

## James Thomas Connell Jr.

March 30, 1941 - December 14, 2015

Mr. James T. Connell, Jr.

Augusta, GA—James Thomas Connell, Jr. was born in Augusta, Georgia on March 30, 1941 to Cora Lee (Oxford) and James T. Connell. He grew up in North Augusta with his parents and younger brother, Chris and graduated from North Augusta High School in the class of 1961. James was a popular and active kid who won shag dancing competitions and diving awards.

James married Tomi Cooper of Augusta and had his first child, daughter Angela in 1961, just before serving in the Navy on submarine service aboard the USS Trumpetfish. Shortly after coming home from overseas, he and Tomi were pleased to welcome their first son, James Thomas Connell, III- whom they called “Trey,” in 1964. In 1967, their third son Tony joined the family.

After his split with Tomi, James moved to California in 1969, where he would live on and off for over 25 years. He often commented on the struggle of being pulled between Georgia and California, the two places he considered his home.

In 1971, James married his second wife, Joy Breslin of Eagle Rock, CA. James attended Los Angeles Valley College and received an Art degree. James worked for the famous exercise enthusiast Jack LaLanne in his West

Hollywood Health Spa as a trainer and became a scuba diving and spear fishing enthusiast. In 1972, James and Joy celebrated the birth of their only child, daughter Leigh.

Putting his artistic talent to good use, in the late 70's James opened a store in Sherman Oaks selling hand painted clothing and began selling his own paintings, including commissioned portraits, which he would continue to do for the remainder of his life.

James moved back to Georgia in the late 80's with his third wife Lori where they settled near Clark Hill Lake. James continued to paint portraits and enjoyed his days on his boat, playing his favorite game, tennis and shooting pool in the club house near his home. After over 20 years together, he and Lori parted ways and James eventually settled back in Augusta.

In 2000, James opened a gallery of his own called Phoenix Gallery on Broad Street in Downtown Augusta and developed quite a large client base for his portraiture. He did a popular series of golf portraits of legends like Jack Nicklaus and Payne Stewart, landscapes of the National Golf Course in Augusta, and the series he was proudest of, portraits based on photographs taken by photographer Edward S. Curtis of Native Americans taken in the early 1900s.

James was battling liver cancer and was enthusiastic about being placed on a transplant list, hoping for the best with a healthy liver that could give him a new lease on life. It is almost unheard of that a person in their 70's would be considered for a transplant of that kind, but James was so youthful and active that his doctors felt he was in the physical shape of a man in his early 50's and advocated for him to receive the new liver.

On November 3rd, James got the call that they had a match and the next day

he received the transplant that he hoped would save his life. He was a strong patient and seemed to bounce back much quicker than expected. His family and doctors were thrilled with his initial recovery, but sadly a couple weeks later, his health took a dramatic turn. Other organs began to fail, then on December 14, 2015 James lost his battle and died peacefully with all four of his children, his brother Chris, his partner of eight years, Sandra Arrington and his oldest grand-daughter Reagan at his bedside.

James will be remembered for his exuberant love of life. His artistic talent, his wicked sense of humor, his passion for political debate, his addiction to tennis, the way he bragged about his grandchildren, and his love of movie trivia, port wine and anything covered in dark chocolate. James had a soft heart which he wore on his sleeve. You would often see tears roll down his cheeks when he told a story from his past or heard a song that touched him.

James is survived by his daughter, Angela Morrison and her husband Greg of Marietta, GA, son Trey Connell and his wife Susan of Cumming GA, son Tony Connell of Salt Lake City, UT, daughter Leigh Breslin of Montrose CA, brother Chris Connell of North Augusta SC and his ten grandchildren, Brad, Cameron, Tristan, Tanner, Reagan, Grayson, Liam, Malone, Gannon and Miles.

A Memorial Celebration of James's life will be held the evening of January 16th from 5 until 7 at the Westobou Gallery, 1129 Broad Street, Augusta GA. The family looks forward to seeing friends, sharing and hearing stories and raising a glass to toast their dad with those who knew and loved him most. A graveside service will be held on Sunday January 17th at 2 o'clock in Sunset Hill Cemetery in North Augusta, SC.

Posey Funeral Directors of North Augusta in charge of arrangements (803-278-1181). Visit the registry at [www.poseycares.com](http://www.poseycares.com)



# Cemetery Details

## Sunset Hill Cemetery

600 Alta Vista Avenue  
North Augusta, SC

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 16. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Westobou Gallery  
1129 Broad Street  
Augusta, GA 30901

## Service

JAN 17. 2:00 PM (ET)

Sunset Hill Cemetery  
600 Alta Vista Avenue  
North Augusta, SC

# Tribute Wall

CC

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Chris D. Connell - June 27, 2025 at 08:14 AM



“ James Thomas Connell Jr.

October 06, 2023 at 06:29 AM



“ James Thomas Connell Jr.

September 24, 2022 at 12:12 PM

EL

“ James was one of the best friends I ever had. He taught me to draw and paint. I miss him. James had a big heart. I will see one again one day.

Elaine van der Linden - March 25, 2021 at 10:11 AM

AN

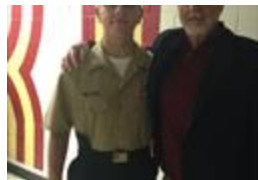
“ Angela lit a candle in memory of James Thomas Connell Jr.



Angela - January 06, 2016 at 11:49 AM

AM

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Angela Morrison - January 06, 2016 at 11:46 AM

AN

*Dad and Cameron when we came to Augusta for a NJROTC competition.*

Angela - January 06, 2016 at 11:48 AM

LB

“ 10 files added to the album *James T. Connell, A Life Well Lived*



Leigh Breslin - January 04, 2016 at 02:31 PM

JE

“ *James was an extraordinary person and I am glad that we were friends. My deepest sympathy to the family, whom he adored.*

*Jeanette B. Eckard*



Jeanette Eckard - December 21, 2015 at 11:44 AM

CD

“ *What a fun, fascinating, talented and vibrant person James was! He lived every minute of his life to the fullest ... the ultimate legacy. I send my deepest condolences to his loved ones.*

Christine Deriso - December 20, 2015 at 10:35 AM

CC

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Chris M Connell - December 19, 2015 at 12:38 PM

CC

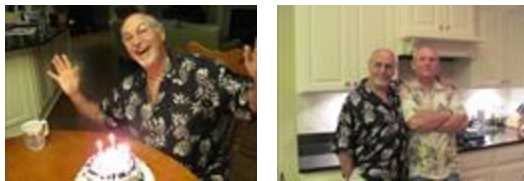
“ *Chris D Connell lit a candle in memory of James Thomas Connell Jr.*



chris d connell - December 19, 2015 at 07:11 AM

CC

“ *2 files added to the tribute wall*



chris d connell - December 19, 2015 at 07:11 AM