



James Lee Davis Sr.

December 12, 1930 - June 15, 2025

James Lee Davis, Sr., 94, of Delmar, passed away peacefully at his home on Sunday, June 15, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. Jim was born in Delmar on December 12, 1930, a son of the late Otho L. Davis and Pauline E. Meelheim Davis (Maitha).

In 1948, Jim graduated from Delmar High School in Delmar, DE. In 1950, he graduated from Beacom College in Wilmington, DE. After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the Delaware National Guard and was assigned to the Headquarters Battery, 736th AAA Battalion at the Wilmington Armory. Upon graduation from college, Jim was employed in the personnel dept. of Worth Steel Co. in Claymont, DE. On August 29, 1950, his National Guard Unit was ordered to active duty for the Korean War and was sent to Camp Stewart, GA. He was then sent to Japan and assigned to the Inspector General, Japan Logistical Command, Yokohama, Japan. In May of 1952, he was honorably discharged as Sgt. E-5. After returning home he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve for 3 years and was promoted to Sgt. 1st class (E-6) and was serving as Sgt. Major at the time of honorable discharge. After returning to civilian life, Jim was employed by Wayne Pump Co. in Salisbury, MD. Jim then moved to become an Insurance Adjuster for John Roane, Inc. He was later employed by Selective Insurance Co. where he was promoted to Branch Manager of the Georgetown, DE office where he retired after 30 years.

On November 21, 1953, Jim married Shirley N. Oliphant. Jim and Shirley had three children. After 52 years of marriage, Jim lost his wife to ovarian cancer.

In 1963, Jim and Shirley started Davis Bus servicing the Delmar School District. They later incorporated and are known today as Davis Bus, Inc., which now services the Delmar, Sussex Tech, Laurel, and Seaford School Districts.

Jim has been a member of the Delaware School Bus Contractors Association, having served on the Executive Committee for several years. He was a member of the Delmar Masonic Lodge #201 A.F. & A.M. since 1952. Jim is an honorary member of the Delmar Fire Dept. where he served as a past President. He was a member of the Delmarva Claims Adjuster Association where he served as a past President. He was a member of the Delaware Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators. Jim also served 3 terms on the Delaware Insurance Dept. arbitration panels as well as serving many years as Chairman of the Intercompanies Arbitration Panel for Delmarva located in Salisbury, MD.

Jim was a member of St. Stephen's United Methodist Church in Delmar serving as Chairman of Trustees. He also served as a member and chairman of the Parish-Pastor Committee.

Jim was elected to the Delmar, DE Council and after 3 years he served as Mayor for 3 terms. He was appointed to chair the Board of Assessment for 6 years. His first duty as Mayor was to form a committee of civic organizations and citizens to fight the Education Advancement Act of 1967 which would have broken up the Consolidation of Delmar, DE schools with Delmar, MD schools. He and his committee appealed to Governor Terry and the Delaware Committee on Education at Legislative Hall and was successful in keeping the schools exempted from breaking up the consolidation. The bill was passed and he and his committee were present when Governor Terry signed the bill into law.

Along with his parents and his first wife, Shirley, he was preceded in death by his grandparents, Betty and Paul Meelheim who were a major part of his life from the age of 4 to 14. He was also preceded in death by an infant granddaughter, Kay Lee Dykes and a stepson, Raymond Garrett.

He is survived by his second wife, Peggy Garrett-Davis; a sister-in-law, Beverly Meyers of Kentucky; a son, James L. Davis, Jr. and his wife, Brenda, of East New Market, MD; two daughters, Sandra L. Brown and her husband, David, of Mardela Springs, MD and Shelly D. Dykes and her husband, Scott, of Delmar, DE; three step-children, Mark Garrett of Connecticut, Jeffrey Garrett of Baltimore, MD, and Michael Garrett and his wife, Leah, of Dagsboro, DE; nine grandchildren, Andrew Davis (wife Lorena) of San Diego, California, Bryan Davis (wife Ting Wu) of Washington, DC, James L Davis III of East New Market, MD, Lindsey Smith (husband Scott) of Laurel, DE, Nicole Johnson (fiance Jefferson Calloway) of Collegeville, Pennsylvania, Kyle Dykes (Shannon Joyce) of Hebron, MD, Kelci Smiley (husband Tavon) of Delmar, DE, Konner Dykes (Madelyn Sansone) of Sharptown, MD, and Kaila Dykes (David Morgan Jr) of Laurel, DE; four step-grandchildren, Madeline Bierman (husband Nicholas), Tyler Garrett, Ian Garrett, and Erin Epperson (husband Joseph); eight great-grandchildren; five step-great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandson.

