



James Franklin Barnette

March 2, 1946 - July 27, 2026

James "Jim" Franklin Barnette

March 2, 1946 – July 27, 2026

Major General James "Jim" Franklin Barnette, a young 80, of Queenstown, Maryland, entered into eternal rest on July 27, 2026, at his home, surrounded by the love of his family.

Born on March 2, 1946, in Charlotte, North Carolina, Jim was the son of the late B. Alex Barnette, Sr. and Agnes Blythe Barnette. Growing up on the family farm near Huntersville, he embraced every opportunity for adventure. He loved riding his horses, cherished his cars, enjoyed taking things apart to learn how they worked, and was happiest outdoors with his hands busy building, repairing, or exploring. Those early passions grew into a lifelong love of aviation, boating, tractors, and fixing just about anything. More importantly, they reflected the curiosity, patience, capability, and generosity that became hallmarks of the man so many came to know and love.

Jim was a member of Huntersville Presbyterian Church, where he first met Mildred Hope in pre-kindergarten Sunday School. Their childhood friendship blossomed into a lifelong love story. They graduated together from North Mecklenburg High School with the Class of 1964, married in 1967, and built a

life together marked by unwavering love, faith, and devotion. Their classmates remained lifelong friends, and just months before his passing, they gathered once again to celebrate their 80th birthdays together—a fitting tribute to friendships and a love story that endured for a lifetime.

Jim earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Western Carolina University in 1968. He was a member of the Delta Sigma Phi fraternity. He briefly worked for R.H. Bouligny, Inc. before receiving his draft notice. Choosing to answer the call to serve, he enlisted in the Air Force accepted a commission through Officer Training School in the United States Air Force in 1968 and earned his pilot wings at Reese Air Force Base, Texas. What began as a commitment to his country became a distinguished military career spanning active duty, the Air Force Reserve, and the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

A command pilot with more than 18,000 flying hours, including more than 800 combat flying hours, Jim proudly served his country during the Vietnam War as a Forward Air Controller flying the O-2. During ten years of active-duty service, he was stationed at Reese Air Force Base, McGuire Air Force Base, and Randolph Air Force Base, where he served as an instructor pilot at the IPIS. He later earned a Master's degree in Management from Webster University.

Jim continued his service in the Air Force Reserve before serving twenty-three years in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. Throughout his distinguished military career, he held positions of increasing responsibility, including Commander 146th TFS, Vice Commander of the 171st Air Refueling Wing, Chief of Staff of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, and ultimately Assistant Adjutant General for Air. As Major General James F. Barnette, he was responsible for the operational readiness of one of the nation's largest Air National Guard organizations, providing leadership for more than 4,000

Airmen while advocating nationally for modernization, readiness, and the continued strength of the Total Force. Beyond his official responsibilities, he was known as a mentor and leader who invested in people, encouraged excellence, and inspired those who had the privilege of serving beside him.

His exemplary military service earned numerous honors and decorations, including the Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters and Earl T. Ricks Award, among many others. He was inducted into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame.

While serving in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, Jim also began a distinguished civilian aviation career. He joined United Airlines in 1978 before transferring to USAir in 1980, where he served not only as an airline captain but also in management and leadership roles. Whether leading Airmen, flying the line, mentoring fellow pilots, or serving those around him, Jim earned the respect of colleagues through his professionalism, integrity, quiet leadership, and unwavering commitment to excellence. He believed success was measured not only by accomplishments, but by the lives he influenced and the people he helped along the way.

Above all else, Jim was a man of quiet strength, unwavering integrity, and deep humility. Though his military service and professional accomplishments earned the respect and admiration of many, those who knew him best will remember him for something far greater: the way he lived his life and the way he made others feel.

At the center of his life was the love he shared with his beloved wife, Mildred Hope Barnette. Childhood friends who became high school sweethearts, they remained each other's greatest source of strength and encouragement for nearly fifty-nine years of marriage. Their enduring love was a quiet testament

to commitment, partnership, and God's faithfulness.

He was a devoted husband, a loving father and grandfather, a faithful friend, and a servant to his church and community. He believed that character was demonstrated not through words, but through actions. He was always the first to offer a helping hand, to share his knowledge, to encourage someone in need, or simply to sit beside a friend during life's difficult moments. His kindness was genuine, his generosity quiet, and his grace constant. He had a remarkable way of bringing out the best in others, giving them the confidence to believe in themselves.

Flying was one of his greatest passions, and anyone who knew Jim knew just how deeply he loved airplanes. But for him, flying was never just about the aircraft—it was about sharing the skies with others. With the same calm confidence and patient spirit that defined every part of his life, he taught countless people to fly, including his son, his daughter, and later, his grandchildren. His greatest satisfaction came not from taking the controls himself, but from watching others discover the freedom, confidence, and wonder of flight.

