

## *The Broken Chain*

*We little knew that morning  
God was to call your name.  
In life we loved you dearly,  
in death we do the same.*

*It broke our hearts to lose you,  
You did not go alone.  
For part of us went with you  
The day God called you home.*

*You left us beautiful memories,  
Your love is still our guide,  
And though we cannot see you,  
You are always at our side.*

*Our family chain is broken,  
and nothing seems the same,  
But as God calls us one by one,  
The chain will link again.*

Author Unknown

"I just woke up from a dream, and this is what I saw ...

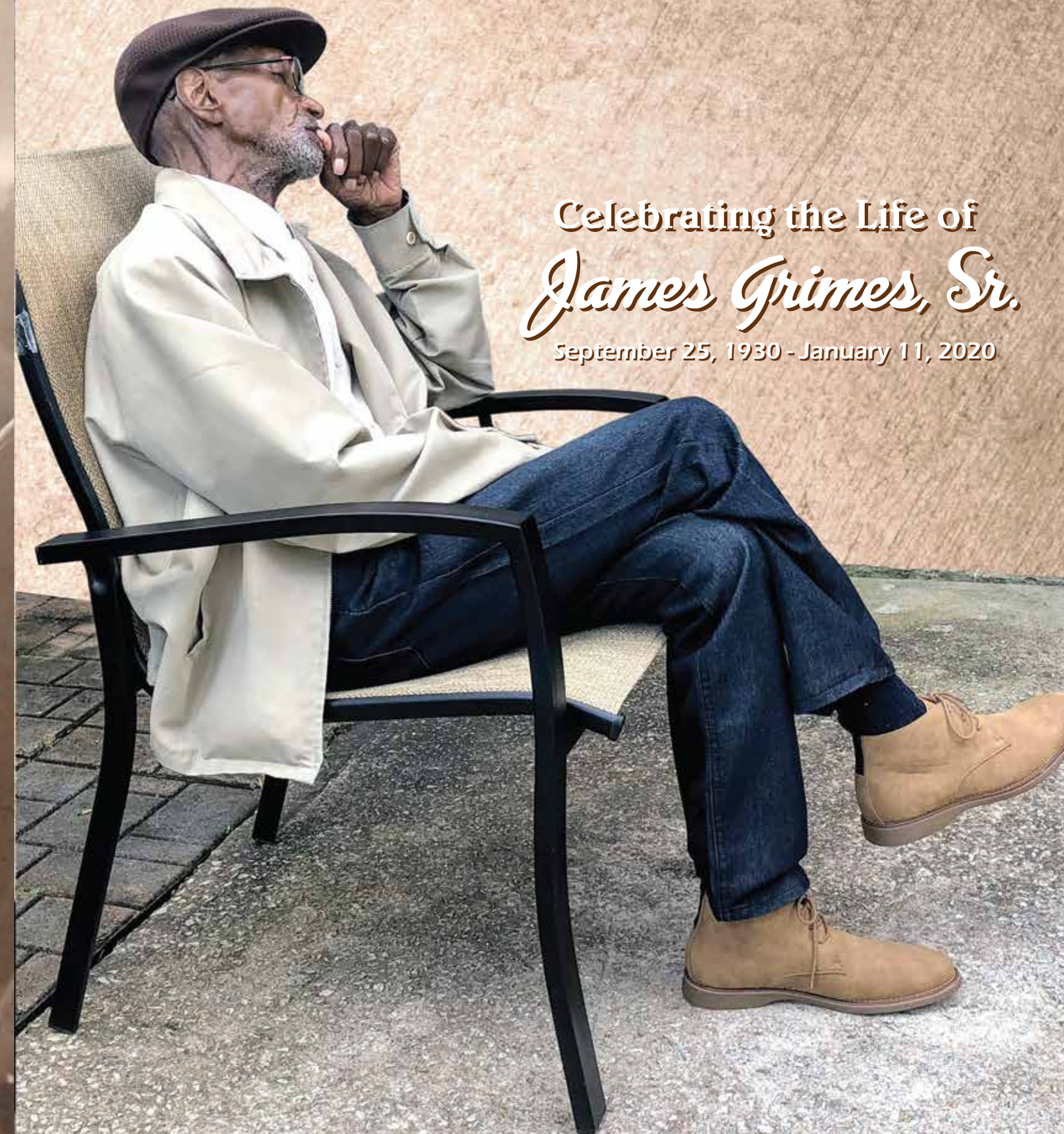
GPa was coming out of his bedroom crossing the hallway to the bathroom. He had a navy blue towel wrapped about his neck and torso. His posture (back) was completely straightened and there was light illuminating from the top of his head, his feet, and his hands."

