



James "Jim" Chewning

April 28, 1930 - September 22, 2024

God has him in His arms and we will always have him in our hearts. James (Jim) Edward Chewning (94) passed away on September 22, 2024 in Tyler.

Born on April 28, 1930 in Paytes, Virginia to James and Cathleen Chewning, Jim was the third of 14 children. His education comprised of only completing the fifth grade, but receiving his GED from the US Army. However, Jim would say he graduated from the "School of Hard Knocks."

At the age of 17, Jim enlisted in the US Army and spent the first four years as a Construction Engineer Specialist. The remainder of his 21 years, seven months and zero days was spent in the logistics field. Army life, being a transient life, Jim's duty stations included several states, Trinidad, Germany, England, and Vietnam. The latter was, according to Jim, by far his best duty assignment because he was able to do the most good for his fellow soldiers. He especially cherished his weekly visits to the Tan Mai orphanage and providing much needed clothing donated by stateside family and friends.

Military life also blessed Jim with introducing him to his kindred spirit, 1LT Alice Sander. They married on January 2, 1957 and had four wonderful daughters. At the end of his service to our country in 1969, Bronze Star recipient Master Sergeant Jim Chewning honorably retired and settled down in Indiana with his family.

Starting his second career with the WA Butler Company, a 22-branch veterinary medicine and pet food supplier, Jim's work ethic made it possible for him to become the company's first ever recipient of the Employee of the Year award. He went on to become its branch manager before his second retirement in 1995.

During his time in Indiana, he continued his passion for volunteerism. He became a member of St John UCC where he was an Elder and Deacon. He also joined the Lawrence Lions Club. With the Lions, he devoted countless hours to their sight program and cherished the 18 years he was the Leader Dog Chairman. With the Salvation Army, Jim drove trucks, performed warehouse duties, went on mission trips and helped with the Christmas Angel Tree Program. With Indiana Prevent Blindness, he conducted thousands of visual screenings for adults. He was a staff driver for the non-profit organization "Second Helpings." For American Cancer Society, he drove cancer patients to and from their appointments. He tutored elementary students needing help with reading. One of his most prized memories was tutoring then becoming a mentor to a fatherless "at-risk" 9-year-old boy. He was awarded the Indianapolis Mayor's Volunteer Partnership Award in 1999 for all of his outstanding contributions.

Wanting to be closer to family, Jim and Alice moved to Tyler, Texas in 2000. Continuing his volunteerism, his third full-time career, he dedicated many years to such organizations as The Tyler Noon Lions Club holding every leadership position and actively participating in fundraisers and activities to include the Texas Lions Camp in Kerrville. With Pollard United Methodist Church, he was part of the Wednesday Work Crew that kept the grounds looking beautiful and participated in more than a dozen mission trips to help those effected by the numerous hurricanes here in Texas. During one of his twenty trips to UMCOR, the staff honored him by naming the walking bridge

after him- “Jim’s Crossing.” For the Salvation Army, he oversaw the Food Distribution for the Angel Tree Program in addition to helping with the Toy Distribution and bell ringing. He was a board member for Texas Lighthouse for the Blind. He took part in every annual United Way’s Day of Caring and Keep Tyler Beautiful’s Tree Planting and Park Service Day events until he could no longer do so. His volunteer work continued into his 90s with his last event in January, 2024 at the age of 93.

Jim’s can-do attitude earned him countless awards with these organizations, including the first ever KTB Difference Maker Volunteer Award. Because of his non-stop work ethic, always going above and beyond, fellow volunteers gave him the nickname of “The Energizer Bunny.” He lived the Lion’s Creed-leading by example, building relationships and improving the community through kindness. He was an inspiration to all he met. He had a servant’s heart and put it into action. He was a role model in all aspects of his well-lived life.

Though he will be dearly missed by family and friends, Jim is pain free, standing tall and at peace. A devoted family man, Jim leaves behind his wife, Alice, after 67 years of marriage; daughters Brenda Chewning-Kulick (George), Carol Szarenski (Caroline Sanchez), Donna Volberding (Wes), and Ellen Blankenship; 17 grandchildren, Kasey, Travis, and Morgan Chewning-Kulick; Katrina (Ramiro Bravo), Alexander, Juliana (Zach Dunton), Nicholas, and Gabriella Volberding; Cody (Kevin) Crehan, CJ (Stefanie), Garrett (Jess), Jordan, Kaylee, Jesse, Lauren, Erin, and Noah Blankenship; 1 great-grandchild Harper Leigh Crehan; seven siblings, Laura Emery, Franklin (Shirlene), Joyce Larson, Charles (Gay), Allen, Ralph (Iris), and Gene and numerous nieces and nephews.

Visitation is scheduled from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Friday, October 4, 2024 at Stewart Family Funeral Home, 7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy. Funeral service

will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 5, 2024 also at Stewart Family Funeral Home with Marla Matthews officiating. Graveside service with military honors will follow at Rose Lawn Cemetery, 2003 Blue Mountain Blvd. There will be a gathering with snacks and refreshments at Pollard United Methodist Church, 3030 New Copeland Rd, after the gravesite service. All are welcome to attend any or all of the services and gathering.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to your favorite charity or to Pollard United Methodist Church in Jim's name.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 4. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Stewart Family Funeral Home
7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy
Tyler, TX 75703
(903) 581-2008

Funeral Service

OCT 5. 1:30 PM (CT)

Stewart Family Funeral Home
7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy
Tyler, TX 75703
(903) 581-2008

Graveside Service with Military Honors

OCT 5. 2:30 PM (CT)

Rose Lawn Cemetery
2003 Blue Mountain Blvd.
Tyler, TX 75703

Tribute Wall



“ Stewart Family Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of James "Jim" Chewning



Stewart Family Funeral Home - October 05, 2024 at 05:24 PM

MC

“ Members of The Tyler Lions Club purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of James "Jim" Chewning.



Members of The Tyler Lions Club - October 04, 2024 at 02:37 PM

RF

“ Robert & Ana Rivas, and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James "Jim" Chewning.

Robert & Ana Rivas, and family - October 03, 2024 at 09:14 PM

RF

“ Robert & Ana Rivas, and family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of James "Jim" Chewning.



Robert & Ana Rivas, and family - October 03, 2024 at 09:14 PM

RL

“ Richard Luna lit a candle in memory of James "Jim" Chewning



Richard Luna - September 24, 2024 at 05:21 PM

RL

Jim and Alice have been a long-standing inspiration to our church family. Their love for each other, Christ, their church family, their community and this country is never questioned. May God be present for the family and evident in our prayers and our actions during this time. We thank God for this life witness and welcome God's comfort and peace.

Richard Luna - September 24, 2024 at 05:26 PM

ML

Mr. Chewning was a prince of a man. Godspeed, sir.

Morgan Todd Lestage - September 25, 2024 at 11:01 AM

GB

Jim was a good friend who knew no stranger. He served faithfully on our Board of Directors at the East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind and his counsel was always beneficial. He was always the last one in for coffee and donuts at Wednesday Work Crew as he wanted to make sure we'd left the campus to his expectations. He will be sorely missed here but we know the streets of Heaven will glow with his presence. Well done my friend. Thank you Alice and Carol for sharing Jim with his many, many friends in Tyler.

GORDON BRYSON - September 26, 2024 at 12:43 PM