That same enthusiasm carried into every corner of his life. Whether carving a perfect slalom turn across the river on water skis, working on his tractors and his many motors, building or fixing something with his hands, or introducing someone to a new adventure, he was happiest when surrounded by family and friends. He had a remarkable gift for teaching with patience, encouraging with kindness, and making others feel capable, confident, and safe.

His faith was not something he simply professed—it was something he lived. Through his church, his community, and his daily interactions, he reflected Christ's love through humility, service, compassion, and quiet generosity. He carried himself with honor in every season of life. Even during his final

months, he faced each day with remarkable courage, steadfast faith, and graciousness, thinking more of the comfort of others than of himself.

Jim treasured the fellowship of fellow veterans and aviators. He was a member of VFW Post 7464, American Legion Post 296, the Veterans Group of Queen Anne's County, and the Quiet Birdmen Easton Hangar, where he formed many lasting friendships and shared the camaraderie of those who understood his lifelong passion for service and flight.

His greatest legacy is not found in the positions he held or the honors he received, but in the lives he shaped. He was steady in every storm, generous in every season, and strong in every circumstance. His family will forever remember the lessons he taught—not only about flying, but about living with courage, integrity, humility, faith, and love. His friends will remember his unwavering loyalty, gentle spirit, and quiet strength. He was filled with insight, laughter, kindness and joy. His church, Immanuel United Methodist, and community will remember a faithful servant who made every place he touched better simply by being there.

In addition to his parents, Jim was preceded in death by his brother, Dickie; his sister-in-law, Virginia; his parents-in-law, James and Myrtle Hope; his sisters-in-law, Mary Hope Farlow and Myrtle Hope Austin; and his brother-in-law, Don Austin.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Mildred Hope Barnette; his daughter, Kristi Barnette Geib and her husband, Ron, and their children, Anna and Matthew; his son, James Scot Barnette and his wife, Wendy, and their children, Abbi, Luke, and Mia; his brother, B. Alex Barnette, Jr (Lillian); and many beloved nieces, nephews, extended family members, and cherished friends.

The lives he touched will continue to reflect the course he set—one of faith,

humility, honor, and love. His family will forever look to the blue skies and remember the man who taught them not only how to fly, but how to live. Though our hearts are heavy with his absence, we rejoice in the promise that he has entered into the presence of his Savior, whom he faithfully served throughout his life. His was truly a life well lived, a race well run, and a faith well kept.

The family extends heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Garg and the team at Maryland Oncology Hematology for their exceptional care and compassion over the past twenty months; to Drs. Laheru and Liddell at Johns Hopkins Hospital; to Dr. Jacobs Cardiologist; to Dr. Salkeni and his team at Virginia Cancer Specialists (NEXT Oncology); to Dr. Somasundaram and his team at UNC Health, especially Kelly Hoyer, for their dedication, encouragement, and research efforts; and to Compass Regional Hospice for the loving care, compassion, and support they provided during Jim's final weeks.

Visitation will be Friday, August 14, 2026 from 6:00-8:00pm at Fellows, Helfenbein, & Newman Funeral Home, Chester, MD. A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, August 15, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at Immanuel United Methodist Church in Grasonville, MD. Family and friends are warmly invited to gather afterward at Jim and Mildred's home to continue celebrating his life, share memories, and enjoy fellowship together.

Interment at Arlington National Cemetery will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial contributions be made in Jim's memory to Compass Regional Hospice, 160 Coursevall Drive, Centreville, MD 21617. The family also invites you to honor Jim's memory by doing something that brings your loved ones together. Take a walk, spend a day on the water, teach someone a new skill, share a meal, tell stories, or simply enjoy one

another's company. He believed life's greatest moments were not found in accomplishments, but in time shared with family and friends. We hope you will celebrate his life by creating memories with those you love.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **14.** 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein, & Newnam Funeral Home, P.A.
106 Shamrock Road
Chester, MD 21619

Visitation

AUG **15.** 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Immanuel United Methodist Church
102 Schoolhouse Lane
Grasonville, MD

Funeral Service

AUG **15.** 11:00 AM (ET)

Immanuel United Methodist Church
102 Schoolhouse Lane
Grasonville, MD

Tribute Wall

JT

“ Jetblue Aircraft Delivery Team purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of James Franklin Barnette.



Jetblue Aircraft Delivery Team - August 13 at 02:35 PM

JT

“ Jetblue Aircraft Delivery Team planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Franklin Barnette.

