



James Elias Jackson

January 9, 1934 - May 17, 2026

James Elias Jackson was born on January 9, 1934, in Cochrane, Alabama to Elias Jackson and Mary Tremble. His humble beginnings would be the catalyst for his dreams and goals to make a positive difference by helping others. James learned early in his life that he had the responsibility and power to change circumstances not only for himself, but also for the people he was called to serve.

He was a trailblazer with a love for people of all races, ethnicities and backgrounds. As a result of his deep and profound love for people, anyone who needed help knew who to call. He always answered, listened and acted on their behalf, giving voice to the voiceless. Big Jack, as he was often called, was a Gentle Giant with a great passion and love for his family, friends and community.

During his early years, James was raised by his Grandmother Mary (his father's mother) who he affectionately called Mama. She instilled the values and character traits that would become the foundation of his leadership style. His relationship with his father, Rev. Eli Jackson, also served as a blessing during his formative years. He loved and cherished all of his siblings.

James was an outstanding athlete and played both football and basketball. He was an avid golfer and had 4 holes in one during the time that he played with

his golf club, The Saginaw Travelers.

James was a combat infantry trainer in the U.S. Marines from 1952-1954. He was a flamethrower and a bazooka operator, which required close contact during combat. He served in the Korean War and left the military after the war ended.

James left Alabama and was planning to move to Cincinnati, OH. However, a military friend named Jesse, asked him to go to Saginaw instead. He decided to visit and stay in Saginaw. We thank God that he did, because that is where he met the love of his life, Nella D. Jackson. He and Nella married on March 27, 1960. They were married for 59 years before she transitioned to heaven in 2019. Nella and James moved from Saginaw, MI to Southfield, MI in 1985.

James worked for General Motors for 49 years and retired in 1996 as an International Representative for the UAW. During his tenure, he negotiated several national agreements between GM and the UAW. He was also the Chairman of Local 668 from 1970-1980 in Saginaw, MI. He traveled internationally to Japan, China and Mexico to learn and bring back strategies to help General Motors in the U.S.

James started at Saginaw Grey Iron in October 1954, as a laborer. In 1960, he was elected as an Alternate Committeeman, for Local 668. He didn't stop there as he became an elected District Committeeman in 1961, and a District Shop Committeeman-at-Large, in 1968. Continuing to serve his brothers and sisters, he was elected as UAW Local 668 Shop Chairman in 1971. In 1979, during his tenure as Shop Chairman, James served as Vice-Chairman on the National Negotiating Committee.

In January 1980, James was appointed by the International Union as an International Staff Representative. Then, in 1985, he was elevated to

International Coordinator. One of James' proudest moments came when he was elected Chairman of Local 668. He, along with representatives from other area locals, worked with the International Union and achieved the 25-and-out early retirement benefit for foundry workers. He also was a leader in ensuring that people of all backgrounds had an opportunity to work in the skilled trades.

James was the President of the Sr. Usher Board for over 30 years at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Southfield, MI. He loved to welcome the visitors and to lead his Usher Board with Excellence.

James transitioned suddenly on May 17, 2026. He was preceded in death by his Wife, Nella D. Jackson, Mother Mary L. Holt, Father, Rev. Eli (Elizabeth) Jackson and Aunt Lela Bell Manningham, who he also lived with in his younger years.

His wisdom, affectionate personality, wonderful sense of humor, compassion and kindness endeared him to everyone he met. He was beloved by all of his nieces, nephews and godchildren. His memory will be cherished by his children: Kathryn L. (Robert) Johnson, Connie D. (Nathan) Jenkins, Anthony R. (Monica) Houston and Dr. Sonia Jackson Myles; Grandchildren: Nathan (Reshida) Jenkins II, Darrin (Casey) Johnson, Anton Houston, Kendall Myles and Jordan Myles. 7 great-grandchildren; Sisters: Elizabeth "Babymae" Rice, Eloise Halliburton and Deboraha Harris; Brother: Berkley Brooks; Sister-In-Love Lillie B. Strong and Brother-In-Love Moses (Gwen) Brewer.

James was fortunate to have very meaningful and long-standing friendships over the course of his 92 years. His best friend, who he spoke with every day, multiple times a day, is Rufus Coleman. Their relationship is a role model for what love looks like every day among friends.

One of the most important aspects of James' life was his love for his family. He talked about it nearly every day. He loved family reunions and encouraged his family members to stay connected and to love and support each other. In fact, he discussed nearly every week, his desire for the planning of an upcoming family reunion.

Spending time with family was one of his favorite pastimes, in addition to watching his favorite game shows, Jeopardy, Wheel Of Fortune, Family Feud, Flipside and Raid The Cage. He also had a great passion for spreading the mission of The Sister Accord®.

During an interview with WXYZ-TV Detroit, Channel 7, on November 7, 2025, when he was honored by The City of Southfield for his service in the Korean War, James shared "Be kind to everybody, help somebody if you can."

