



James L. Bass

June 7, 1921 - May 21, 2020

Funeral Services for Smith County, TN, native James Lillard Bass, Jr, will be held at 2PM on Sunday, May 24, 2020 at the Carthage Chapel of Bass Funeral Homes, conducted by Rev. Jerry Wallace and Rev. Monica Mowdy with eulogy delivered by his daughter, Jane Bass Turner. Burial will follow in the Gordonsville Cemetery. Visitation with the family will be at the Carthage Chapel of Bass Funeral Home on Saturday from 3PM until 8PM and on Sunday from 10AM until service time at 2PM. Mr. Bass passed away on Thursday, May 21, 2020, two weeks before his 99th birthday. He was 98 years of age.

A son of the late J.L. and Linnie Gibbs Bass, he received his early education in the Smith County School system graduating from Gordonsville High School in 1939. He enrolled in Cumberland University to continue his education which was interrupted by America's entry into World War II. While at Cumberland University he helped pay his tuition by waiting (hopping) tables in the university's dining room.

During World War II he served as a radio operator and aerial gunner on a heavy bomber assigned to the U.S. Army Air Corps stationed with the 8th Air Force in Conington, England with the 457th Bomb Group. In preparation for his assignment he went through basic training by what he called was the toughest drill sergeant in the Army. He then took an extensive course in radio operation and maintenance and procedure at an army facility in Sioux Falls, SD. It was here he learned the International Morse Code. Aerial Gunnery school followed in Yuma, AZ. In combat he participated in the Battle of the Bulge, the Rhineland Offensive, and the Central Europe Campaign. For his service he was awarded the European, African, and Middle East Campaign Medal with battle stars, the Air Medal with clusters, the Victory Medal, and the French Foreign Legion Medal of Honor, the highest honor bestowed by the French Government for his role in liberating French POW's. Concerning his service in the Armed Forces he said "I was proud to have served. I was aware that I was part of a larger effort that would have a lasting impact on the world. If we had not stepped up when we did and Hitler had been successful, we would be living in a very different world at this time."

After the conclusion of the war he continued his education with an undergraduate degree from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville in 1947. He entered law school at Vanderbilt University and graduated in 1949, beginning a long career in law. He remained active until May 8, 2020.

Mr. Bass was instrumental in the formation and development of the Smith Utility District. Funds for the formation and development of public works projects were scarce in the early 1960's; however he looked for and found a favorable source of financing to start the project. He has looked with pride with the development of the District and provided legal services to the district for more than 50 years. He was also active in helping secure funds for rural telephone systems to bring modern telephone service to rural areas and served as legal counsel for more than 50 years to a trade association, NTCA, whose membership consisted of rural telephone systems located all across the nation. He served on the Smith County Industrial Board, and prepared the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws of the Industrial Board, the Smith County Chamber of Commerce, and the Smith County Heritage Museum. He was a longtime member of the Carthage United Methodist Church where he taught adult Sunday School Class for a number of years and was active at all levels of the Methodist Church.

He is the author of a historical account of the 457th Bomb Group and a history of the rural telephone program. He was also a licensed funeral director in the State of Tennessee and at the time of his death was the oldest licensed funeral director in the state.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years; Erma Elizabeth Armistead Bass, Son; John Lillard Bass, Siblings; Paul B. Bass, Bernie S. Bass, and Cara Duncan Bass.

He is survived by two children; James David (Dawn) Bass of Carthage, TN, and Jane Elizabeth (Larry) Turner of Gordonsville, TN. Grandchildren; Emily Jane Bass, James Gregory Bass, Lilly Katherine Turner, and Steven (Kerri) Clemons. Special Friend; Tiffany Angel.

The family requests memorials be made to the Carthage United Methodist Church Memorial Fund or a charity of your choice.

Due to COVID-19, no food or drink will be accepted at the funeral home.

Cemetery Details

Gordonsville Cemetery

34 Hickman Hwy
Gordonsville, TN 38563

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 23. 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Carthage Chapel of Bass Funeral Home
807 N Main Street
Carthage, TN 37030
kurtbass@bassfh.com
<https://www.bassfh.com/>

Visitation

MAY 24. 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Carthage Chapel of Bass Funeral Home
807 N Main Street
Carthage, TN 37030
kurtbass@bassfh.com
<https://www.bassfh.com/>

Service

MAY 24. 2:00 PM (CT)

Carthage Chapel of Bass Funeral Home
807 N Main Street
Carthage, TN 37030
kurtbass@bassfh.com
<https://www.bassfh.com/>

Tribute Wall

HG

“ We first met in 2000. In Carthage, Tennessee, home of then Vice President Al Gore, who at the time was running for President. James acted as local representative of the Gore campaign which he did with great spirit, humor and a juicy southern accent. We did two reports for Dutch TV with James in a starring role 😊 First during the primaries and later on Election night in Nashville.