Jetblue Aircraft Delivery Team - August 13 at 02:35 PM



“ Rose Tribute was purchased for the family of James Franklin Barnette.



August 13 at 08:09 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Franklin Barnette.

August 13 at 08:09 AM

JW

“ Jim leaves a vacant space that will remain in our hearts. Lourdes and I are certain that the moment he transitioned to eternity, he heard a powerful and sweet voice saying: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Well done, Sir.

Joe Wojtecki - August 12 at 12:00 PM

JW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Joe Wojtecki - August 12 at 11:56 AM

JW

USAF Thunderbirds Missing Man Formation

Joe Wojtecki - August 12 at 12:02 PM

“ Dear Mildred,

I feel so sorry for Jim's passing. When I got home from my bike ride and saw his photo, in uniform in your email, I knew, and I was completely stunned. I don't have words for my sadness, but I want you to know how deeply I feel for you. I can't imagine what you're going through—except that I know your faith and the strength of your 59 years of wonderful memories with Jim will carry you.

At our class reunion in May, he seemed strong, healthy, and full of warmth. I knew he was facing terminal illness, but I still hoped—still believed he would have more time. I had so much more I wanted to ask and say to him. When I saw him there, he looked like the Jim I've always known: friendly, vibrant, calm, and steady. Even as we both knew the illness was there, he didn't want to dwell on himself. He preferred to ask how I was doing in my work and my life, and he showed genuine concern for my progress.

He shared with enthusiasm, a story about a recent acrobatic flight he took with his son at the controls. Jim and I always shared a love of flying and boating. He was especially interested in my project rebuilding my sailboat—and in my plans to teach my grandson to sail ahead of earning his captain's license. These were the kind of dreams Jim would always encourage, rather than draw attention to himself.

Jim always represented the best I could hope to be—successful in school, sports, the military, and life, with humility and never with arrogance. As our football team's center, he played with heart and reliability, never trying to be the star. He was a steady, genuine friend—one of the regular guys, easy to relate to, with a gift for laughter and fun. (Even when I checked on him after he flipped his Sprite over on the railroad crossing after high school, he just laughed, said he was fine and only needed a new convertible top.)

After leaving the reunion, I realized how my time with Jim, to this day, still challenges me to be my best in every way—especially

finding myself active and still in reasonable health at 80 years old.

*Mildred, I love you both. I will miss Jim for the rest of my life here,
and I hope we can be together again in our afterlife.*

*Love you,
Tom*

Tom Manning - August 11 at 03:10 PM

YF

“ Your Compass Regional Hospice Family
purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the
family of James Franklin Barnette.



Your Compass Regional Hospice Family - August 11 at 01:54 PM

YF

“ Your Compass Regional Hospice Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in
honor of James Franklin Barnette.

Your Compass Regional Hospice Family - August 11 at 01:54 PM

RH

“ Rick and Carmen Hyman purchased the Endurin
g Grace for the family of James Franklin
Barnette.



Rick and Carmen Hyman - August 11 at 11:33 AM

SC

“ 1 file added to the album Jim's Happiness



Scot - August 10 at 03:47 PM

EA

“ Elizabeth Diaz, Tom and Mike Armstrong purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of James Franklin Barnette.



Elizabeth Diaz, Tom and Mike Armstrong - August 09 at 09:07 PM

EA

“ Elizabeth Diaz, Tom and Mike Armstrong planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Franklin Barnette.

Elizabeth Diaz, Tom and Mike Armstrong - August 09 at 09:07 PM

B(

“ I served alongside him, aka Sir or Jim, for 12 years and I was always treated fabulously by him. He was one of a very few that I truly was honored to have served with in my 25 year career in the military.



Bryon K. Coffman, MSgt. (Ret.) - August 09 at 04:21 PM

BC

“ *My sincere condolences to Mildred, family & friends. Prayers to all & may your memories be a blessing to you.*



Billie Carroll - August 08 at 09:07 AM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of James Franklin Barnette.*



August 01 at 01:43 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Franklin Barnette.*

August 01 at 01:43 PM

TW

“ *Tom And JoAnn Woodward lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette*



Tom and JoAnn Woodward - August 01 at 11:21 AM

GP

“ *Gene And Lynda Palmatary sent a virtual gift in memory of James Franklin Barnette*



Gene and Lynda Palmatary - July 31 at 10:35 PM

GP

Mildred. So, so sorry to hear of Jim's passing. It was always a pleasure to see him at the Queenstown Church Auction and chat. Our prayers and with you and your family at this time. Please know there are others that care and praying for you. He will be missed, but never forgotten. God Bless. Gene and Lynda Palmatary

Gene and Lynda Palmatary - July 31 at 10:38 PM

JC

“ I was deeply saddened to hear about Jim’s passing. Flying formation with him was one of the true highlights of my time in the air—he was a pilot you could trust implicitly, wingtip to wingtip.