"My Daddy made it home ... glory to God ... he made it, y'all!!"

Ev, Beloved Daughter  
January 16, 2020 10:38pm EST

## Celebrating the Life of *James Grimes, Sr.*

September 25, 1930 - January 11, 2020



## Obituary



James Grimes was born and raised on a farm to Annice Grimes and William Henry Spruill, on September 25, 1930, in rural Conetoe, NC. As a child growing up, James often saw and interacted with his birth father, William Henry Spruill, and his Aunt Betty Spruill, his father's sister. When James' father enlisted in the US Army, he did not see him again. However, in letters to his sister, Betty, William Henry often asked about his son, and sent money to his sister asking that she make sure he had warm clothing in the winter, summer clothes and overall, how James was faring in Brooklyn, NY.

Although James was not raised by his parents, he was raised by family. In 1944, at age 13, he traveled with his Aunt Beulah Staton, and two cousins, Betty and Dorothy Staton, to live in Brooklyn, NY. He resided with his Aunt until he was grown, married, and established his own household. He truly loved being around family.

His early schooling was a 3-mile walk to Robinson School in rural Conetoe. It was a 3-room cabin schoolhouse, and just ½ mile from Robinson School on the same road, was a brick school for the white children. In New York, James attended Westinghouse High School, but dropped out. However, he did study and achieved his high school GED.

He was a member of and attended St. Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, NY, where he met the woman who would become the love of his life, Elizabeth Lawrence. Their courtship was brief and intense, resulting in marriage on May 4, 1952, at the church where they originally met. In 1953, shortly after their marriage, James enlisted in the US Army and served overseas, after which he and Elizabeth started their family. Unusual for the times, in 1968, James and Elizabeth purchased a home in Queens Village, NY. They had transitioned from the projects in Brooklyn to a home in Queens. Culturally rich, it was here that they raised their family.

James was self-motivated with unlimited self-confidence and from 1957 through 1986, worked various positions in New York from selling ice bricks in Brooklyn, Langsam's Hardware Store; Usher at the Paramount Theater in Brooklyn; drove Checker Cabs; Mortician at Greenpoint Hospital in Brooklyn; and his last stop, a Token Booth Clerk for the NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

In 1986, James retired from NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and along with his wife, Elizabeth, and their three youngest children, moved to Atlanta, GA, and became members of Ben Hill United Methodist Church.

James was preceded in death by his loving wife, Elizabeth, one daughter, Tomika M. Grimes; two sons, Wallace G. Grimes and John Eric Grimes; his grandson, Tyrell Pravato; his father, William Henry Spruill; his mother, Annice Brandon; his stepfather, Heyward Brandon; his aunts, Minnie Lee Ruffin, Betty Spruill and Beulah Reese; his sisters, Minnie Pearl Robinson, Queen Melissa Davis and Hazel Brandon Palmore.

He is survived by his children: Ev L. Thomas (Granarldo Victez), Deborah L. Gibbs, James I. Grimes, Jr. (Angela), Cynthia Hooker (Lawrence), Jacquelyn Fuller, Neffertitie Pravato, and Kenneth Grimes.

Grandchildren: Jameelah Clayton-Jennings (Kenneth); Kai Mays (James, Jr.); William A. Rogers (Shemika); James Love Grimes and Kaimel Grimes; Dalia I. Bullock; Al-Aakhir Rogers (Diana); Niya Gibbs; Tashera Hutcheson (Michael); Sa'lyd Campbell (Daakeia); Sean Watford; Daquan Grimes, Lakeshia Grimes, Laniese Grimes, and Eric Latrell Grimes.

