



Mr. Jay Duane Hardin

August 26, 1962 - March 19, 2025

Mr. Jay Duane Hardin earned his eternal wings at the age of 62, on March 19, 2025, at Northeast Georgia Medical Center. His beloved wife, Gala, was by his side during his final moments.

Jay will be remembered for his kind spirit, love for his family, and unwavering dedication to those he cared about. He leaves behind a legacy of love and cherished memories that will be held close by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Jay's life story was a testament to his dedication and love for his family and community. He was born in Peoria, IL to proud parents, J.D. and Joyce (Crowder) Hardin. He graduated from Peoria High School in 1980, where he excelled in track and field, showcasing his competitive spirit and determination.

Jay has three remarkable children: Shayla, Jamar, and Jordon, from his marriage to Sharon Danage in 1985. Jay's love for his children was simply unparalleled and transcends words. His dedication as a parent was truly inspirational and serves as a beautiful reminder of the power of unconditional love.

Life took another beautiful turn when Jay met the love of his life, Gala Denney. They married on February 15, 2008, and Jay's heart expanded to include three more children in love: Danielle, Andrew, and Christian.

Jay joined the US Air Force and dedicated himself to serving with the 182nd Airlift Wing for the Peoria Air National Guard. Through unwavering commitment and hard work, he advanced through the ranks, ultimately achieving the esteemed position of Master Sergeant and Production Control Supervisor. Throughout his career, he received numerous decorated awards, a testament to his dedication and excellence in service. On April 28, 2011, he retired from his illustrious military career. However, his journey did not end there. Following retirement, he pursued higher education and obtained a Bachelor of Science in Religion: Biblical and Theological Studies. This accomplishment further exemplifies his relentless pursuit of knowledge and personal growth.

Jay consistently demonstrated an unwavering dedication to service and pursued various avenues to effect positive change. He volunteered extensively with Youth for Christ and served admirably as a camp counselor at Kids Across America (KAA) Camp. Furthermore, Jay was employed as a martial arts instructor at Legacy MMA Karate in Georgia, where he imparted discipline and life skills to the students. Jay's commitment to youth development was truly commendable.

Jay was a man of God, devoted to his faith and community. He was a cherished member of St. Paul of Peoria since 1986, and he continued his spiritual journey by attending Twelve Stone Church in Braselton, GA. Jay's dedication to his faith was unwavering, and it was evident in the way he lived his life. Additionally, Jay was a long-time and esteemed member of Henry Brown Lodge #22. His commitment to the lodge and the fraternity was significant, and he contributed greatly to its activities and brotherhood.

Jay is survived by his loving and devoted wife, Gala, of Flowery Branch, GA, along with his children Shayla, Jamar, and Jordan Hardin all of Peoria, IL; and his children in love, Danielle (Dustin) Boyer of Groveland, Andrew Gonzales of Peoria, IL and Christian Miles of Flowery Branch, GA. His loving parents, J.D. and Joyce Hardin, along with his sisters, Theresa Hardin and Vernona (Carletus) Hines, all of Peoria, IL also remember him dearly. He leaves behind 10 grandchildren and a host of nieces, nephews, and other wonderful family and friends who will forever cherish his memory. He is preceded in death by his grandson Isaiah; his Paternal Grandparents, Talmon DeWitt Hardin and Birdie Lee (Foster) Hardin; his Maternal Grandparents, Willie Crowder and Johnie (Brown) Crowder.

Funeral services will be held at 10 am on Monday, March 31, 2025, at St. Paul Church of Peoria with a visitation to begin at 9 am with Henry Brown Lodge #22 performing Masonic Rites at 9:30. Rev. Dr. Deveraux Hubbard, Senior Pastor, will officiate the ceremony. Jay will be laid to rest at Camp Butler National Cemetery in Springfield, IL, with full U.S. Air Force Military Honors. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to KAA Camp on the church website: <https://spbaptist.org/> OR via cashapp: \$give2StPaulPeoria1 and put KAA in the memo.

Simons Mortuary has been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences may be made at SimonsMortuary.com.