Here’s a poignant tribute to General Jim, with Dick James executing the Missing Man pull up maneuver, with Jim on his wing.

Sharing the sky with Jim in formation was an honor I’ll cherish forever. Looking at this picture of him flying, I’m reminded of his strength, precision, and passion for flight. Though he has flown West, his legacy remains with all of us who had the privilege of flying by his side.

*He will be deeply missed. Blue skies and tailwinds, shipmate!
With deepest sympathy to his family and friends,*

John Cutcher



JOHN CUTCHER - July 31 at 10:24 PM

WL

“ Wayne Larrimore lit a candle in memory of
James Franklin Barnette



Wayne Larrimore - July 31 at 08:19 PM

BW

“ Bert and Linda Wells purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of James Franklin Barnette.



Bert and Linda Wells - July 31 at 06:51 PM

BW

“ Bert and Linda Wells planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Franklin Barnette.

Bert and Linda Wells - July 31 at 06:51 PM

FH

“ From Kate and Brad Howard purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James Franklin Barnette.



From Kate and Brad Howard - July 31 at 02:36 PM



“ Memorial Honor Blanket was purchased for the family of James Franklin Barnette.



July 31 at 01:19 PM

GB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Gina Burgess - July 31 at 10:52 AM

GB

A great time together, such a blessing to be friends for so many years. Will miss you. Rest in peace. Hugs to the family.

Gina Burgess - July 31 at 10:56 AM

GB

May your family find comfort in the love that surrounds you.

Gina Burgess - July 31 at 11:03 AM

DW

“ David Wenck lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette



David Wenck - July 31 at 10:23 AM

DW

Very nice man he would always come into the lawnmower shop in Queenstown always talked about his trips flying RIP Mr Jim

David Wenck - July 31 at 10:28 AM

HU

“ 1 file added to the album *Jim's Happiness*



Hunter - July 31 at 09:00 AM

TW

“ *Tim Ward lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette*



Tim Ward - July 31 at 07:05 AM

TW

Jim was a great neighbor, friend and pilot, He helped me build my house, always offering his tractor to help me. He will be sorely missed !

Tim Ward - July 31 at 07:08 AM

LB

“ *Lisa Boone lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette*



Lisa Boone - July 30 at 09:49 PM

JR

“ I spent my initial Naval Aviation service working with and for many leaders!! Jim Barnette was a personal hero of mine!! A great Pilot, a great leader, who so influenced and set the highest standard for new and younger Pilots to use as a model!! He was a hero to so many, but he was the best of all to me!! Rest in peace my friend!! You have earned it!!!

John Ross - July 30 at 08:50 PM

GG

“ Gay Gunther lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette



Gay Gunther - July 30 at 08:10 PM

SH

“ I am so glad that we got to see Jim at our Class of 1964 80th birthday party. Thank God that we decided to celebrate in the Spring rather than in the Fall. We were blessed to see & talk to Jim. Jim was an amazing man & we were honored to have known him. Rest in peace. Bobby & Sandy Hinson

Sandy Hinson - July 30 at 07:02 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Franklin Barnette.

July 30 at 07:00 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of James Franklin Barnette.*



July 30 at 07:00 PM



“ *June Clark lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette*



June Clark - July 30 at 06:26 PM



“ *Hello, my condolence goes out to family and love ones. I first met Jim a couple of years ago, Jim and Mildred treated my family as though we are part of their family. You cannot help but to love his family, a kind giving heart, showing love for every one there are no strangers, such a kind and loving person also his family. THANKYOU Jim and Mildred for the love and kindness shown to me an skeeter my daughter, How can I not speak of the love and kindness an giving heart that you and Mildred showed to my sister Sandy (aka Dee) love you both From (aka Bo)Melinda and Skeeter West of North Carolina*



Melinda & Skeeter Wesr - July 30 at 06:25 PM

DJ

“ *The greatest gift Jim gave us was to call him our friend
Rogie and Dick James*

Dick James - July 30 at 06:24 PM

DL

“ *Dolores Lane lit a candle in memory of James
Franklin Barnette*



Dolores Lane - July 30 at 05:19 PM

JC

“ *This one is tough. While not knowing Jim as long as many here, we
shared a common bond of the love of our profession and those in it.
We shared many a story, common friends and laughs over each.
His warmth, unflinching integrity and compassion for others are
memories I will always remember. His love of Mildred, and pride in
Kristi and Scot, who followed in his footsteps was evident every time
he spoke of them. And the way he faced this battle is a life lesson
for us all.*

*TO/GA , V1, Vr, V2...gear up, cleared unrestricted climb. Farewell,
my friend on your flight west.*

Burro

John Caputo - July 30 at 03:59 PM

JK

“ Jim and I were both Captains with USAIR, and in 1990 Jim was a designee for the FAA and gave me my type rating ride on the B737-300/400. Jim was a professional without losing his good-natured approach to his responsibilities.