Great-grandchildren: James E. Mays III, Khalil J. Mays, Sri K. Mays, Kiari I. Mays, Latif Mays, Amirah S. Mays, and Jair Mays; Cambrea Rogers and William A. Rogers, Jr.; Kailia Bryce, Jahlil Allen, Jillian Allen, and Millionaire Allen; Gia and Maya Hutcheson; Sa'lyd Campbell, Jr. and Kaleya Campbell; Jabari Grimes, and Maya Grimes; Ameer Jennings and Ayah Jennings; Ariel Rogers, Asa Rogers and Aviyah Rogers; Xavier Grimes, Semaj Grimes, and Giovanni Grimes; and Dylan N. Antwi; and one great-great grandson, Soléy Kimani-Kandra El.

Two sisters: Mary Elizabeth Milton, Brooklyn, NY, and Deborah J. Santiago (Ernesto), Malverne, NY, and his favorite first cousins: Ruth Ruffin, Portsmouth, VA, and Betty and Dorothy Staton, Brooklyn, NY, and a host of other cousins and friends. James was well-loved and will be well-missed.

## Remembrances

"Uncle is at peace now and has been received by all of our loved ones who've been waiting for him. They probably threw a party for him and he's cracking jokes right now! But seriously, I celebrate (not mourn) his long life."

*Yvonne "Tay" Milton, Niece, Brooklyn, NY*

"GPa was always funny and would mistake me for Latif. When I'd say it's Millionaire, he'd say 'Well tell Latif to come see me.' He would also always ask me for money because of my name. When I'd flip it on him, he'd offer me \$50 to shave him, but I'd always talk him into just handing the funds over...He'd yell for my Mom and tell her I'm trying to shake him down."

*Millionaire Allen, Great-grandson, Ellenwood, GA*

"One memory I have of GPa is whenever we went over his house, he would find some way to take his shirt off and start doing pushups!"

*Khalil Jamir Mays, Great-grandson, Tyrone, GA*

"Many memories I've had with granddad included family gatherings for Thanksgiving. I also remember talking to him in the kitchen at his home a few times while eating cookies and preserves. The last memorable moment I had with him was discussing the passing of Grandma and my dad."

*Laniese Grimes, Granddaughter, Atlanta, GA*

"I remember how much he loved to dance, and his favorite musician was Louie Jordan, and he and I danced all the time at home in the living room. He had lots of friends on the block, where he often played stickball on the street."

*Hon. Betty E. Staton, Cousin, Brooklyn, NY*

"Apollo had Wednesday Amateur Night and James went to perform. Puerto Rico was who swooshed a performer off stage if he didn't like the performance. So, there was a crowd from the block, and everyone started clapping and hooting and Puerto Rico was forced to step back and allow James to finish his performance."

*Dorothy Staton, Cousin, Brooklyn, NY*

"What I remember most about GPa was his love of Jazz and amazing collection of it; the feeling of him being such a manly man with a firm handshake, and him telling and reminding every visit, "...not to stop up the toilet!"

*Vaughn Allen, Family Friend, Ellenwood, GA*

"I remember when we surprised Pop with a casino trip. The look on his face was priceless. Quoting what he said "Well HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME" - I knew y'all were up to something!!! Lol He was so happy that day and sharper than a nail's point. And talked about it all the way back home. He made all our day."

*Lashanda Ingram, Family Friend, Conyers, GA*

"GPa, aka Jimbo...what a man...full of confidence, strength, humor, and great sense of music! We always had great convos and loved to talk about music. His flesh is gone, but his spirit lives on!"

*Jackson Hayes, Family Friend, Atlanta, GA*

"I will always remember Mr. Grimes strong iron will, his confidence, razor sharp wit and his unconditional love, especially for family. He never failed to show me support in whatever I attempted. I learned how to make blueberry pie when I discovered it was his favorite. I will forever appreciate the joy he brought to my life."

*Cheryl Henry, Family Friend, Atlanta, GA*

# Remembrances

"I remember just after this Christmas, how Pop was having physical challenges at the same time that I was having a knee issue. So, when I was at home alone with him, to stand up, he'd wrap his arms around my chest, and I'd wrap my arms under his and around his waist, then we'd do a side two-step until we'd be in front of his recliner, then I'd gently help lower Pop into the chair. When we'd finished, he'd look up with a smile and say, "Who loves ya', baby?!" I miss you, Pop..."

*Ev Thomas, Daughter, Atlanta, GA*

"My Fondest Memories of Daddy was he always loved me to scratch his scalp and grease it ... this made me feel special because nobody could touch his hair."

