



James Vernon Lewis

July 23, 1934 - September 29, 2025

James Vernon Lewis was born July 23, 1934 in Holmes County, Florida. He died at his daughter's home on Monday, Sept. 29, 2025 in Tallahassee, Florida at the age of 91 years and 2 months, and was the second oldest surviving member of his entire family, surpassed only by his cousin, Aaron Nathaneal Bauldree, aged 91 years and 8 months. When they got together they sure could tell some stories!

Although he considered himself just a plain country fellow, he accomplished much despite his modest start in life.

The oldest of nine siblings, he was born into a poor family, when the country had emerged from the Great Depression and was about to plunge into World War II. He grew up in and around Chipley, Florida. Times were hard, and his family sharecropped, moving frequently, starting school late each year after crop picking was done. He had no shoes until age 10, and picked cotton when he was small. He struggled in school but found a benefactor there - the band director Mr. Thompson, who not only provided a music outlet for young "Vernon", but provided him with many life experiences that would have been unattainable otherwise. Playing just by ear, Vernon became an integral part of the high school band, and joined "The Footlifters" - a small high school group that played for special occasions in the community. He and some friends had a 30 minute radio show gig for a time. At some point he learned to read music,

and could play any instrument he picked up - banjo, piano, horn, trumpet, guitar, mandolin, drums, harmonica, accordion, etc. In his 70s, he was persuaded by his daughter to play handbells with her.

He quit school shy of graduating to join the Air Force in 1952, knowing he had to support his family. Stationed at Maxwell Field, he played in the band. He sent half his pay home each month for three years, making life a little easier for his siblings. He served for 3 years.

After discharge, he learned surveying and drafting on the job in Richmond, Virginia, where he met his wife Betty in 1960. They married in 1962 and had one daughter, Lisa Page in 1965. Job opportunities took the family to Tallahassee in 1970, where Jim (as he was known to his wife and work friends) worked at the Department of Transportation for many years.

With only his GED and no college, Jim studied at night after working full time at the Tallahassee Dept. of Transportation during the day, and moonlighting each night as a draftsman, and took the board exam for Civil Engineering, which he passed, allowing him to advance professionally as a Registered Engineer. In 1980, job opportunities necessitated a move to Seminole, Florida. He and his wife lived there until 1999, when they joined their daughter in Virginia to enjoy retirement.

Never able to get the longing for Dixieland out of his system, he convinced his family to make a move south in 2015, settling in Headland, Alabama where even at the age of 80, Jim helped restore a historical 1902 home. He and Betty occupied the renovated carriage house behind the "Big House," as he called it. The family moved back to Tallahassee in 2022.

This man had some shortcomings, as we all do, but was the best father a girl

could ask for. He was always available to talk things over, listen to every little thing, fix whatever needed it, build whatever was desired, tutor and offer unconditional love and acceptance, no matter what. He accepted all of our flaws and loved us unconditionally anyway. He and I shared an ability to think and feel deeply, and we shared many long discussions on life and dreams and goals.

When he became a paw-paw he spent many hours with his grandchildren, especially the last two, Jackson and Quincie.

He survived many things that should have killed him - childhood illnesses and frostbite for which he saw no doctor, malaria, tick borne diseases, stage four esophageal cancer in 2004, and multiple cardiac arrests.

Jim is survived by his daughter, Lisa Page Lewis, grandchildren Jessica, Kayla, Joseph, Emily, Lindsey, Abigail, Alyssa, Jackson and Quincie and great grandchildren Liam, Gabe, Henry Walker, and Leana.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Mary Jones Cox, father James Coy Lewis, wife Betty Cauley Lewis, and daughter-in-law Fyenne Farabee.

Although his death leaves an emptiness in our hearts and lives that can never be filled, we all have so many good memories from a life well-lived - so many humorous things and memorable times and camping trips - that we consider ourselves blessed and fortunate to have had him for as long as we did. Wait for us, Dad, on the bench beside the lake at Douthat - we'll be there as soon as we can.

**Mom and Dad and I talked many times about scattering their ashes at Lake Douthat in Virginia - a favorite place that we visited often. I am going to put a

memorial bench there for them with their names engraved on it. In lieu of flowers, anyone wishing to make an contribution to the bench may do so via PayPal (@lisalewis240) or Venmo (@Lisa-Lewis-355). Please add a note earmarking the funds for the memorial bench.

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Bevis Funeral Home - September 30, 2025 at 10:25 AM