After a tragic crash of a B737 near Pittsburgh, Pa., Jim and another check airman, on their own time, researched the problem with the rudder system and found a design flaw; otherwise, the pilots would have been blamed for the crash. Jim was a credit to the Airline Piloting profession.

*Captain Joe Kernan
USAir retired*

Joe Kernan - July 30 at 11:53 AM

JS

“ Mildred and family : so sorry to hear about Jim. Many fond memories of seeing and talking with Jim during my years working at Queen Anne's Hospice. He will be missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.
Jerry & Mary Sutton

Jerry Sutton - July 30 at 08:15 AM

JS

“ Jerry Sutton lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette



Jerry Sutton - July 30 at 08:03 AM

KL

“ *Kathy Lantz lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette*



Kathy Lantz - July 29 at 05:55 PM

KM

“ *Scott and I have been Jim and Mildred's neighbors for 24 years. Jim rescued me when I fell off my bike right in front of their driveway. He was a kind and decent man. Mildred, our hearts go out to you and your family.*



Kathy & Scott McCann

Kathy McCann - July 29 at 05:23 PM

BY

“ *Thoughts and prayers, Mildred, for you and your family in the loss of Jim.*

Jane Young



Bill Young - July 29 at 04:45 PM

CT

“ *Colleen Thomas lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette*



Colleen Thomas - July 29 at 02:28 PM

CT

*Dear Mildred and family,
Our thoughts and prayers of strength, peace and rest are with you all.
Jim was a great man, a role model, who always had a smile, kind words, and great conversation. He loved his wife, Mildred and family dearly. He will be sorely missed.
Colleen & Buddy Thomas*

Colleen Thomas - July 29 at 02:32 PM

EC

“ *We have lost a great friend, a great individual, a great family man and someone of undaunted courage*

Eric Ciganek - July 29 at 12:29 PM

BP

“ *Bill And Norma Patton lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette*



Bill and Norma Patton - July 29 at 09:22 AM

PH

“ *Phil And Joyce Hurlock lit a candle in memory of James Franklin Barnette*



Phil and Joyce Hurlock - July 29 at 06:24 AM

PH

Our most sincere condolences to the family at this very sad time. Our thoughts and prayers are with each of you.

Phil and Joyce Hurlock - July 29 at 06:29 AM

FS

“ *Frank And Jarrett Smith lit a candle in
memory of James Franklin Barnette*



Frank and Jarrett Smith - July 28 at 06:14 PM

RH

“ I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of my friend and North Mecklenburg High School classmate, Jim Barnette, on July 27, 2026. Jim and I first knew each other as teammates on the North Meck football field, where his steady presence and quiet determination made him someone you could always count on.



After graduation, our paths crossed again in uniform. Jim served in the U.S. Air Force from 1968 to 2006, a remarkable span of dedication and patriotism. I was also serving in the Air Force, and both of us spent time in Vietnam during those difficult years. Knowing Jim was out there—doing his duty with the same strength and integrity he showed on the football field—meant more than he ever knew.

In recent decades, Jim and I reconnected through our Class of '64 reunions, sharing stories, laughter, and memories of the long road we had traveled since our high school days. This year, at our 80th Birthday Reunion, we had the chance to catch up even more. Jim's warmth, humor, and genuine kindness were as strong as ever. It was a gift to spend that time with him.

Jim lived a life of service—to his country, to his family, and to everyone fortunate enough to call him a friend. My deepest condolences go to his Mildred, his daughter and son, and all who loved him. I take comfort in knowing that his legacy of strength, loyalty, and friendship will continue to shine brightly.

Rest well, Jim. You served your country with honor, and you walked through life with heart. It was a privilege to walk part of that road with you.

Rick Hyman - July 28 at 03:13 PM

GA

My condoldences to Mildred and the family. I first met Jim in the 9th grade and always enjoyed talking to him. I sat at the same table at our recent high school reunion and had a good talk with him, He was a very interesting and honorable man. He will be missed.

Gary Ashford - July 30 at 11:18 PM