



Johnny Ray Hemphill

April 9, 1946 - October 5, 2023

Johnny Ray Hemphill was born on the 9th of April, 1946 in Louisville, Mississippi, to James Henry and Juanita Reed Hemphill. He was the first of four children and the only boy. Johnny grew up in the Ellison Ridge community, and, like so many other young Winston Countians during that time, had to help keep the family farm going and worked in the cotton fields. He always said he never knew they were poor. Everyone was poor back then. After graduating from Nanih Waiya in 1964, he headed north to Detroit to find work. During his time there, he met and married Pauline Ruth Jones.

His country came calling in December 1965 and Johnny was drafted into the United States Army where he was trained as a cook. Being the only male child made him ineligible for service overseas in Vietnam. He was stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, where he fed many of the men training there, a number of which were from back home in Winston County.

Upon the end of his enlistment, he returned to Detroit where he and Pauline started their family with the births of three of their four sons, James who was stillborn in 1967, Jerry in 1968, and Jason in 1974. In 1976, the decision was made to move back to Winston County to escape the big city and raise their sons in the country. They settled in a rental house in Ellison Ridge for a time while Johnny worked hard to save for a place of their own. Not long after in 1977 the youngest son Jimmy was born.

Johnny was soon able to find the place we all called home in the Calhoun Community where he raised his three sons, cows, chickens, and his prized tomatoes. During that time, he worked in the metal fabrication business, maintenance at TRW, and finally as a millwright at the particleboard mill for Georgia Pacific/Roseburg until he retired.

In retirement, Johnny found joy in gardening, growing his tomatoes and socializing at the Warrior One Stop. He also took up beekeeping after he found a swarm of bees had moved into an old potato box. Johnny studied all he could find on raising bees. He spent hours building his hive boxes and tending to them until it got to be too much work and his health wouldn't cooperate.

Johnny's journey through this life came to an end on the 5th of October, 2023, after complications of a heart attack. He was surrounded by loved ones when he gained his Eternal Reward. We will all miss him dearly.

Johnny was preceded in death by his parents, sisters Rita Hall and Shirley Pruitt, and an infant son, James Donald. He is survived by his sister Marlene (Rick) Lentz; sons: Jerry (Lucrecia) Hemphill, Jason (Beth) Hemphill, all of Louisville, and Jimmy (Courtney) Hemphill of Tishomingo. He also leaves behind five grandchildren: Jeffrey (Stewart) Hemphill, Nathan Hemphill, Jacob (Anna) Hemphill, John Hemphill, and Megan Hemphill; five bonus grandchildren: Gracie Storment, Bryson Crawley, Brendan Smith, Jayred Smith, and Brody Smith; and two great-grandchildren, Jace and Jules Hemphill; along with many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be 4 p.m. Sunday, October 8 in the Nowell-Massey Funeral Home Chapel in Louisville, Mississippi, with Reverend Wayne Hill officiating. Visitation will be the day of the service from 3 p.m. until service

time at Nowell-Massey Funeral Home. Interment will immediately follow the service in Sardis Cemetery in Winston County.

Memorials in honor of Johnny may be given to Sardis Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, c/o Glenda Thomas, 215 Thomas Road, Louisville, MS 39339 or to Nanih Waiya Community Park, P. O. Box 83, Louisville, MS 39339.

Services are under the direction of Nowell-Massey Funeral Home, 724 North Columbus Avenue, Louisville, MS. Memories and condolences may be shared with the family by signing the guest register at www.nowellmasseyfuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Sardis Baptist Church Cemetery

Sardis Road
Louisville, MS

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 8. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Massey Funeral Home
724 N. Columbus Avenue
Louisville, MS 39339
(662) 773-3501
nowellfuneral@bellsouth.net
<https://www.masseyfuneralhome.net/>

Service

OCT 8. 4:00 PM (CT)

Nowell-Massey Funeral Home Chapel
724 N Columbus Ave
Louisville, MS 39339
nowellfuneral@bellsouth.net
<http://www.nowellmasseyfuneralhome.com>

Interment

OCT 8 (CT)

Sardis Baptist Church Cemetery
Sardis Road
Louisville, MS

Tribute Wall

KH

“ I was truly saddened to learn of this dear man’s passing. Johnny was a thoughtful, insightful, and genuine individual. My memories of him will be fond ones. He was so appreciative of what he called my “perty words” when he heard my poetry and nostalgic stories. He came by my home a couple of years ago to bring me some cuttings from his yard, as he knew I loved flowers and gardening. It was a brief visit that would leave me with years of beautiful blooms and memories of the kind-hearted soul who gave them to me. Every time I see those Sweet Williams and hibiscus showing off in my garden I think of him, and I always will. Next spring when they re-emerge, a little part of that rugged country fellow with the gentle spirit and sentimental heart will sweeten my garden, call in the bees and butterflies, and bring a smile to the grateful face of this deliverer of “perty words”. Rest in peace, friend.



Katrina Estes Hill - October 08, 2023 at 03:42 PM

MH

“ Sincere sympathy,
Mozell Hull

Mozell Hull - October 08, 2023 at 09:52 AM

KS

“ I worked with Johnny at GP and I can truly say folks don't come any better. He was a talented millwright and a fine man who most definitely loved his family. I know he will be missed but rest assured, he's in good hands now.

Kacey Sloan - October 07, 2023 at 10:13 AM

LF

“ Love Marlene and family purchased the Blue & White Sympathy Standing Spray for the family of Johnny Ray Hemphill.



Love Marlene and family - October 07, 2023 at 09:07 AM

TR

“ So Sorry for your Loss. Stay Strong.

Thomas Reed - October 06, 2023 at 03:13 PM