



James Kenneth Chestney

March 31, 1943 - June 7, 2025

James Kenneth Chestney, 82, of Medora, Illinois, passed away peacefully on June 7, 2025.

Born in Fort Benning, Georgia in 1943, Jim spent his early years in Springfield, Illinois before his family moved to Bloomington. It was there, at Bloomington High School, that he met the love of his life, Carolyn S. Carey. They were married on September 5, 1964, in Bloomington, and shortly after began building their life together in Alton, Illinois.

Jim was a man of principle, quiet strength, and boundless curiosity. He graduated from Bloomington High School where he played four years of football and sang in the a cappella choir. He earned his undergraduate degree from Western Illinois University and was a proud member of the TKE fraternity. He went on to earn his master's degree and dedicated his life to education and craftsmanship.

For 37 years, Jim was a welding and machine shop teacher at Alton High School, where he was affectionately known as "Mr. C." He also taught night classes at Lewis and Clark Community College, sharing his skills and knowledge with students of all ages. His impact was lasting—he not only taught trades, but mentored character, discipline, and pride in hard work. His "Super Welders" group was a badge of honor among his students.

Jim had a gift for working with his hands. Woodworking was one of his many passions, and he could often be found crafting in his shop or offering help on a project. He was a member of Godfrey First United Methodist Church where

he used those skills to support the church. He loved history and reenactments and was an active participant in rendezvous gatherings, where he felt most connected to the past and to nature. Jim was also known for his incredible range of knowledge—he always seemed to know a little bit about everything. He was preceded in death by his parents, James R. Chestney and Virginia A. (Colvin) Chestney, a brother Denny R Chestney and by his beloved wife, Carolyn S. (Carey) Chestney. Their love and partnership were the foundation of a beautiful family and life well lived.

Jim is survived by his children: James Chestney (Kim), Jeffrey Chestney (Myrt) Robert “Hobbie” Chestney (Kim) and Carey (Chestney) Cox (Chad); and his 14 grandchildren.

Jim’s legacy lives on through the lives he touched as a teacher, mentor, father, grandfather, and friend. His life was a testament to hard work, lifelong learning, and quiet generosity.

Visitation will be at Gent Funeral Home in Alton, IL on June 28, 2025 from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and service will follow at 12:30. Pastor Jay Hanscom will officiate. Internment of ashes will be held privately at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Jim’s honor to Godfrey First United Methodist Church 1100 Airport Rd Godfrey Il, 62035

He will be dearly missed and forever remembered. Additional information and online guestbook may be found at www.gentfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN **28**. 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home & Cremation Services
2409 State Street
Alton, IL 62002
(618) 466-5544
<https://www.gentfuneralhome.com/>

Memorial Service

JUN **28**. 12:30 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home
2409 State Street
Alton, IL 62002

Tribute Wall

JH

“ *a great man with a caring heart, the world is lesser at his passing. Let him be an inspiration for the remaining of us to do better.* ”

jason michael heeren - June 28, 2025 at 01:31 PM

KN

“ *Jim was a gentleman and a phenomenal person
Gracious leader , I am grateful to have known him, and privileged to have made his artillery staff uniform, a shining light has gone out but his light shines now on the other side , rest in peace dear friend* ”

Ka hleen Nadeau - June 28, 2025 at 12:31 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of James Kenneth Chestney.* ”



June 27, 2025 at 04:22 PM

YF

“ *Your AEG family purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of James Kenneth Chestney.* ”



Your AEG family - June 25, 2025 at 03:05 PM

GR

“ My utmost admiration for Mr. C my welding instructor in high school
- class 78/79 & 79/80

*“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish
and you feed him for a lifetime”*

My deepest sympathy to his family,

Glenn Reinhardt

Glenn Reinhardt - June 17, 2025 at 04:24 PM

KF

“ I owe this fine man more than I can say. Mr.C helped me with so
many aspects of my life. My condolences to his family. Godspeed
my mentor, my friend.

Kevin Fuller - June 13, 2025 at 08:37 AM

MB

“ Mr Chestney was one of the best teachers I ever had, he was such
a great man, always patient and willing to show you how to do
anything the right way. Such an awesome man, he will definitely be
missed.

Michael Belcher - June 11, 2025 at 09:23 AM

DG

*I couldn't agree with you more. If we had more teachers like him, it
would be a better world. The students that he taught went onto work in
the trades and made a very good living. Such a good man God bless.*

Daniel Gentry - June 11, 2025 at 08:28 PM

JC

“ *What an awesome Uncle! Love his stories and so many fun family memories over the years. 4th of July parties, Disney, watermelon floating in the swimming pool, diving for coins in the deep end, canoeing down the Current River... the list goes on. He will be surely missed! Love from Julie & Troy NC family* ❤️

Julie Cupples - June 10, 2025 at 09:55 PM

BE

“ *We would like to send our sincere condolences to Jim's family. We knew Jim from long ago and attended lots of reenactments and rendezvous events that he also attended. He was always a fun person to be around.*

Bess & Maurice Ellis

Bess Ellis - June 10, 2025 at 06:44 PM

CD

“ *To all who knew and shared their lives with James Kenneth Chestney, we mourn with you. Although we never had the honor to meet him, we could see his legacy through his beautiful grandchildren we have come to know and now his beautiful granddaughter Amanda (and his legacy) will become a part of our family too. We are so honored to have come to know him through the love Amanda has shared with us. We will forever play "the marble game" in his memory! Rest in the arms of Jesus, James, as He says "you were a good and faithful servant."* ❤️

Carolyn Diederich - June 10, 2025 at 05:34 PM