Jim enjoyed travel and camping with his family and also his cruises to Alaska and the Caribbean. He also enjoyed the time he spent remodeling the home he was born in and remodeling his daughter and son-in-law's home.

A viewing will be held on Saturday, June 21st from 6 to 8 pm at the Short Funeral Home in Delmar, and also on Sunday, June 22nd from 1 to 2 pm at St. Stephen's Church in Delmar. A Masonic service will begin at the church at 2 pm on Sunday, followed by the funeral service. Interment with military honors will follow at St. Stephen's Cemetery Park following the service. A funeral reception will be held after at the VFW in Delmar, MD.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, 101 E. State Street, Delmar, DE 19940 or Delmar Masonic Lodge #201, P.O. Box 106, Delmar, DE, 19940.

Arrangements are in the care of Short Funeral Home in Delmar. Online condolences may be sent to the family by visiting www.shortfh.com.

Cemetery Details

St. Stephen's Cemetery Park

State Street
Delmar, DE 19901

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 21. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Short Funeral Home
13 E Grove Street
Delmar, DE 19940
(302) 846-2525

Visitation

JUN 22. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

St. Stephen's Church
101 E. State Street
Delmar, DE 19940

Funeral Service

JUN 22. 2:00 PM (ET)

St. Stephen's Church
101 E. State Street
Delmar, DE 19940

Tribute Wall



“ *Short Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of James Lee Davis Sr.*



Short Funeral Home - June 22, 2025 at 11:31 AM

RL

“ *Ron L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Lee Davis Sr..*

Ron L. - June 20, 2025 at 09:54 AM

RL

“ *I'm sharing in your sadness as we remember Jim. His leadership and service to his community, state and nation were well known to me when I served as the state supervisor of school transportation. His active participation in the School Bus Contractors' Association, timely communications and outstanding recommendations were appreciated. They also led to improvements for safe, reliable school transportation of students in Delaware.*

Ron Love - June 20, 2025 at 09:50 AM

GR

“ Shelly and family, I am so sorry for your loss. I remember all the good times over to your house all during the school year. The loss of parents are very hard. Thoughts and prayers to all the family.



Gail "Sullivan" Revel

Gail Revel - June 19, 2025 at 04:52 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James Lee Davis Sr..



June 19, 2025 at 10:20 AM

JM

“ I had the pleasure of spending time with Mr. Davis at pam rehab. We shared memories of the good old days and his military career. He shared stories of his early days around trains in Delmar and driving the school bus. He was a very kind soul and toward the end of his stay he mentioned that he was all out of fight and ready to move on to be at peace with the lord. My condolences to James wife Peggy and his entire family.

Jack Mitchell - June 18, 2025 at 09:06 PM

SR

“ Sincerely, Roger & Tina Rexrode purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of James Lee Davis Sr..



Sincerely, Roger & Tina Rexrode - June 18, 2025 at 12:37 PM

SR

“ Sincerely, Roger & Tina Rexrode planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Lee Davis Sr..

Sincerely, Roger & Tina Rexrode - June 18, 2025 at 12:37 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of James Lee Davis Sr..



June 18, 2025 at 11:54 AM



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

June 18, 2025 at 11:54 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of James Lee Davis Sr..*



June 17, 2025 at 03:56 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of James Lee Davis Sr..*



June 17, 2025 at 03:48 PM



“ *God Speed Mr. Davis*



Todd Lowe - June 17, 2025 at 11:10 AM



“ *When I moved here from Maine, Mr Davis hired me to drive a bus in 2012. I will surely miss him very much. He was a wonderful Boss, Friend, and a great human being. My thoughts and prayers are with the family. Lots of Love, Audrey Hardy*



Audrey Hardy - June 16, 2025 at 10:41 PM

KS

“ *Kay Short-Habig lit a candle in memory of James Davis*



Kay Short-Habig - June 16, 2025 at 08:59 PM

KS

“ *Mr. Davis was one fine gentleman and Friend to so many. He will be missed by many folks.*

Our condolences go out to his Wife Peggy Davis and all of the rest of his Family.

I had the good fortune of knowing Mr. Davis and his first Wife Shirley when I was just a young child. I hung out with their kids Jimmy Lee, Sandy and Shelly later on in my childhood. They were like a second Mom and Dad to so many kids, including myself in the town of Delmar. Just so many great memories that I will cherish forever. 💕💕

Mr. Davis is now at peace with the Lord.

God Bless all of Mr. Davis' Family and the many Friends that he made in his lifetime. His legacy of honesty, fairness to all, hard work, Love and caring for others will live on forever! So thankful to have known and been in his company for a number of years!

Love and prayers to his Family and Friends,

Karl and Kay Short- Habig

Delmar, DE.

Kay Short-Habig - June 16, 2025 at 08:58 PM