



James Allen Shanks

September 12, 1942 - September 13, 2024

James Allen Shanks, of Bourbonnais, crossed over on Friday, September 13, 2024, one day after his 82nd birthday.

James was born in Danville, IL., the son of Raymond and Jane Shanks (nee Sowers) on September 12, 1942, the second of four sons. He graduated high school, then served his country in the U.S. Army for three years. After high school, James moved to the West coast and supported himself by teaching classical guitar to students, both privately and in the classroom. His classical compositions were published in his own book during these years and distributed to music programs throughout the country.

In 1968 he returned to Danville, where he met the love of his life, Betty, and married her on October 22, 1968. Some bachelors would hesitate to marry a widow with five kids still at home, but not James. He became “Daddy” to all five that day, and never saw it any other way.

James was truly a Renaissance man. He was an immensely gifted, self-taught guitarist, pianist, banjo player, bassist, and singer. Together with Betty (who was also very musical!) he made a life of music, on the road and at home. He loved astronomy and spent many nights studying the stars. He learned carpentry and built a sunroom off the 2nd floor of his house all by himself. He cooked, painted, drew, wrote songs, read good books, loved movies,

especially sci fi and comedy, loved watching cartoons with his youngest, loved animals, especially his best dog, Lefty. He once found a nest of baby mice in the garage and was unable to exterminate them, saying, "Don't tell your mom." Later in life he pursued amateur radio and received both a ham radio license and a commercial radio license.

He loved Schlitz beer and fishing (especially those two together.) He had a temper and was stubborn as a Missouri mule, up but he was the kind of guy who took in stray teens, stray dogs, and lonely people. He never met a stranger.

He is survived by his children, Sue Woods of Catlin, IL., John Stevens (Bonnie) of Kankakee, Sally Smith, also of Kankakee, and Samantha Hunter of Manteno; 9 grandchildren, Jennifer Dolliger, Neil Stevens, Sarah Allen Smith, James Robert Smith, Michelle Jones, Ann Dewitt, Holly Cox, Austin Thompson, and Mary Kate Thompson.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Betty; son, Bernie Stevens; daughter, Stacy Thompson; and son-in-law, Ken Smith.

Per James' wishes there will be no service. Internment will take place on Tuesday, October 22, 2024, at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, IL., at a time yet to be determined.

RIP Dad, till we meet again.

Cemetery Details

Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery

20953 west Hoff Rd
Elwood, IL 60421

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

JB

“ *RIP Uncle Jim. They're playing music in heaven. Love from Jim and Mary Kay* ”

Jim Beedle - September 24, 2024 at 06:31 PM

HG

“ *Sally, so sorry to hear about the passing of your father and Sarah's Grandfather* ”



Herman Giese - September 24, 2024 at 06:30 PM