*Neffertitie 'Naffy' Pravato, Daughter, Charleston, SC*

"From "yeaaaaaaaaa vaavaay!" (My Gold Member)...to "needs more sugar" (I learned to make him the best trusted coffee/tea)...to "I'm sorry I'm such a stinka"...to "now sit down"...you knew...you were ready, and this is what we prepared for baby...total peace...Your very last "I love you back" will ring off in my mind and heart forever"...rest easy Gold Member, put in a good word on the other side for your partner in crime."

*Kailia Bryce, Great-granddaughter, College Park, GA*

"He was a stern man and believed in principles, like when you come in his house, wash your hands before you go in his refrigerator...that could cause a problem and did. But I hold that to this day with my own kids. There was no sleeping late! I had to get up early and pick pine cones up in the yard and do grass, then I could go play. And he would make sure I had some money in my pocket, and he told me a man always takes care of his family. He was tough and rough, but he always said, "This is what a man is supposed to do.' That summer I spent was rough, but great. I learned a lot from him and Grandma about how relationships work and the sacrifices people make to be together."

*James Love Grimes, Grandson, Freeport, NY*

"I can remember coming into town for Christmas and Granddaddy James always had his fireplace going. I remember Grandpa's old Cadillac and he would ride slow. Listening to jazz. He had music playing all day at the house. He loved to record his TV shows. He easily had 1000 tapes. Everything from movies to award shows to inaugurations. He would fall asleep in his recliner but tell me he was just resting his eyes and I still couldn't change the channel. He was knowledgeable about so much. We would talk about so much. I admired him so much."

*Daquan Grimes, Grandson, Stone Mountain, GA*

"One time he told us about the "origin" of the word Hurricane. He said Cain and Abel were playing together and saw an approaching storm. As Abel was running away, I guess Cain was taking his time so Abel apparently tried hurrying him by yelling "Hurry Cain !" and that was the so-called origin of the word."

*Sri and Kiari Mays, Great-granddaughters, Tyrone, GA*

"I remember asking, "How are you doing, Mr. Jim?" He responded, "Everybody ... I'm doing everybody!!" Then he asked, "How are you doing?" I responded, "I'm fine," and he says, "I can see you're fine, now how are you doing?"

*Mary Gray, Family Friend, Stone Mountain, GA*

"Besides his barber, Pa didn't let anyone else cut his hair. So, of course, I was quite proud when he let me put my barber shears to his head!"

*William "AC" Rogers, Grandson, San Antonio, TX*

# Order of Service

Saturday, January 25, 2020  
1:00pm

Musical Prelude

Processional

Hymn of Celebration..... I Can Only Imagine

Reading of Scripture .....Deacon John Thomas  
Old Testament: Psalm 34:4-5

Reading of Scripture ..... Venita Epps  
New Testament: Revelation 21:4

Prayer of Comfort ..... Dr. Al-Aakhir A. Rogers

Celebration in Song ..... Phyllis Adams  
It Is Well

Reflections of Love ..... Cole Johnson  
Curtis G. Rogers  
Charmaine Godly

Celebration in Song..... Fragile Heart

Words of Comfort (Eulogy)..... James Grimes, Jr  
Matthew 20:1-16

Acknowledgements

Recessional ..... (I Am) Redeemed

Repast Immediately Following Memorial Service

Griner Funeral Home  
186 GA-279  
Fayetteville, GA 30214

Herman Griner, Funeral Director

"In 1986, while working as a tollbooth clerk, James was mugged by three would-be robbers who knocked him to the ground. When he heard one of the muggers shout, "Shoot the bastard!" he remembered that he had a gun in his pocket. He pulled the gun and started shooting, mortally wounding one of the assailants. He was hailed as a hero, but was indicted for carrying an unlicensed weapon – a crime in the State of New York. There was so much public outrage over his indictment (and such overwhelming support for James) that a team of lawyers agreed to defend him for free. James was cleared of all charges. The case drew the attention of Phil Donahue, who invited James to be on his talk show. When one member of the audience voiced criticism about what James did, he quoted John 8:7, saying, 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.' I remember how shocked and proud his wife was when James quoted scripture on the Donahue Show!"

