



James Curtis White

June 24, 1937 - February 7, 2026

****James Curtis “JC” White******, 88, passed away peacefully on the morning of February 7, 2026. He was born on June 24, 1937, in Uvalda, Georgia, to Curtis James and Rozie Lee Kelly White.

JC spent most of his childhood in Nocatee, Florida, where he developed a love for fishing, playing pool, riding in the Arcadia Rodeo, and playing fast-pitch softball.

Those early years shaped his adventurous spirit and appreciation for competition.

He proudly served his country in the United States Army from 1957 to 1961, achieving the rank

of Sergeant. Stationed in Germany, JC often shared colorful stories of his time overseas—stories

that reflected both his humor and his pride in serving.

After his military service, JC became the Director of Recreation at G. Pierce Wood Memorial

Hospital, where he met his former wife, Myra, the mother of his two daughters.

He later settled

in Lakeland, Florida, where he raised his family and built a long and successful career as a food

salesman. Representing companies such as Lance, E.J. Keefe Co., Carr Brothers, and PFG, JC

consistently ranked as a top salesman, earning numerous awards and accolades. More importantly, he earned the respect and friendship of his clients, many of whom remained close friends long after his retirement.

JC was a devoted father and grandfather. To his grandchildren, he was simply “Papa Horse,” a title he wore with pride and joy. He rarely missed his daughters’ and grandchildren’s sporting events, football games, or dance recitals. He coached basketball at Lake Gibson High School during his daughter Kimberly’s playing years and was an avid college sports fan, especially cheering on the Florida Gators. Each year, he looked forward to attending the high school state basketball championships in person.

He loved to travel and explore the world, visiting numerous countries including Germany, Austria, Peru and Mexico. One of his most memorable adventures was hiking Machu Picchu, where he was moved by the children in a local village who gratefully received clothing and school supplies.

JC had a passion for life’s simple pleasures—southern cooking, traveling to Las Vegas with his best friend Bob to play blackjack, betting at the the dog track, buying and boarding horses, and caring for his beloved pets, horse Thunder and his dog Sabbath. He took pride in teaching his daughters how to ride horses, water ski, fish, dance the jitterbug, play blackjack and poker, and

even how to shoot a basketball at a young age. He believed in living fully and passing those experiences on.

He was known for having a saying for every situation, which made him truly one of a kind.

People often shared that he made them feel truly special and that he was one of their favorite

people. He was loved deeply and will be missed beyond measure.

He was preceded in death by his five sisters: Mae, Ruby Lee, Nellie, Mary, and Josephine (Jo).

He is survived by his daughter Kimberly and son-in-law Kenny Jones; his daughter Kelly Hare

and son Steve McRae and wife Shelby; his grandchildren Kyle, Kevin (Jamie), Kody (Amber), Payton, Kurtis, Kourtney (Tyler), and Cassidy; and his great-grandchildren Alana, Taya,

Jameson, Neil, Alyx, Gilbert, and Addison, along with several nieces and nephews.

JC's legacy lives on in the stories he told, the lessons he taught, and the love he had for his family.

Dad was a passionate supporter of athletics, always cheering the loudest for any team his grandchildren played for or coached. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to

Santa Fe Catholic High School Girls Softball, 3110 US 92, Lakeland, Florida 33801 (in care of Girls Softball).

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

FEB **16**. 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM (ET)

Gentry-Morrison Funeral Homes - Serenity Gardens Chapel

3350 Mall Hill Drive

Lakeland, FL 33810

(863) 858-4474

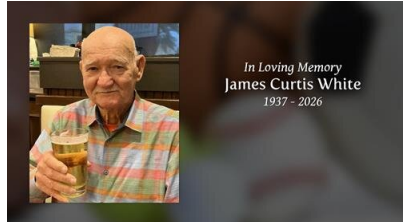
t.hall@gentry-morrison.com

<https://www.gentry-morrison.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ Gentry-Morrison Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of James Curtis White



Gentry-Morrison Funeral Homes - February 13 at 04:37 PM

PT

“ Payton, Devin and Tammy purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of James Curtis White.



