



Gwendolyn L. James

November 18, 1946 - April 14, 2025

Gwendolyn James was born on November 18, 1946, in Leesburg, Florida as the first child to the late Claudius J. Manigault Sr. and the late Lois H Manigault. She was raised in Taveres, Florida, and graduated from Eustis Vocational High School, Class of 1963. She went on to pursue higher education at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry in 1967.

Although trained in the sciences, it was in the classroom where Gwendolyn found her true calling. She dedicated herself for over 40 years at Lake County and Orange County Public Schools as a mathematics teacher. She was deeply respected not only for her intellect, but for the care, discipline, and encouragement she poured into every student. Gwendolyn believed deeply in the power of education and in the potential of every child.

As Chairperson of the Math Department at Westridge Middle School, she took pride in fostering academic excellence, mentoring young teachers, and creating a supportive environment where students could thrive. Her leadership left a lasting impression on students and staff alike.

Gwendolyn's life was firmly grounded in faith. At an early age she was baptized at St. John Independent Free Methodist Church (IFMC) and

participated in several ministries (usher board, choir, Sunday school, and youth department). Later she became the First Lady of St. Luke IFMC and served faithfully alongside her husband for 38 years. As a lifelong member of the Independent Free Methodist Church (IFMC), she was a devoted member for more than 70 years and stood as a pillar of grace and wisdom in her church community.

Also, she helped implement programs that encouraged spiritual growth and leadership among young people. Her impact was also felt through her leadership as a member of the IFMC Council and Chair of the Youth at the Sunday School Conventions, where she served with humility, compassion, and unwavering devotion.

She was the loving and devoted wife of Pastor Nathaniel James. Together, they shared over 58 years of marriage — a union built on faith, love, and mutual respect. Beyond her role as a wife, Gwendolyn was a devoted mother, proud grandmother, and joyful great grandmother. She treasured her family deeply, always present with a listening ear, a warm heart, and words of encouragement. Family was her joy, and she created a home filled with love, laughter, and lasting memories.

Gwendolyn leaves behind cherished memories and is survived by her husband, Pastor Nathaniel James, of Altamonte Springs, FL; and her sons, Gregory (Kim) James of Altamonte Springs, FL; Neill James of Maitland, FL; and Nicholas (Jennifer) James of Altamonte Springs, FL.

She is also survived by her beloved sister, Claudia (Edison) Hires, of Orlando, FL; two brothers, Claudius Manigault, Jr, of Longwood, FL, and John (Faye)

Manigault of Longwood, FL; and brother-in-law, Freddie James of Altamonte Springs, Florida.

Her legacy continues through her grandchildren: NaTasha James, Arielle (Chris) Young, Nicole James, NaKayla James, Gregory James, Shayla James, Karter James, Ky'Elle James, Nia James, Jordan James; and three great grandchildren, Reyelle Sands, Dequarius Harper, and Reythaniel Sands. She is also survived by a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, and cherished church family members who loved her dearly and will continue to carry her spirit forward.

Gwendolyn leaves behind a life marked by service, love, and strength. Her presence made the world brighter. Her lessons stretched far beyond the classroom. And her unwavering faith continues to guide all those who knew her.

She will be deeply missed, but her legacy will live on — in her family, in her church, and in every life she touched.

Cemetery Details

Tavares Cemetery

2055 Dead River Road
Tavares, FL 32778

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 2. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Independent Free Methodist Church Headquarters
1151 Pamela Street
Leesburg, FL 34748

Service

MAY 3. 11:00 AM (ET)

Independent Free Methodist Church Headquarters
1151 Pamela Street
Leesburg, FL 34748

Tribute Wall

NE

“ Hey Mom miss you so much wish I can hear your voice again. Give Dad a big hug and Kiss for me.

Neill - March 20 at 11:58 AM

NE

“ Hey Mom miss you so much. Give Dad a big hug and kiss for me.

Neill - March 20 at 11:46 AM

MS

“ MONICA DENISE SCOTT sent a virtual gift in memory of Gwendolyn L. James



MONICA DENISE SCOTT - May 17, 2025 at 04:04 PM

MS

“ MONICA DENISE SCOTT lit a candle in memory of Gwendolyn L. James



MONICA DENISE SCOTT - May 17, 2025 at 04:04 PM

CR

“ *Mother Gwen-Wow! One who possesses the kindest-sweetest heart. It was and would have been hard for me to say, "NO," to a request for me to minister in dance, fellowship, or give a sermon. Truly, a mother.*
Mrs. Cheryl Raiford



cheryll raiford - May 13, 2025 at 01:08 AM

BS

“ *One had to know her to know her:*
-Gwendolyn was a friend and colleague.
-She was an advocate for education.
-She was a champion for students.
-Excellence and efficiency was expected from students... she cared.
-Failure was not an option.
-She brought peace into the classroom, confidence, and expectations... a safe place.
Will she be missed? Absolutely!
But it makes one smile to know the thousands of student lives that benefitted from her purpose/calling and because of that...
She still lives!