*Felicitas Ruffin Carter, Cousin, Orange Park, FL*

**Token Booth Clerk Who Shot Holdup Suspect Should Have Had Escort** *(Excerpt)*

NEW YORK (AP) A subway token booth clerk stopped a holdup by shooting an alleged robber, but he used an unlicensed revolver and faces up to a year in jail because of a state law against such weapons, police said Tuesday. James Grimes, 55, was carrying all his receipts from one booth to another about 8:45 p.m. Monday when he was approached by three men who demanded money, Transit Authority police said. Two of the men fled without the money and one was hospitalized in critical condition Tuesday.

City Councilman Noach Dear of Brooklyn said he had lined up a team of lawyers who had agreed to defend Grimes for free and asked the district attorney to dismiss the charges against him. He is an innocent victim who was doing his job, Dear said. Hall said Grimes was justified in defending himself and noted that police consider the neighborhood where the booth is located a high crime area. While we don't condone carrying weapons on the job, still we feel that if the clerks cannot be protected by the Transit Authority Police or the TA, in a case like this, Grimes was justified, Hall said. If he had not done so, he might be dead right now.



Not many know this, and he always told me... 'Don't tell nobody!' But every time I'd walk in the crib and yell 'What's up G Peezy' he'd yell back 'Is that my favorite?' I'd respond, 'You know it!' So I have to inform you guys that Binky was and always will be GPa's favorite! Now sometimes he'd mistake me for Kailia...so I'm guessing she was his favorite too (inserts side eye). I love that Old Man and what I'll miss the most is sitting and watching movies with him for hours and hours. We did that when I was a little girl up until adulthood. He always talked through the movie explaining everything because he more than likely had seen it 9 times before you watched it with him...I love you G Peezy and I'm going to miss you soooooo much!

*Dalia Bullock, Granddaughter, Atlanta, GA*



*As we say goodbye to a giant  
A man who in stature, was short  
Yet big was how he taught us to live  
Striving for Victory as if life was a sport*

*Caring for us from the background  
Never wanting to impose  
Allowing us to make our own mistakes  
That came with the life we chose*

*But a great provider you were  
Even when you had no desire  
Challenging us to always be better  
And when wrong you held us to the fire*

*Not to burn us but give us strength  
To fight when we were going through  
You had your very own way of doing things  
But, as a Father, you were TRUE*

*Now God has called you home  
And missing you seems to be the story  
But you've given so much over the years  
Now God has called you to Glory*

*In closing, Pop, "Get your Dance on in Heaven!!"*

*James I. Grimes, Jr., Son, New York, NY*

*"Well-picked afro. Wife beater. Blue denim jeans with the sewn-in crease. James Brown boots; black or brown. A leather belt that seemed to be an extension of his hand! That is how I will remember my GeePa. Jazz music, train sets, and old black and white movies. Those were his favorite pass-times. He was a provider and a disciplinarian. He was dependable. He was a great storyteller. He was resourceful. He loved his family and we loved him. I am really going to miss my GeePa. But I smile a broad smile when I imagine Liz linking back up with her Jim!"*

*Kai A. Mays, Granddaughter, Tyrone, GA*

*"James Grimes Sr. (GPa) definitely had the wisdom of a Man that could only be given by God. A pillar of strength, support, and discipline...A Father. A chosen leader, a rock, a protector, and a provider...A Husband. Unconditionally loving, kind, humorous, and comforting...A Grandfather. I will remember the Greatness in him. One of the realest & most respectable men I have known. Love you all & sorry for your loss (our loss)."*

*James "Tank" Mays, Jr.,  
Grandson-in-law, Tyrone, GA*



*"I remember the summer vacations, grandpa had us outside from sun up to sun down. There wasn't any sucking up AC; you had to pick up those pine cones and needles, mow the grass on the riding lawn mower, and you better wash your hands before going into the refrigerator. If you didn't, everybody in the house would know about it.*

*Grandpa was always strong. Even as his body weakened, his mind continued to exercise. In his latter years, we were blessed by the gentle strength Grandpa shared with us. This is the strength that is demonstrated through being humbled, being grateful, and being ready to see Jesus when He calls you home. We'll miss you Pa"*

*Al-Aakhir and Diana Rogers, Grandson and  
Granddaughter-in-law, Tampa, FL*

