

JIM B. HIGGINBOTHAM



James Byron 'Jim B.' Higginbotham was peacefully called to his heavenly home on Friday, February 8. Jim was born in Fernandina Beach on April 14, 1944. He grew up in Hilliard and as a young man he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Jim was baptized at Hilliard Baptist Church. At the time of his passing, he was a Fernandina Beach resident and active member of First Baptist Church of Fernandina Beach where he sang in the choir, while also singing bass in the men's ensemble "A Few Good Men". He loved the Lord and his church family. He wanted to attend services even after he was unable to do so because of his declining health.

Jim graduated from Hilliard High School and was proud to play on the basketball team that brought home the State AA Basketball Championship in 1963. After graduating from Lake City Community College, where he continued to play basketball on an athletic scholarship, he enrolled in Middle Georgia State University in Warner Robbins, GA.

In 1966, he joined the United States Air Force and was a proud Veteran of the Vietnam War where he was stationed in the Philippines as an Aeronautical Mechanic. After returning home from Vietnam, he went to work with Houdaille-Duval Wright Construction Company and was the Superintendent on the Downtown Fernandina Beach Centre Street redesign and building project. After completion, the City of Fernandina Beach offered him the position of Director of Public Works. He retired from that position after over 25 years of service.

He was a die-hard Georgia Bulldog Fan, loved to play golf, enjoyed riding his bike around the island, having late afternoon coffee with his buddies, indulging in chocolate and of course his favorite...politics!

Like his father before him, he served three terms as a Nassau County Commissioner and was also elected as Chairman by his fellow Commissioners. He was a highly ethical, honest, kind, intelligent, generous, handsome, loving, outgoing (never met a stranger!), competitive, talented, loyal, adventurous, funny, man's-man. He loved his family immensely and his favorite thing to do was to spend time with them. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

He leaves behind his wife, Carol L. Decker-Higginbotham of Amelia Island; as well as his three beloved children: son, Barry (Stacey) Higginbotham of Yulee; daughters Laran Phelps of Yulee and Erin (CJ) Eiras of Jacksonville; a sister Vivian Armstrong; and a brother Richard (Cathy) Higginbotham, all of Hilliard. Jim also leaves behind his seven beloved grandchildren, Baleigh and Brennan Higginbotham, Ella and Amelia Phelps and Severiano, Bianca and Maximus Eiras; and two stepsons Steve and Mark Decker along with their families. He also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, close cousins, life-long friends, as well as the mother of his three children Jan R. Spottswood of Jacksonville. He was preceded in death by his parents, John B. and Wynelle Davis Higginbotham; a brother Johnny; and stepfather Carl Wright; as well as son-in-law Neil Phelps.

A memorial service to celebrate Jim's life and legacy will be held Saturday, February 16 at 11 a.m. at the Fernandina Beach First Baptist Church on 8th Street.

Please share your memories and condolences at www.oxleyheard.com.

If so desired, donations may be made in Jim's memory to Community Hospice of N.E. Florida, 4266 Sunbeam Road, Jacksonville, 32257.