Ever since 2000 we stayed in touch, discussing US politics and other things in life. Such as his time in the US Air Force in WW II, liberating Europe. It is great that he reached to age of almost 99, but very sad to learn that an unfortunate fall turned out fatal.

James, my friend, you will be dearly missed. And thanks for all those nice conversations and wonderful memories. : 1:

*Herman van Gelderen
The Netherlands*

Herman van Gelderen - June 07, 2020 at 01:15 PM

JT

Thank u for your kind comments. Daddy has that way of influencing and befriending people of all walks of life. Thank u for remembering him.
Jane Bass Turner

Jane Turner - September 07, 2020 at 08:15 AM

HG

“ RIP James Bass 🥲🇺🇸

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Herman van Gelderen

Herman van Gelderen - June 04, 2020 at 04:23 AM

GB

“ Our deepest sympathy to the family during your time of loss.
Mr. James was a fine man and will be greatly missed. Glenn ;& Judy Young Bush.

Glenn & Judy Young Bush - May 30, 2020 at 07:21 PM

FW

“ *I was the vice-chair of the Conference CFA during James's second term as Chair. What a gentle and gracious mentor he was. It was my great pleasure to have known and worked with him. Foye Webb*

Foye Webb - May 25, 2020 at 12:57 PM

SJ

“ *Mr. Bass and his firm was the attorney for our father, Roger V. Wellbrook, Lt. Col., USMC. He prepared the wills, POAs, and Living Wills for him, his son and wife. Mr. Bass emphasized the need to plan for the end of our lives and we are eternally grateful that he did so for us. Mr. Bass was a fine gentleman and we will remember him fondly. Our prayers and condolences for his family go out for their loss.*

*Joseph Wellbrook (Sherry)
Gainesboro, TN*

Sherry and Joe - May 24, 2020 at 07:55 AM

HB

“ So sorry to learn of Mr. Bass's passing. He was a lawyer's lawyer. I know he will be missed by all who knew him. He leaves us with a beautiful history from his good work. My condolence to his family. Haywood Barry, Wilson County General Sessions Judge.

Haywood Barry - May 24, 2020 at 07:54 AM

RW

“ I'm very sorry for your loss, and our's too He was a walking History I enjoyed talking with Him I have a memory 60 yrs. ago We would share. You are in My prayers and thought's Love You all very much .



Richard woodard - May 23, 2020 at 07:53 PM

WG

“ Our family's condolences to the family of Mr Bass. He was a fine person and a true Southern gentleman! I met Mr Bass through my dad (William, Sr) and mother (Ann Miriam) and they always remarked upon the friendship they shared with him. The last time I spoke with him was at my Dad's interment in Gordonsville this past June. Again, he was a truly fine individual and will be greatly missed! Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

William Gwaltney, Jr
Maureen Warren

William Gwaltney - May 23, 2020 at 05:21 PM

RG

“ He will live on through the wonderful family he has left behind. Our community is so fortunate to retain David Bass and his family in Carthage, who inspire the rest of us through their contributions to church and community. God bless you Mr. Bass; you will be sorely missed; thank you for the wonderful family you have created for us to be examples for the rest of us. Thanks for your leadership, kindness and example. Ruth McCall and Gary Garrett

Ruth McCall Garrett - May 23, 2020 at 10:43 AM

SD

“ My daughter, Grace, was loved by Mr. & Mrs. Bass and spent many hours at their house. Mr. Bass would come home at lunch and slide her around in an enamel wash tub and treated her as family. My family was so blessed to have been a part of his family.

Susie Dennis - May 22, 2020 at 04:49 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James L. Bass.



May 22, 2020 at 04:38 PM

TH

“ I met Lawyer Bass while my wife and I were stationed in the UK when he visited his old base , I met a true southern Gentleman and enjoyed my time taking with him and doing research for him . He will be greatly missed and I will always have great memories of having met him , I am so sorry to hear of the families loss
Tom Hayman

THOMAS HAYMAN - May 22, 2020 at 04:34 PM

NL

“ May God continue to bless this family. Mr. Bass was always so good to our family and so many others. May you find peace knowing he is with our Lord.

