



Willie Thomas Segrest III

August 18, 1947 - June 8, 2025

Willie Thomas Segrest, III

Willie Thomas Segrest, III “Tommy”, 77, of Laurel passed away on Saturday, June 7, 2025.

He was preceded in death by his wife Deborah Anne Parker Segrest of 47 years; his father, Willie Thomas Segrest II; mother, Doris Flood Segrest; and sister, Linita Segrest Wright.

He is survived by his son, Willie Thomas Segrest IV “Tom” (Gina); daughter, Shelley Segrest Taylor (Truitt); and grandchildren, Ty Segrest (Tessa), Abby Segrest, William Taylor, Mary Segrest Taylor, and Parker Taylor.

Tommy was a lifelong resident of Laurel, and a student of both Prentiss Elementary, and Maddox Junior High School. He went on to graduate high school from Chamberlain Hunt Military Academy in Port Gibson, MS. He attended The University of Southern Mississippi where he received a bachelor’s of arts degree in history. He and his wife were long time members of West Laurel Baptist Church.

He started his career at Masonite Corporation, where he met his wife, Debbie. Then, he continued his career in the sawmill industry where he worked for

various lumber companies throughout the southeast. He eventually finished his career back in Laurel, working for both Sanderson Farms and Community Bank.

In addition to raising his own children, he also served as the Phi Kappa Fraternity chapter father for many years, and through this service touched the lives of many teenagers in the community.

To his family, Tommy was the hardest working man that they have ever known. A hero figure to his children, he taught them the value of a hard day's work. He instilled a saying among his children that he would repeatedly tell them: "When life gets hard for everyone else, it gets just right for us." He loved his children, but even more adored his grandchildren. He was a very proud "Big Daddy."

The family would also like to express their gratitude to Ms. Ann Dear for the care she provided to Tommy over the last several years of his life.

Pallbearers will be Michael Casey, Will Casey, Benji Casey, Jason Henley, Christopher Yoder and Ty Segrest.

A visitation will be held at Memory Chapel in Laurel on Thursday, June 12th, at 12:30 PM, with a graveside service and burial to follow at 2 PM at Lake Park Hills Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks donations be provided to The Dubard School for Language Disorders at The University of Southern Mississippi.

To view and sign the online guestbook, please visit www.memorychapellaurel.com

Cemetery Details

Lake Park Hills Cemetery

2806 Emmy Dr.
Laurel, MS 39440

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 12. 12:30 PM (CT)

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

Graveside Service

JUN 12. 2:00 PM (CT)

Lake Park Hills Cemetery
2806 Emmy Dr.
Laurel, MS 39440

Tribute Wall

EJ

“ Tommy you were one of the best!! Growing around you was such a blessing I didn't realize until I was older. He was a great mentor to me & so many growing up. He let us be young boys be a little wild but was a safety net to keep us from going too far. Tommy & Debbie were our Phi Kappa Parents & we all loved them. Tommy, tonight I sat & drank a toast you, remembering so many great times, & I wished you safe travels until we meet again. I hope you & my dad are up there running the show!!

Love you Big T

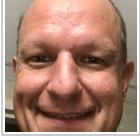
Ellis (P.P.) Smallwood

ELLIS W SMALLWOOD JR - June 11, 2025 at 09:34 PM

SC

“ Dear Shelley & all the family,
We were so very sorry to have read about the passing of your Dad.
He was a very special person with many accomplishments.
We will be keeping you & your family in our hearts
& pray for God to give each one comfort & peace.
Love,
Shelton & Rhonda Cooley

Shelton & Rhonda Cooley - June 10, 2025 at 06:04 PM



“ Sunday, 8 June 2025 - Willie Thomas Segrest, III, affectionately known as 'Tommy,' was my father's best friend growing up in Laurel, Mississippi. With colorful stories, his influence helped me identity, find a sense of purpose, belonging, and better understand the meanings of love, and family. Early in childhood, after a melodramatic 'Day in the Park,' caused his son, Tom and I to question our security as toddlers, his hands and magnetic laughter lifted me into a convertible. Having had our cheeks painted with balloons, much to our collective displeasure, Tommy assured us that no one was going to make us cry any more.

His confidence helped. That remaining summer, and many others thereafter, he served as a surrogate father, firmly and decisively balancing dispensations of love, tolerance, discipline, and an attribute often misunderstood, and fleeting in our culture of materialistic measurements of success. His life and blessings were the embodiment of grace. His actions causing me to know that I mattered. I was loved without contingency, exactly where and how I was.

"I am NOT a common drunk, or gambler," I said, continuing. "My mama's Sunday School teacher at the First Baptist Church told me it was okay to learn and play poker, if we were doing it with chips, and not money." "That's exactly right," said Tommy Segrest, "but boy, you need to find a damn job!" I agreed.

Tommy continued helping me his family, friends and those he loved in every possible way, undeterred by rejection and naysayers. With moving sincerity rarely exhibited by men of his era, he would violently grab me, embrace, and demand, "Look in my eyes. You know that I love you, and Tom loves you. And we will always be for you, no matter what."

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13. Tommy Segrest practiced that scripture daily in unusually effective and provocative ways.

Closing, the most profoundly powerful scripture reads, "So when Jesus received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." John 19:30. We mourn and celebrate the life of a true warrior, father, brother, husband and friend, knowing that his life is and will be eternally preserved and glorified in the spirit of Jesus, and manifested in the love of his son, Tom, his daughter, Shelly, and all family and friends who truly knew that decent man. We love you, Big Daddy. Amen.

Dow Yoder - June 10, 2025 at 01:34 PM

SB

“ *Shelley and family, I am saddened by the death of your dad and grandfather.
Prayer support, Sharon Barham*

SHARON BARham - June 10, 2025 at 10:21 AM

CH

“ *I will forever be grateful for the love and influence of both Tommy and Debbie for my children, Jason and Hilary. Then, when their dad passed away, Tommy assumed the role of advisor and “listening ear” for Jason. He knew how to be quite stern while making him laugh at the same time! Lots of love between them.*

Carol Henley - June 10, 2025 at 09:38 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Willie Thomas Segrest III.*

June 09, 2025 at 05:06 PM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Willie Thomas Segrest III.*



June 09, 2025 at 05:06 PM