Cemetery Details

Camp Butler National Cemetery

5063 Camp Butler Road, RR1
Springfield, IL 62707

Previous Events

Gathering

MAR 31. 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM (CT)

St. Paul Peoria
114 W. Forrest Hill Avenue
Peoria, IL 61604

Masonic Rites Ceremony

MAR 31. 9:30 AM - 9:55 AM (CT)

St. Paul Peoria
114 W. Forrest Hill Avenue
Peoria, IL 61604

Funeral Service

MAR 31. 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM (CT)

St. Paul Peoria
114 W. Forrest Hill Avenue
Peoria, IL 61604

Tribute Wall



“ *Simons Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin*



Simons Mortuary - April 07, 2025 at 02:10 PM



“ *Simons Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin*



Simons Mortuary - March 31, 2025 at 02:48 PM



“ *Simons Mortuary created a Webcast in memory of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin*



Simons Mortuary - March 28, 2025 at 06:49 PM

NS

Beautiful home going service. 🙏

Nicholas Hines Sr - March 31, 2025 at 03:18 PM

MF

“ *Ms. LOLA SIMMONS & FAMILY lit a candle in memory of Jay Hardin*



Ms. LOLA SIMMONS & FAMILY - March 31, 2025 at 10:14 PM

RS

“ Was very sorry to hear of Jay’s passing. Knew him as a young kid and watched him grow into a very fine God loving man with so many spiritual gifts. Had many conversations with him at church about the military, Taekwondo, Career objectives, and last but not least, serving God , for which he was quite fluent and intentional. Jay was the kind of person that when he wasn’t around you noticed it. Great guy who truly loved his family. Now he gets to meet someone who he spent time studying about. Well done Jay, now you can rest.
Raymond & Mary Smith

Raymond Smith - March 30, 2025 at 10:17 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



March 30, 2025 at 09:00 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.

March 30, 2025 at 09:00 PM

PP

“ Gala and Family - we are so sorry for your loss. We are praying for you during this difficult time.

Paul & Cheryl Pottschmidt - March 29, 2025 at 02:14 PM

KN

“ Kim and Rufus Nelson lit a candle in memory of Jay Hardin



Kim and Rufus Nelson - March 29, 2025 at 12:30 PM

TH

“ Theresa purchased the Father - Large Memorial Stone for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



Theresa - March 28, 2025 at 06:22 PM

MS

“ Mr Nicholas Hines Sr purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



Mr Nicholas Hines Sr - March 28, 2025 at 03:10 PM

MS

“ Mr Nicholas Hines Sr planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.

Mr Nicholas Hines Sr - March 28, 2025 at 03:10 PM

LJ

“ LeRoy & Sonya Linwood Jr. lit a candle in memory of Jay Hardin



LeRoy & Sonya Linwood Jr. - March 28, 2025 at 02:18 PM

KF

“ Gala & family - we are so sorry for your loss. What a great person, I'm so glad I got to meet him and know how loved he was. Be strong, we are all thinking about you.

Korey & Heidi Coon family - March 27, 2025 at 10:15 PM

CS

“ Craig and Dana Stroup purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



Craig and Dana Stroup - March 27, 2025 at 09:16 PM

CS

“ Craig and Dana Stroup planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.

Craig and Dana Stroup - March 27, 2025 at 09:16 PM

AA

“ Mr. Harden - I remember meeting you for the first time in TKD class. You and I used to push each other to be the best and I will always appreciate you for that. But the friendship we developed throughout our training is what I'll remember most. Thank you Sir for being a great man. I'll remember you always... Rest easy my friend 🙏

Andre Allen - March 27, 2025 at 08:52 PM

LW

“ So sorry for your loss but I know Jay loved the Lord and with that being said, He is in a better place. I had the pleasure of meeting and playing football with Jay in high school (Peoria High School). And we reconnected again by way of phone when he moved to Georgia. We had many great conversations about the things of God. As a matter of fact he was in the midst of writing a paper or something being a student a Liberty University. He will be missed.
Much Love my friend.
Lew Williams

Lewtonia F Williams - March 27, 2025 at 08:49 PM

DW

“ R.I.P. Jay. You were one of my favorites in high school, even though we went to rival schools. Prayers for the family 🙏

Debra Washington - March 27, 2025 at 06:32 PM

VH

“ Mr. Harden, a gentle giant in all areas of his life, especially in martial arts, AWESOME BLACK BELT -. Ms. Harrison.

