



Dr. Rayford James Harris

February 24, 1938 - July 20, 2024

Dr. Rayford James Harris went to be with his Lord on Saturday, July 20, 2024. He was born in Pineville, Mississippi on February 24, 1938, to Hudson James Harris and Neva Roberts Harris. He had one brother Rex Harris. Rayford was preceded in death by his parents and brother.

Rayford married Tommie Lee Dixon on March 17, 1962. They were married 56 years before she passed away in 2019. They have five children, Jeff Harris, Millicent Harris Fleming (Tim), Chad Harris (Stephanie), Shanalyn Harris Allen (Brandon), and Lance Harris (Nicole). He also has eight grandchildren, Bailey Fleming Poling (Ryan), Maddie Fleming, Hudson and Colson Harris, Olivia and Ethan Allen, Amelie, and Roan Harris, and one great-grandson, Harrison Poling.

Rayford was an active member of Kingston United Methodist Church. He attended Shady Grove School in Laurel and graduated from Jones County Agricultural High School in Ellisville, Mississippi. He then attended Jones County Junior College and Mississippi State University where he earned a degree in geology. He served his country as a medic in the Air Force Reserve and worked for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in Virginia. Dr. Harris worked at NASA in Huntsville, Alabama, and at Stennis Space Center in Picayune, Mississippi, before attending Dental School at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. Dr. Harris graduated in December of 1972 with his

Doctorate of Dental Surgery and practiced dentistry in Laurel, Mississippi, for over 40 years.

Dr. Harris was involved in Toastmasters, Rotary Club of Laurel, and a past president of the Mississippi Academy of General Dentistry. His hobby was dentistry. He loved attending educational meetings, and he dearly loved his patients. He provided dental services as a missionary to Honduras and Nicaragua for 25 years. He had a gift for recalling the names of his patients and dates of specific events. His smile and kindness would fill the room.

Dr. Harris loved to spend time with his family. Affectionately known as “Papaw” to his grandchildren, he did not miss a baseball game, dance recital, or play. Dr. Harris loved doing for others and getting to know everyone he met.

His family would like to thank his faithful caregivers, Debbie Tyree, Carla Madden, and Nina Burnham. Dr. Harris loved them dearly.

In lieu of flowers, please honor Dr. Rayford Harris with gifts to the Baptist Medical & Dental Mission International (11 Plaza Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39402) or the Gideons International (PO Box 1504 Laurel, MS 39441).

Visitation will take place Saturday, July 27, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. with the Celebration of Life Service at 11:00 a.m. at Memory Chapel Funeral Home of Laurel, Mississippi. The interment will be held at Lake Park Hills Cemetery in Laurel, Mississippi. Reverend Mark Covington will officiate.

Pallbearers will be Hudson Harris, Colson Harris, Dr. Tim Fleming, Dr. Brandon Allen, Dr. Ryan Poling and Bryant Raby.

Honorary Pallbearers are Jon Harris Carter, Ethan Allen, Roan Harris, Dr. Tony Bounds, and Dr. Brent Culpepper.

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

Cemetery Details

Lake Park Hills Cemetery

2806 Emmy Dr.
Laurel, MS 39440

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 27. 9:00 AM (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

JUL 27. 11:00 AM (CT)

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



“ Dr. Harris was great and kind man. Fantastic dentist. He was classmates with my dad at the University of Tennessee dental school in Memphis. I grew up knowing him as a kid and saw him as an uncle. You will be missed, Uncle Rayford.

Sean Reynolds - July 28, 2024 at 10:45 PM

JM

“ A true champion in his service to our community. Gentle. Kind. Professional. His legacy lives! Joey McIntosh

Joey McIntosh - July 27, 2024 at 04:17 AM

GK

“ Greg, Jenny, Sutton, MaryEllen and Keith purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Dr. Rayford James Harris.



Greg, Jenny, Sutton, MaryEllen and Keith - July 26, 2024 at 02:30 PM

GK

“ Greg, Jenny, Sutton, MaryEllen and Keith planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Rayford James Harris.

Greg, Jenny, Sutton, MaryEllen and Keith - July 26, 2024 at 02:30 PM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Rayford James Harris.*



July 25, 2024 at 04:47 PM



“ *Mimi, Bill& Diane,Mel & Ted and Missy purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Dr. Rayford James Harris.*



Mimi, Bill& Diane,Mel & Ted and Missy - July 25, 2024 at 11:04 AM



“ *Mimi, Bill& Diane,Mel & Ted and Missy planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Rayford James Harris.*

Mimi, Bill& Diane,Mel & Ted and Missy - July 25, 2024 at 11:04 AM



“ *Chad and Family,
I was sad to hear of Dr. Harris' passing. He was an amazing boss when I worked for him in the 80's and 90's. He sure loved the Lord, his family and his patients! What an amazing sweet, caring, precious man! He will be truly missed by so many! Much love and prayers to you all, Amy Rowell (Eagleville, TN)*

Amy Rowell - July 25, 2024 at 09:25 AM

MG

Praying for y'all. I'm so sorry for your loss of your dad. He was such a sweet man and has a sweet family. He surely will be missed.

Memory Graham - July 27, 2024 at 04:05 PM

BS

“ So sorry to here !! Loved your mom and dad !! My prayers and thoughts are with you all !! 🙏🙏 Billy Shirley

Billy Shirley - July 24, 2024 at 09:17 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Rayford James Harris.



July 24, 2024 at 10:11 AM

MD

“ Michelle D. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Rayford James Harris.

Michelle D. - July 24, 2024 at 10:10 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. Rayford James Harris.



July 24, 2024 at 08:43 AM

TF

“ Terry & Olga Copeland & family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Rayford James Harris.

Terry & Olga Copeland & family - July 24, 2024 at 08:43 AM

PH

“ Patrick, Bethany, Isaiah, Ryleigh Hinton purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Dr. Rayford James Harris.



Patrick, Bethany, Isaiah, Ryleigh Hinton - July 24, 2024 at 01:57 AM

PS

“ Chad,

How deeply you must feel the loss of one so dear to you and your family. But time alone will ease the grief, and you'll find in its place cherished memories of him that time cannot erase. Timeless treasures never pass when memories remain. With Sympathy from Henry and I, you are in our thoughts and prayers.

Henry and Paula Steen

Paula Steen - July 23, 2024 at 07:27 PM

WF

“ *Wade/Jefcoat Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dr. Rayford James Harris.*



Wade/Jefcoat Family - July 23, 2024 at 05:18 PM

WF

“ *Wade/Jefcoat Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Rayford James Harris.*

Wade/Jefcoat Family - July 23, 2024 at 05:18 PM