Payton, Devin and Tammy - February 16 at 03:12 PM

KW

“ High school sleepovers at Kelly’s house were my opportunities to get to know Mr. White. Mr. White was for me, a larger than life character who always made ME feel larger than life!... At the time, I played golf- and I remember- when I would see him, he would always announce me: “Kelly Wotipka “!!!!, like I was a super star pro golfer!... with each announcement/ encouragement that he made it would help me build my confidence. I think he knew this would help me in my life, no matter where I ended up.
What a blessing to have known him!

Kelly Wotipka - February 15 at 11:33 PM

MW

Thank you for sharing Kelly! I miss those sleepover days.

Myra White - February 17 at 06:07 PM

KH

Wonderful memory from my other high school half..Kelly1 and 2. He was a big fan of your golf career!

kelly hare - February 17 at 06:10 PM

MW

“ *I remember when JC brought home a beautiful brown horse with a white blaze on his face. He tried to ride him and was thrown off hard, over and over again. Every day after work, JC would come home and try again. Every day, he got bucked off.*

The horse wasn't broken—until the day he was. JC never gave up on him, and he named him Thunder. From that point on, Thunder was JC's horse for the rest of his life. JC was the only person Thunder would allow to ride. They built a strong bond based on patience, trust, and mutual respect.



Myra White - February 15 at 03:57 AM

KW

“ *Uncle James visited us a lot when he lived in DeSoto County when my sister and I were kids....my favorite memory was he would get down in the floor and play jacks with us and we thought he was so cool. Rest in peace.....give Granny a big hug for me* ❤️❤️

Kathryn (Delores) Waddell - February 15 at 12:44 AM

KH

“ JC — “Mr. White” to me growing up — always made me feel so welcome during my childhood sleepovers with Kelly. He used to tease me, saying, “You’re always smiling... like you’re up to something,” and then we’d both laugh.

One of my favorite memories is when he took Kelly and me camping. We slept in a tent, went canoeing, and woke up to the most delicious wild boar sausage he cooked over the campfire for breakfast.

He had a special gift for connecting with people and making them feel truly seen and valued. I also witnessed that in the unwavering support he showed his two daughters over the years. He was a remarkable person with a true zest for life, and he will be deeply missed!

Kendra Hendry - February 13 at 09:56 PM

KH

Kendra I completely remember that camping trip. In fact I still have pictures of you and I looking very tired outside that tent and also canoeing. We had such a great time. Wonderful memory to share thank you.

kelly hare - February 13 at 10:11 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of James Curtis White.



February 13 at 04:50 PM

KD

“ Karen Dixon DiDonna purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of James Curtis White.



Karen Dixon DiDonna - February 13 at 01:20 PM

PF

“ Preston Oliver and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Curtis White.

Preston Oliver and family - February 13 at 02:18 AM

PF

“ Preston Oliver and family purchased the *Beautiful in Blue* for the family of James Curtis White.



Preston Oliver and family - February 13 at 02:18 AM

JH

“ Brenda & I lived in MI, we didn't get to spend much time with JC. Generally, either Payton's birthday or Christmas were the reason for both of us to be together, but those visits were special.

JC was an interesting person, and his down-home personality was the reason he was a good salesman. I'll always remember his story about how he needed to find a good customer who's business wasn't affected by the ups and downs of the local economy. Driving by a local jail struck him as the perfect opportunity. He immediately went to the Warden's office, but the Warden was at a horse auction that day. JC went back the next day with the perfect opening line; tell me about your horses. When he left, he had his first order and things were on the way up from then on.

My favorite personal time with JC was our breakfasts at "Twain's" when we were both in CA. We could sit and talk with no interruptions and solved many of the world's problems.

Attached is a picture of JC on the tram at Disneyland in April of 2011. Brenda & I, along with Kelly & Payton, spent the day and evening, with JC. He was not one for the thrill rides, so he volunteered me for that task.

Jim & Brenda Hare



JR Hare - February 13 at 01:34 AM

KH

Thank you JR for sharing that memory. Yes Dad loved his breakfast at Twain's with you. And thank you for sharing the jail/salesman story I learned something. I did not know that he got the jail business that way and he maintained that business his entire career! Thank you ❤️

kelly hare - February 13 at 10:15 PM

KH

“ Here is daddy walking with his granddaughter Payton and his great grandson Jameson. This was taken not too long ago and I just thought it was such a sweet moment.



kelly hare - February 12 at 08:29 PM