



James Wesley Smith

October 9, 2025

James “Jim” Wesley Smith, 95, of Milton, Georgia, passed away on October 9, 2025.

Born in Johnson City, New York, Jim was the son of the late Moses Wesley Smith and Ethel Knowlden Smith. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 68 years, Margaret Olson Smith, and his sister, Phyllis Posey.

Jim is survived by his daughters, Deborah (Kim) Honan of Alpharetta, Georgia, and Cynthia (Jimmy) Smith of Jacksonville, Florida; his grandchildren, Emily (Addison) Dillard of Milton, Georgia, Patrick Honan of Mobile, Alabama, and Shannon (Alex) Hoffman of St. Mary’s, Georgia; and his five great-grandchildren: Jackson and Charlie Dillard, and Avett, Anderson, and Austin Hoffman.

Jim spent his childhood in Olean, New York, and graduated from Olean High School. In the summer of 1949, shortly after graduation, he traveled to Idaho to fight forest fires. He later hitchhiked home; a formative experience that sparked a lifelong love of adventure and the outdoors. Jim went on to attend the Syracuse University School of Forestry, where he earned both his bachelor’s and, later, his master’s degree with the support of the GI Bill.

Jim began his professional career with the U.S. Forest Service in Moncks Corner, South Carolina. Shortly thereafter, he voluntarily enlisted in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict, serving in the Counterintelligence Corps at Fort Meade, Maryland.

After his military service, Jim began a long and distinguished career with

Union Camp Corporation in Savannah, Georgia, where he worked for 35 years in various roles, including Research Forester, District Superintendent, and Labor Relations Manager. He was proud to be among the earliest Registered Foresters in the State of Georgia.

Upon retirement, Jim and Margaret settled in Roswell, Georgia, and later moved to the North Georgia Mountains. Their home was always a haven for family, friends, fellow gardeners, and nature lovers; and for anyone willing to spend an afternoon on the front porch, sharing stories and soaking in the surrounding landscape.

A passionate naturalist, conservationist, and outdoorsman, Jim was a Lifetime Member, Board Member, and Past President of the Georgia Native Plant Society, as well as a Master Gardener. His deep knowledge of plant identification and propagation made him a living encyclopedia of the natural world. He was always eager to share his wisdom, helping others grow closer to the outdoors. His garden was a living testament to his devotion and a reflection of his faith, with each plant embodying his care, patience, and reverence for nature.

Jim was also a gifted storyteller; his well-timed wit, his ability to weave words, and his timely humor could bring a smile to the room. His love of storytelling eventually led him to publish two books: *Full Circle: The Epiphany of a Gardener* and *Tales from My Life – Some Tall and Some Not*.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in Jim's memory be made to the Alpharetta Community Agriculture Program (Old Rucker Farm).

<https://alpharetta-community-agriculture-program.square.site>

They also encourage you to spend time outdoors with those you love, to plant something, watch it grow, and take a moment to appreciate its beauty — just as Jim always did.

His celebration of life service and interment will be held on October 25, 2025 at 1pm at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Family, 202 Griffith Road, Jasper, Georgia.

Cemetery Details

Cremation - Northside Chapel Crematory

12050 Crabapple Road
Roswell, GA

Previous Events

Celebration Of Life

OCT **25**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Episcopal Church of the Holy Family
202 Griffith Road
Jasper, GA 30143
<https://www.holyfamilyepiscopalchurch.net/>