



JAMES DONALD CANOLES

December 21, 2025

James Donald Canoles, 89, better known as Don or DonDon, and sometimes lovingly known as The Godfather, went home to be with the Lord on December 21, 2025.

Don was met at the gates of Heaven by his beloved wife of 68 years, Kathryn, daughter, Judy, parents, Louis and Avis Canoles, and brothers and sisters-in-law Sybil Canoles, Red and Maxine Kelley, Elmer and Lorene Lovell, Douglas Lovell, Roger and Dorothy Pittman, and Gerald and Joyce Lovell.

Left behind to cherish his memory are his daughter Janet Stanley and son-in-law Dwaine, his granddaughters, Alyssa Whatley and Kaylen Melton (Daniel), great-grandchildren, Cooper, William, and Hannah, brother Larry Canoles, sister Sharon Lagrone, and a host of nieces, nephews and friends.

Don was born on April 26, 1936. At the age of 12 he visited church with his aunt for the first time and became a Christian that same day. After that he dedicated his life to being a servant of the Lord, even if it meant having to catch the bus to get to church. He was heavily involved as a member of Valley Creek Baptist Church and served as custodian for several years and as a deacon for decades. He was awarded Deacon Emeritus in 2018.

He graduated from Bessemer High School in 1955 and married his

sweetheart, Kathryn Lovell the following year. He was employed at Associated Grocers of the South as a broker all his working years and finally retired (with more than a little persuasion by Kathryn) in December 2015 at the age of 79. When asked why he worked for so long past retirement age he would reply, “we owe, we owe, so off to work we go.”

He enjoyed yearly trips to the beach with the whole family, traveling with Kat, Alabama football games, sitting in the sunroom with his coffee, and a snappy suit and tie. He lovingly referred to all the women in his life as “dolly”. He loved Elvis, The Beach Boys, Marilyn Monroe and watching westerns and Cops on TV. After a trip to Hawaii, he became a frequent user of the Hawaiian “shaka” hand gesture that means “hang loose” which went perfectly with his laid-back personality. Don was a Godly man with a soft heart.

In the past year, after the death of his beloved Kat, he only wanted to go home to be with her. We find comfort imagining the joyous reunion they had on the streets of gold on a Sunday morning. As Don thanked God nightly for “life, health, and strength,” we also thank Him for the life Don lead and the example he left us.

In the last several years, Rhonda Vines and Crystal Renz were kind and patient caregivers to both Don and Kat, loving them like their own parents and the family is forever grateful. The family would also like to thank Amedisys Hospice for their kindness and compassionate care of Don.

The visitation will be Monday December 29, 2025, at Peoples Chapel Funeral Home at 10:00 AM with the funeral service beginning at 11:00 AM. Burial will follow at Valley Creek Cemetery.

Tribute Wall



“ *Fairest of All* was purchased for the family of
JAMES DONALD CANOLES.



December 27, 2025 at 02:50 PM