Barbara Shackelford - May 05, 2025 at 04:42 PM

WJ

“ *We will miss your smile, your advice and good nature! Rest in Peace, 🙏 Winnie and Camille*

Winnie Jackson - May 02, 2025 at 10:23 PM

MH

“ May the love of God and the gift of time bring comfort and healing through the loss you're feeling now. With heartfelt sympathy and caring prayers for you and the family. James & Meroy P. Hudson



Mrs. Meroy P. Hudson - May 02, 2025 at 09:47 PM

GR

“ Thanks for all the love you gave to me and my wife, Greg and Althea from Jacksonville

GREG - May 02, 2025 at 08:14 PM

KR

“ Karen Ross lit a candle in memory of Gwendolyn L. James



Karen Ross - May 02, 2025 at 12:08 PM

GJ

“ Gail Henderson Johnson lit a candle in memory of Gwendolyn L. James



Gail Henderson Johnson - May 02, 2025 at 05:13 AM

GJ

“ My deepest condolences to the family. See called me the night before she got her wings giving me her condolences because my mom had just got her wings. I will always remember that sweet spirit she had and she will forever be missed.

Gail Henderson Johnson - May 02, 2025 at 05:11 AM

SW

Gwen was the daughter of our Jones High School Principal, Mr. Manigault. Our class graduated in 1965. We extend condolences to Gwen and her family and the Manigault siblings and other relatives. Her exit from earth to Glory, signals the completion of her assignment here.

Shirley Green Woodard-Bryant, Secretary,

1965 Jones High Alumni Class

Shirley Green Woodard-Bryant - May 02, 2025 at 08:33 PM

LP

“ Love, Dan and Marilyn Powell purchased the Fair est of All for the family of Gwendolyn L. James.



Love, Dan and Marilyn Powell - May 01, 2025 at 04:40 PM

LP

“ Love, Dan and Marilyn Powell planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Gwendolyn L. James.

Love, Dan and Marilyn Powell - May 01, 2025 at 04:40 PM

DF

“ Doretha Eason and Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Gwendolyn L. James.



Doretha Eason and Family - May 01, 2025 at 10:52 AM

RY

“ Prayers 🙏 and much Love ❤️ in the name of Jesus ! Proverbs 3:5-6. Psalms 23:1-6. Romans 8:28. Psalms 37:25!

Rev Leverk Youmans - April 30, 2025 at 03:24 PM

DF

“ Donna and Coy Pilson, Panama City, FL purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Gwendolyn L. James.



Donna and Coy Pilson, Panama City, FL - April 29, 2025 at 03:59 PM

NJ

“ NaTasha James lit a candle in memory of Gwendolyn L. James



NaTasha James - April 29, 2025 at 03:33 PM

EC

“ Eddie Cooper purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Gwendolyn L. James.



Eddie Cooper - April 29, 2025 at 12:43 PM



“ Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Gwendolyn L. James.



April 29, 2025 at 11:15 AM

JH

“ I am so grateful to God that we were able to visit a few weeks back and share that we loved each other. I will miss my best friend & mentor. Our early morning talks and prayers. Say hello to Arthur & Esther for me. ❤️

JoAnn Hardy - April 28, 2025 at 07:33 AM

NJ

“ Nakayla James lit a candle in memory of Gwendolyn L. James



Nakayla James - April 27, 2025 at 10:53 PM

LC

“ My deepest condolences and prayers to the family. My love for her will last forever.

Linda McCloud Cunningham

Linda Cunningham - April 25, 2025 at 08:35 AM

JD

“ Prayers of Strength and Peace for you all Family..🙏

John & Debra

JOHN A Dabney - April 24, 2025 at 04:07 PM



DN

“ The Newsome family lit a candle in memory of Gwendolyn L.James

Dot Newsome - April 23, 2025 at 08:24 AM



RS

“ Rey Sands purchased the Lily and Rose Tribute Spray for the family of Gwendolyn L. James.

Rey Sands - April 22, 2025 at 04:19 PM



RS

“ Rey Sands planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Gwendolyn L. James.

Rey Sands - April 22, 2025 at 04:19 PM

NJ

“ The most beautiful king hearted woman you'll ever meet. I am so blessed and grateful that God chose you to be my MEMA. I love you with all my heart and I will continue live by your wise words, " Never let anyone steal your joy."

NaTasha James - April 21, 2025 at 03:32 PM

NJ

“ I love you MEMA.

NaTasha James - April 21, 2025 at 12:50 PM

KM

“ Keith P McNair lit a candle in memory of Gwendolyn L. James



Keith P McNair - April 21, 2025 at 11:23 AM

RA

“ Ruby Ashley lit a candle in memory of Gwendolyn L. James



Rubye Ashley - April 20, 2025 at 05:06 PM

TD

“ *Terric Candace Durden lit a candle in memory of Gwendolyn L. James*



Terric Durden - April 20, 2025 at 02:17 PM