Vera Harrison - March 27, 2025 at 05:04 PM

HB

“ Hilario, Kathy, & the boys planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.

Hilario, Kathy, & the boys - March 27, 2025 at 01:19 PM

HB

“ Hilario, Kathy, & the boys purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



Hilario, Kathy, & the boys - March 27, 2025 at 01:19 PM

JF

“ Jeff Day and family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



Jeff Day and family - March 27, 2025 at 08:05 AM

JF

“ Jeff Day and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.

Jeff Day and family - March 27, 2025 at 08:05 AM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



March 26, 2025 at 08:50 PM

TK

“ The Hutcherson's Kevin/Michelle planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.

The Hutcherson's Kevin/Michelle - March 26, 2025 at 03:58 PM

TK

“ The Hutcherson's Kevin/Michelle purchased the Forever Our Angel Bouquet for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



The Hutcherson's Kevin/Michelle - March 26, 2025 at 03:58 PM

LT

“ I have worked with Jay for many years as the property manger for his neighborhood. He was also kind and respectful to us and all neighbors. He will surly be missed at Southern Property Management.



Lynn Tipton - March 26, 2025 at 02:59 PM

JP

“ To the family of Jay Hardin, Please accept my deepest condolences. I am so sorry for your loss. May the God of comfort grant you peace. Joy Pirkel

Joy Pirkel - March 26, 2025 at 11:22 AM

YF

“ Your BCP Athens Caterpillar Facility purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



Your BCP Athens Caterpillar Facility - March 26, 2025 at 10:32 AM

JL

“ Jay was a good neighbor for many years. He was always so kind and helpful. When Jay and Gayla moved away, they were truly missed. Rest in God's peace dear friend.

Julie Laidler - March 25, 2025 at 06:50 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.

March 25, 2025 at 01:11 PM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



March 25, 2025 at 01:11 PM

AI

“ *Annette Irby lit a candle in memory of Jay Hardin*



Annette Irby - March 25, 2025 at 10:21 AM

SA

“ *Scott and Julie Margetis 182nd ANG purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.*



Scott and Julie Margetis 182nd ANG - March 25, 2025 at 05:11 AM

TG

“ *The Gipson Family, Stone Mtn, GA lit a candle in memory of Jay Hardin*



The Gipson Family, Stone Mtn, GA - March 24, 2025 at 10:53 PM

VK

“ *To the family of Jay Duane Hardin - please know that you have my sincerest sympathy for the loss of your loved one. He was a very nice guy and I always enjoyed talking with him. He will be missed and fondly remembered. May God bless, comfort and keep you as you contend with his passing.*



Vickie King - March 24, 2025 at 10:47 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.*

March 24, 2025 at 08:58 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mr. Jay Duane Hardin.



March 24, 2025 at 08:58 PM

AK

“ Aaron & Lisa Kelly lit a candle in memory of Jay Hardin



Aaron & Lisa Kelly - March 24, 2025 at 06:12 PM

RA

“ Renee Adell lit a candle in memory of Jay Hardin



Renee Adell - March 24, 2025 at 01:44 PM

PW

“ My prayers for comfort to the family. He will be greatly missed.



Phyllis Williams - March 23, 2025 at 11:47 PM

KC

“ Kathy Collins lit a candle in memory of Jay Hardin



Kathy Collins - March 23, 2025 at 08:12 PM

KN

“ Sending prayers to the family. Mr. Hardin was a big part of my childhood during my years in taekwondo. Rest peacefully Mr. Hardin job well done 🙏

KeAnna Nichelson - March 23, 2025 at 05:07 PM