



## James Howard Sykes

April 11, 1941 - July 12, 2025

James Howard Sykes transitioned from his earthly life to his eternal life in the early morning hours of Saturday, July 12, 2025, at his home surrounded by his family.

Howard was born at the "Womack Place" on April 11, 1941, to John Thomas Sykes and Tullie Ola Duncan Sykes in Bolivar, TN. He was born into a farming family and was the eleventh of twelve children. With so many siblings, five of them being older sisters, Howard grew up knowing a life of hard work and learning to follow orders. This would serve him well during his time in the military.

Howard attended classes at Bolivar Central High School and graduated with the class of 1959. Unable to afford to pursue a college education, but knowing he wanted the opportunity to see something outside of Hardeman county, he enlisted in the National Guard before graduation. His first assignment, at Fort Jackson in South Carolina, left him questioning his decision for choosing military life. Thankfully, he was transferred to Fort Knox in Kentucky, where he spent his time learning to drive tanks and other military equipment. He was able to return to civilian life after his training, but was required to continue with the mandatory summer training and weekly meetings. Howard despised those weekly meetings, so he chose to enlist in the Army for three years. His most memorable assignment was his deployment to France as a military policeman. During this period, he was given the rare opportunity to guard the Château de Malmaison, once the home of Napoleon Bonaparte. Howard's

military years and his family upbringing laid the foundation for a life rooted in discipline, service, and structure - never going a day without a clean shave and following every rule to the letter (except for that one speeding ticket in 2007).

After his discharge from the Army, Howard was able to build a long and respected customer service career with Eastern Airlines, giving them almost three decades of service until their closure. After Eastern's closure, he was employed with P&O Nedlloyd. His work ethic, instilled in him by his parents, was unmatched. It was a reflection of one of his lifelong mottos: "Hard work pays off."

On December 30, 1967, Howard married Mary Elizabeth Werne in Memphis, TN - and he never stopped doing what "Beth said to do," another of his guiding principles. They relocated to the Atlanta area in 1970. Together, they built a beautiful life filled with love, laughter (sometimes at his expense), and family. He and Beth were blessed with three wonderful children, Bridget, Leigh, and Andy. His family was the center of his world, and he spent many nights worrying about his knucklehead teenager's safety when curfew was drawing near. In 1999, they moved to Newnan, GA and he loved it and the wonderful people he met there over the years.

Howard had a unique way of viewing the world. He was convinced that the Central Time Zone was the only time zone worth using, even though he spent most of his life living in Eastern. He was endlessly baffled by the number of people who bought cars "without blinkers". He also insisted that all shirts have a breast pocket (watch out for that pocket bandit!), and if a pen was loaned, the cap came off - no one walks off with a capless pen. He knew the value of a good container, be it a coffee can, plastic bin, or box. He was rarely without a supply of "car candy" and coupons. He made sure to have change in his pocket, making sure to have four pennies - five would make a nickel, and that would just be wrong. Howard claimed to be easy going and not picky; however, his family knew better - finding a "Howard compliant" restaurant proved to be no small feat.

While Howard's true loves were his wife, children, and grandchildren, he had room in his heart for the things that brought him joy and allowed time to be spent with those most special to him. He loved cheering on his beloved UT Vols and was a lifelong devoted fan of the Atlanta Braves. He enjoyed his mornings with Beth, drinking coffee until his "eyeballs floated", and relished in a cold glass of apple juice or a grape soda. He also possessed the "Sykes traits" of adoring cheese, ice cream, and saving money.

Howard lived a life of integrity and dependability. He was a devoted husband, proud father and grandfather, and a man who believed in doing things the right way, even when no one was watching. He leaves behind a legacy that will be carried on by his wife, Beth Sykes of Newnan GA; his daughter Bridget Cutchen and husband, Chuck of Moreland, GA; his daughter Leigh Calmes and husband, Todd of Independence, LA, and his son Andy Sykes and wife, Sarah of Senoia, GA; his grandchildren, Marissa Sykes, Owen Sykes, Cyrus Calmes, Tyce Calmes, Lucas High, Kaelyn High and Lindsey Stewart. His great-grandchild, Connor Stewart. Brothers Gerald Sykes of Bolivar, TN and Bob Sykes of Athens, TN. Numerous nieces and nephews in TN and throughout the south east.

There will be a family service at Hebron Baptist Church in Bolivar, TN on August 9th. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St Jude Children's Hospital.

Condolences may be expressed online at [www.mckoon.com](http://www.mckoon.com)

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory (770) 253-4580

## Cemetery Details

### McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory

38 Jackson Street  
Newnan, GA 30263  
care@mckoon.com  
<http://www.mckoon.com>

## Previous Events

### Family Service

AUG 9.

Hebron Baptist Church