in downtown Laurel, where he sold insurance for Jefferson Pilot. After retiring from insurance sales, his time was spent renting and maintaining offices at his building. He was a charter member of Westminster Presbyterian Church of Laurel. Lee enjoyed playing golf at the Laurel Country Club, where he experienced many fond memories with longtime friends. Another passion was coaching and mentoring kids throughout the Dixie Youth Baseball Program.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Melissa Denham Downing, his mother, Katherine Lee Downing, his father, James Young Downing Jr, and his brother James Young Downing III.

He is survived by his children, Lee Downing Jr. of Laurel and Amanda Downing Arender (Matt) of Laurel, two grandchildren, Millie and Kit Arender; sister Kathy Downing Batson (Mike) of Columbus; nieces, Megan Batson Sipes (Jim); Allyson Batson Amos (Marc) and their children Sloan, Mallory, and Abby; brother-in-law, Tony Thaxton; nephews, Tony Thaxton Jr. (Jennifer); John Thaxton (Kelli); and Joel Thaxton.

Pall bearers will be Lee Downing Jr, Matt Arender, John Thaxton, Joel Thaxton, Brad Payne and Joel Miller.

Honorary pall bearers will be Tony Thaxton, Charles Clayton, Taylor McLemore, Jack Shields, Daryl Cooper, and John Cox.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Laurel Main Street, P.O. Box 1256, Laurel, MS 39440 or your favorite charity.

Visitation will be Friday from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Memory Chapel Funeral Home in Laurel.

To sign the online guest book, visit www.memorychapellaurel.com.

Cemetery Details

Lake Park Cemetery

1303 Old Bay Springs Rd
Laurel, MS 39440

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 30. 12:00 PM (CT)

Memory Chapel Funeral Home
3100 Audubon Drive
P. O. Box 674
Laurel, MS 39440
(601) 428-5235
memorychapel@comcast.net
<https://www.memorychapellaurel.com/>

Service

MAR 30. 2:00 PM (CT)

Memory Chapel Funeral Home
3100 Audubon Drive
P. O. Box 674
Laurel, MS 39440
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Tribute Wall

JC

“ Lee was almost like a brother to me.

It was fun to argue with him about anything and everything and we'd always part friends!

My late mother once said that "The hardest part about growing old, is that you lose the friends with whom you could share old memories with. All the "remember when" things!" and I find this very true.

Lee's passing leaves a very big hole in my life especially when it comes to remembering things in the past! I shall miss him each and every day I pass by the empty bench at 509 Central Avenue!

My deepest condolence's to his Sister and his wonderful Son and Daughter.

John Cox

John C. Cox - March 30, 2018 at 01:18 PM

GB

“ Wishing you Comfort and Grace....

Gloria Flowers Buchanan

Gloria Flowers Buchanan - March 30, 2018 at 01:05 PM

SH

“ Thinking of you and hoping that time will bring you comfort.

Terry and Sylvia Holifield



Sylvia & Terry Holifield - March 30, 2018 at 01:04 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of James Lee Downing Sr.



March 29, 2018 at 10:40 PM

JT

“ Lee, Amanda & Family,
Tony, Brooke, Brandon and I are sending our deepest and most sincere condolences. We are so sad to hear of your Dads passing. We each hold dear cherished memories of family time spent with him at Holidays and family gatherings. We still have the recipe of wiener water soup he shared with us so hilariously at our wedding ! He will be greatly missed. We are comforted by knowing he's in the presence of our Savior, Melissa and so many loving family members & friends. We are deeply saddened that we cannot be there for his special time of remembrance tomorrow. Please know we are lifting each of you in prayer and asking Gods special embrace of comfort.
With love and sympathy,
The Virginia Crew

Jennifer Thaxton - March 29, 2018 at 10:24 PM

PH

“ james was a friend and my neighbor this is paul hester son of (bill hester).talking to him in the yard over the hedges as we both did yard work. He always had a smile and a hand shake for me i will miss him
paul hester

paul hester - March 29, 2018 at 08:23 PM



“ Mrs. Fields Nibblers® Sympathy Basket was purchased for the family of James Lee Downing Sr.



March 29, 2018 at 09:36 AM



“ Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of James Lee Downing Sr.



March 28, 2018 at 10:49 PM

JS

“ Lee and I spent many days growing up together in the Bay Circle and Lake Park Drive area dating back to the 3rd grade. We spent many hours playing football and other games when kids spent time out side. We rode bikes, shot BB guns , camping out at the end of Lake Park Drive in the woods. Friends like Ted Byers, Bill Murdock, Mike Lester, Tommy Webb, Michael Casey were always there to add to the fun. Many Christmas Holidays were spent helping Lee and his Dad taking inventory at the Western Auto Store. As we got older and went to Jr. High at Jones and on to Watkins, we played football and Lee was a running back for the Tornados. He was a shifty runner and a real favorite of Coach Zerk Wilson. Along with James Harry Mauldin we attended the State High School All-Star football game in Jackson and saw Archie Manning play. We would go to golf tournaments in summer before he and Melissa got married. I still have a life insurance policy that Lee sold me in the 1980's. When he turned 40, there was a birthday party, and I can't remember exactly who did it, (I think it was Joel Thoms or Carl Blackledge, Jr.), that gave him a jar of Weeny Water Soup as a present. I wonder why! As time went on , I moved to Kansas and always looked forward to touching base with "Stubby" when I came back to Laurel.

Amanda and Lee, you had a wonderful father and along with you, I will miss him.

Jim Sanders

Jim Sanders - March 28, 2018 at 10:01 PM

WR

“ Lee and "Queen" Amanda,
I am typing this with a heavy heart. So sorry to hear about the passing of your dad. I loved seeing his devotion to "mentoring kids in Dixie Youth baseball" mentioned in the obituary. I have a ton of great memories that will never be forgotten. From the Dodgers (tball), Giants, White Sox, all the way to the Mets (11-12), we all experienced some great times together and a lot of baseball. So many treks back and forth to the park in the ol' white car talking about "may pops" and later termed "gone pops" (referring to his tires of course). Oh man, the things I will always remember. The nicknames he called me "Will-Beanie" and "Blossom" (saying I looked like the girl on that show) just cracked me up. Remember the good...he will be missed, but is now in a better place. I'm so sorry I will not be able to make it to Laurel on Friday. God Bless you both during this tough time. Lots of love.

Will Renovich (and family)

Will Renovich - March 28, 2018 at 05:01 PM