



JAMES T. BURGESS

November 22, 2025

James T. Burgess, 70, of McCalla, AL passed away peacefully in the company of loved ones on November 22, 2025, after a long and valiant fight against chronic health conditions. Tim was born in Fairfield, AL but grew up exploring the woods and creek beds outside of McDonald Chapel and Edgewater. There he discovered his love for the natural world of native plants and scurrying animals, as well as the stories told of the ages of the earth by rocks and minerals. One of Tim's favorite memories and deepest regrets was of finding and subsequently losing a stone tool fashioned by prior inhabitants of that creek untold years before. That implement, the size and shape of his palm, captured his imagination, and in so doing encouraged a lifetime of chasing wonder and following curiosity that were core to his identity. This led him to teach himself to play so many musical instruments by ear, to sing, and to paint. Tim's other great virtue was a heart turned to relentless service by his Christian faith and his desire to do good in the world. A sheriff's deputy for Jefferson County with thirty years of service, Tim found many opportunities to aid the people of Alabama, saying that he saw himself more as a helper of the vulnerable than as an enforcer of the law. The things a deputy sees working the night shift for decades leave a mark, as do the personal tragedies he endured one after another. Yet, Tim held on to the importance of compassion and caregiving, devoting his personal time to a ministry behind the wheel, driving from neighbor to neighbor, friend to friend, and relative to relative, making sure they had everything they needed, even carrying extra dog food in

the trunk for hungry strays. A charmer to the end, he delighted the staff and fellow patients at his dialysis center with a Christmas concert on the ukulele. His dedication to service was extraordinary, and it is what sustained him in retirement. Independent and self-reliant up until the last few months of his life, he remained that free spirit in the woods, that creek bed creature, staring up into the nighttime sky, and we will be forever grateful for him.

Tim was preceded in death by his father William C. Burgess, his mother Mildred K. Argo, his brothers William C. Burgess, Jr. and Ronald Burgess, sister Cathy Harvey, and first wife Debbie Donaldson Burgess. He is survived by his wife Margie Burgess, children John Burgess (Andrea Wright) and Christina Latham (John), and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and in-laws. He touched innumerable lives beyond these and will be deeply missed.

The visitation will be from 10:00 AM until 11:00 AM on Saturday, December 6, 2025, at Peoples Chapel Funeral Home in Hueytown, AL. A remembrance service will be held at 11:00 AM at the Funeral Home. Guests are invited to come forward and share memories of Tim and how he touched their lives. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Greater Birmingham Humane Society or a charity of your choice.

Tribute Wall

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“ *This world has lost a beautiful soul ☐ There will never be another like you and you will be truly missed until we see you again ☐*

Susie Tupkelewicz - December 06, 2025 at 11:21 AM