Nancy Lewis - May 22, 2020 at 02:10 PM

DR

“ Mr. Bass was a wonderful man, an excellent attorney and a beloved mentor. I had known him as a good friend and colleague as fellow attorneys in the rural telephone cooperative world for more than 35 years. His counsel to me was always kind, gracious and positive. We had a lot of good times, laughs, and fellowship together at coop lawyer meetings, and I loved his many “war” stories. Whether we shared a steak at a meeting; or shared a Pizza in his hometown of Carthage, he was a great friend. I was blessed to follow him as general counsel at NTCA, and his mentoring of me during the transition was invaluable. I will greatly miss him. Don R. Richards, Lubbock, Texas.

Don Richards - May 22, 2020 at 01:48 PM

SC

“ I am so sorry to hear of his passing but am so thankful for the wonderful legacy he has left for all of you. Please be assured that you are in my prayers. He was always a kind gentleman to me and Bert. Sue Coble

Sue Coble - May 22, 2020 at 12:16 PM

NE

“ NineStar Connect Directors & Employees purchased the Fiery Lily and Rose for the family of James L. Bass.



NineStar Connect Directors & Employees - May 22, 2020 at 10:04 AM

GH

“ Family we love you. Thank you for sharing Mr. Bass with all of us. I praise God today for all the blessings I have received through knowing Jim. He was a friend, mentor and leader in my life. His consistent character, Godly wisdom, amazing memory and quick wit are just part of what made him so special. Our country, your community and the rural broadband industry cannot begin to quantify his impact on all of us. Thank you Mr. Bass for being you. We love you and we'll see you again! We will celebrate you now and will never forget what you have done for all of us!



Greg Hale - May 22, 2020 at 09:49 AM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of James L. Bass.



May 22, 2020 at 09:41 AM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of James L. Bass.*



May 22, 2020 at 08:59 AM

TG

“ *Telcom Insurance Group purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of James L. Bass.*



Telcom Insurance Group - May 22, 2020 at 08:15 AM

RS

“ *We are so sorry for your loss. His kindness to our family will always be remembered.*

RADM & Mrs Vinson E Smith - May 21, 2020 at 11:07 PM



“ *So sorry to hear of this, he was always one of my favorites.*

Randy Watts - May 21, 2020 at 10:59 PM

SB

“ *Our lives can be defined by those we meet. There are few I have met who I have had a greater respect for - their work ethic, their moral compass or their passion to leave the world in a better place than Mr. Bass. His years of passionate work to ensure that all Americans, regardless of where they lived, had access to telephone and later broadband service was just a small part of his passion to improve the lives of others. He was also smart, kind, quick with a supportive word and a smile and genuinely one of the finest men I have had the honor to work with and to simply know. David and Jane were the stars in his eyes and I look forward to knowing he's made his way to the heavens above. Shirley Bloomfield*

shirley bloomfield - May 21, 2020 at 09:01 PM

DL

“ David, Jane and Family, We will not be attending services for Mr Bass due to the virus, but wish to extend our condolences as well as to express our true feelings regarding both your father and mother. Nancy and I cherish the many memories with the couple we regarded as the most down to earth, honest, helpful and friends to be counted on at all times. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. God bless. The Lashers; Nancy and Dave

Dave Lasher - May 21, 2020 at 08:58 PM

MM

“ Families were always friends.—A fine man! Thanks for his service to our nation 🇺🇸

Morris & Glenda (Sanderson) Myers - May 21, 2020 at 08:06 PM

RB

“ A Fine Christian Gentleman , in every sense , Who will be Dearly Missed !!! Great Legal Representative for NTCA for many Years !!!

Ricky E. Strong , Twin Lakes Board - May 21, 2020 at 06:27 PM

WW

“ He and David often invited me to go with them to the Indy 500. Even in his 70s, it was all the rest of us could do just to keep up with him. Amazing man, amazing father, great lawyer, wonderful friend. Wayne Winfree

Wayne Winfree - May 21, 2020 at 05:55 PM

SG

“ Mr. Bass was one of the sweetest, kindest men I have ever known. I have known this gentle man all my life. He was a great man to his family and to all his friends. I know how kind he was to my mother and I will always be grateful for his help and kindness during my mother's later years. Mr. Bass was a true friend.

Sally Gibbs - May 21, 2020 at 05:48 PM

EB

“ Evelyn Brown lit a candle in memory of James L. Bass



Evelyn Brown - May 21, 2020 at 04:58 PM

RB

“ Sorry to hear about the death of Mr. Bass. Mr Bass gave my start in the funeral business. I was a Jr in high school in Cookeville, Tn and road the bus to carthage and stay uptairs at the funeral home some 50 years ago and later became a Embalmer and Funeral Director . Sorry I am unable to be there but I always thank him several times for his kindess. RIP Roger K. Burke Cookeville, Tenn.

Roger Burke - May 21, 2020 at 04:51 PM