Cemetery Details

Great Lakes National Cemetery

4200 Belford Road
Holly, MI 48442

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 28. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services
24585 Evergreen Rd
Southfield, MI 48075
(248) 702-5367
info@kempfh.com
<https://www.kempfuneralhome.com>

Family Hour

MAY 29. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
23455 West Nine Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48033

Funeral Service

MAY 29. 11:00 AM (ET)

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
23455 West Nine Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48033

Graveside Service

JUN 2. 1:30 PM (ET)

Great Lakes National Cemetery
4200 Belford Road
Holly, MI 48442

Tribute Wall



“ *Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Live-streamed Funeral Service in memory of James Elias Jackson*



Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services - May 27 at 06:17 PM

DB

I am going to miss him so much. I loved him and Nellie dearly. They left a beautiful legacy and mark on this earth. I believe God has already said job well done thy good and faithful servant.

Dwan Bryant - May 29 at 06:27 AM

LT

“ *Lula Trice lit a candle in memory of James Elias Jackson*



Lula Trice - May 29 at 09:58 AM

KM

“ *Kenneth Alan Myles purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of James Elias Jackson.*



Kenneth Alan Myles - May 28 at 11:59 AM

KM

“ Kenneth Alan Myles planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Elias Jackson.

Kenneth Alan Myles - May 28 at 11:59 AM

KN

“ Kara N. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Elias Jackson.

Kara N. - May 27 at 11:33 PM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of James Elias Jackson.



May 27 at 08:32 PM

DP

“ Dennis And Gail Porter sent a virtual gift in memory of James Elias Jackson



Dennis and Gail Porter - May 27 at 07:12 PM

CH

“ Christine H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Elias Jackson.

Christine H. - May 27 at 01:23 PM

SS

“ Shane and Traci Sanders purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of James Elias Jackson.



Shane and Traci Sanders - May 27 at 10:09 AM

SS

“ Shane and Traci Sanders planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Elias Jackson.

Shane and Traci Sanders - May 27 at 10:09 AM

DS

“ LOVE YOU ALL MY BEAUTIFUL COUSINS. I PRAY YOUR GRIEF BE SHORT AND YOUR JOY MUCH LONGER WITH BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES OF BELOVED UNCLE JACK. SINCERELY DONNA SHIPMAN AND BREWER FAMILY ❤️🙏❤️



Donna Shipman - May 27 at 01:41 AM

TF

“ *The Halliburton Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James Elias Jackson.*



The Halliburton Family - May 26 at 10:48 PM

ES

“ *Ethel Shaw lit a candle in memory of James Elias Jackson*



Ethel Shaw - May 26 at 10:29 PM

ES

Sending prayers and love to the family. 🙏

Ethel Shaw - May 26 at 10:31 PM

ZF

“ *Zuleika (Tru) George-Little & Family purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of James Elias Jackson.*



Zuleika (Tru) George-Little & Family - May 26 at 09:05 PM

ZF

“ *Zuleika (Tru) George-Little & Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Elias Jackson.*

Zuleika (Tru) George-Little & Family - May 26 at 09:05 PM

FT

“ Family of Racquela Taylor-Gilbert purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of James Elias Jackson.



Family of Racquela Taylor-Gilbert - May 26 at 08:59 PM

FT

“ Family of Racquela Taylor-Gilbert planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Elias Jackson.

Family of Racquela Taylor-Gilbert - May 26 at 08:59 PM



“ Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of James Elias Jackson.



May 26 at 01:56 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Elias Jackson.

May 26 at 01:56 AM

DF

“ Donna, Casey, Darrin, Adam, Anna & families purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of James Elias Jackson.



Donna, Casey, Darrin, Adam, Anna & families - May 24 at 04:52 PM

KC

“ Kenyatta Coleman purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of James Elias Jackson.



Kenyatta Coleman - May 24 at 11:12 AM

PI

“ PPO Chapter of AKA Sorority, Inc purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of James Elias Jackson.



PPO Chapter of AKA Sorority, Inc - May 22 at 08:12 PM

JO

“ Love you Uncle Jack!



Joanie - May 22 at 10:09 AM

CR

“ *Carolyn Reynolds lit a candle in memory of James Elias Jackson*



Carolyn Reynolds - May 21 at 09:14 PM

RH

“ *Robin Hunter lit a candle in memory of James Elias Jackson*



Robin Hunter - May 21 at 02:23 PM

GL

“ *To the family of Mr. James Jackson, wishing you a peaceful place for your heart to rest. May your precious memories and the caring thoughts of those around you bring comfort at this time.*

*Glendorah Lawrence
Saginaw, Michigan*

Glendorah Lawrence - May 21 at 12:16 PM

GS

“ I met Mr. Jackson while working for GM at the Center for Human Resources (CHR). We became instant friends. He was always straight forward. You knew how he felt. I think that's why we got along. Very nice man and well-respected.
Gloria Perkins-Sellers



Gloria L Sellers - May 20 at 10:46 PM

JF

“ Julie Holt & your Christ Hospital Family purchased the Fairest of All for the family of James Elias Jackson.



Julie Holt & your Christ Hospital Family - May 20 at 07:41 PM

SE

“ May God comfort the family, especially Soror Sonia, who took wonderful care of her beloved Daddy. He rejoices in Heaven with his beautiful bride...PRAISE GOD!



Soror Eurydice - May 20 at 03:33 PM

TW

“ I've only known him to be a kind and honorable person. He was always fun, honest and a great family man. Rest in peace, Grandpap

Tamara Whaley - May 20 at 01:06 PM

EK

He was my neighbor, when ever he was sitting outside I would say hello or have a brief conversation. Always a pleasure soul. He will be missed. Kisha

Emanuel -Durrell Kisha - May 21 at 10:59 AM