



## JESSE EUGENE COOLEY

November 5, 2024

Jesse Eugene Cooley was called home to the Lord on November 5, 2024. Gene was the son of Jesse Newbern and Roselle (nee Massey) Cooley. He was born on December 22, 1938, in the home of his paternal grandparents, Francis Chappel and Rosa (nee James) Cooley, in Lacey's Chapel, Alabama. He lived in Lacey's Chapel until he was 8 years old when the family moved to Holbrook Avenue in Bessemer where he loved to play pranks on his future brother-in-law. As a child, Gene enjoyed Boy Scouts. He rode on the handlebars of the ice cream vendor's bicycle to escort him around the neighborhood. Gene was a popular and active student at Bessemer High School. He served as president of his senior and junior classes and co-captain of the football team, and he ran track. He graduated as part of the class of 1957.

On May 10, 1958, he married his high school sweetheart, the girl next door, Frances Palmer. He attended the University of Alabama where he graduated in 1965 with a Bachelor of Science in mining engineering. A lifelong Alabama Crimson Tide fan, one of his favorite stories was meeting Alabama quarterback Joe Namath at a Tuscaloosa drug store while Gene was holding his oldest daughter, Susan. In college, he was a member of the ROTC and served in the U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers, stationed in Anchorage, Alaska, until 1968.

He worked in coal mining in Boone County, West Virginia, and Big Stone Gap, Virginia, before returning to Alabama. He spent most of his career managing coal mines near Brookwood, Alabama, for Jim Walter Resources. He retired in 2002 after which he spent his free time reading western paperbacks, watching beloved old westerns on television, and enjoying quality time with his wife and family at their home in McCalla. For many years, he kept hunting dogs and took regular hunting trips to Texas and South Dakota with dear friends. Gene never met a stranger and loved talking about his family and friends from Bessemer. He still attended quarterly high school class reunions at the Bright Star restaurant.

Gene was an ordained deacon of the First Presbyterian Church in Bessemer. In recent years, he and Frances became inaugural members of its successor, Shepherd of the Valley Presbyterian Church in McCalla, Alabama. Gene was a man of God, loved his church family, and took great pleasure in Shepherd of the Valley's services and other activities.

Gene was preceded in death by his mother, father, and brother Larry Wayne Cooley. He is survived by his loving wife of 66 years, Frances; four children Susan Frances Cooley, Jesslyn (Will) Lantrip, Shane (Sharon) Cooley, and Angela Jill Cooley; four grandchildren, Chazz Lantrip, Jessi Raye (Bailey) Johnson, Kendra (Tim) Shaw, and Kayla (Patrick) Rooks; two great-grandchildren, Luke and Gavin Shaw; his extended family of cousins, siblings-in-law, nieces, and nephews; and a large group of friends.

He will be laid to rest in a graveside service on Thursday November 7, 2024 at

11:00 AM Valhalla Cemetery in Midfield. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Shepherd of the Valley Presbyterian Church in McCalla.

# Tribute Wall

JE

“ John @ Sarah Elam lit a candle in memory of  
JESSE EUGENE COOLEY



John @ Sarah Elam - November 15, 2024 at 07:11 PM

FB

“ He was the best mine manager I ever worked for; may he rest in  
peace.  
Frank Blake

Frank Blake - November 08, 2024 at 01:49 PM

EF

“ He hired me as a kid of 17 in 1975, thanks have been in order now  
for over 50 years, my condolences to the family, oh and the day we  
filled a garbage can with doves was memorable

Eugene foster - November 06, 2024 at 08:30 PM

SC

“ My father was a very generous man. We learned that you had to be  
very sure and careful about saying you liked something, because if  
you did he would buy it in quantity and it would always be in the  
house.

Shane Cooley - November 06, 2024 at 06:19 PM

JC

Or he would literally take the jacket off his back and give it to you. 😄

Jill Cooley - December 29, 2024 at 09:21 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of JESSE EUGENE COOLEY.*



---

November 06, 2024 at 11:21 AM



“ *Jesse was #3 Mine Mgr when I first met him in 1979. I was a vendor and got to know him quite well over the years. He was frank, honest and intelligent. I shall miss him. May he Rest In Peace. My condolences to his family.*

---

**Al Colvin** - November 06, 2024 at 08:19 AM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



---

**Cathy Mills** - November 05, 2024 at 04:24 PM