



## Dr. James Jefferson Thomasson, Jr.

August 22, 1934 - November 23, 2021

James Jefferson Thomasson, Jr.

James Jefferson Thomasson, Jr. was born in Carrollton, Georgia August 22, 1934 to James Jefferson Thomasson and Emeline Cheney Thomasson. Jimmy, as he was affectionately named, moved to Newnan with his sister Emily as his father bought The Newnan Times-Herald newspaper. Soon after, his mother died of scarlet fever when Jimmy was two. To keep his family safe, his father moved to a home in Raymond, which burned. The children were saved by a helpful neighbor.

Thus, the family moved back to Newnan, his father remarried; Jimmy began his individual life in the town. His dancing lessons at age five led to his meeting Susie Arnall Mann, dressed in a stunning top hat. This partner later became his life partner, sweethearts all their lives. Susie's mother, Myrtle Arnall Mann, saw the excellence in this young man and had him come by for visits and lemonade. A spiritual leader in Newnan, Miss Myrtle's influence became a life-long voice of significance.

During early years, Jimmy worked as a grocery clerk, mapping cotton for the government, and assisting with construction of what was then the new Newnan High School. He also worked at his father's newspaper as a proofreader. When the family added a radio station, Jimmy traveled with his father to determine the station's signal coverage so that advertisers would know the potential size of the audience.

Jimmy and Susie dated throughout high school; her father did not trust Susie in Jimmy's Model T, so he offered "Boy (his term for Jimmy)" his own. Not only a talented student, Jimmy excelled on the football field as a Newnan Tiger, resulting in a meeting with the legendary Bobby Dodd to discuss his becoming a Yellow Jacket. His father prevailed, however, in persuading him to pursue his desire to become a physician. After a 1952 graduation, he entered Emory University where he was Number One in the Kappa Alpha fraternity and, later, was inducted into the Hardeman Court of Honor.

After graduation in 1956, the couple was married at her parents' home. Jimmy returned to medical school at Emory; Susie taught school in Decatur until their first daughter Myrtle Mildred was born. Two years later, Emeline Mann entered their world during medical school. James Jefferson III arrived in another two years. With surgical residencies at the Veterans Hospital, Grady, and Egleston his deferment of military service ended.

His surgeon's career began aboard the USS Shangri La (CVA38). Jimmy enjoyed his service in the Navy immensely and achieved the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He had a harrowing adventure ship to ship via helicopter to assist two critically injured crew members of the Newman K. Perry destroyer following a collision between the two ships.

Upon his discharge from the Navy, Jimmy set up his surgical practice at the PAPP clinic as a general surgeon. The family lived at 74 Jackson Street, which was conveniently located next door to Newnan Hospital and across the street from Susie's parents. Thus began the ritual of Saturday morning breakfasts enjoyed by only Jimmy and Miss Myrtle, a vivid memory often recalled.

During Jimmy's years in the Navy, the children lived with their mother in Collinsworth, New Jersey, Atlantic Beach, Florida and Orange Park, Florida. While in Orange Park, the children attended St. John's Country Day School in Orange Park. After the Newnan return, this noteworthy educational experience served as a frequent discussion among their friends Evelyn and Will Haugen and Carolyn and Guy Arnall. With that impetus grew the private

educational opportunity, The Heritage School, which remains a noteworthy, larger institution today.

Soon after the opening of the school in 1970, Susie lost her father, Emil K Mann, followed by the death of her mother in 1973. With lots of children's activities in the next decades, Jimmy's focus remained his work, his family, his church, Central Baptist. He was an excellent surgeon, much loved by his patients and colleagues. As the children gained maturity, married, and had their own children, Susie and Jimmy enjoyed their time together.

Jimmy saw his life change after a bicycle accident led to the beginnings of several surgeries on his back. Spinal stenosis and vertebral fusions led to the loss of much feeling and muscle control in his hands. The days of holding a scalpel were over. Jimmy made the best of this turn by being with Susie.

Jimmy was a natural "fixer" of people and things.

As Susie's health began a swift dive downward, he was ever at her side, making sure she enjoyed drives, her favorite foods, and the presence of her beloved children and grandchildren. When Susie died in 2015, he was greatly bereft. He had his own struggle with bladder cancer in 2014 but was pronounced cancer-free in 2021.

In making a life for himself alone, Jimmy turned to an interest he learned in his youth, furniture refinishing. His basement was fitted for construction, and he enjoyed bringing wood to life. Aided in this pursuit by fellow artisans, he enjoyed dining with gentlemen from all walks of life. He relished their creations, perhaps more than his own as what others could accomplish merited his admiration, never jealousy.

Jimmy's love of automobiles began in his youth. As time passed, he grew fond of collecting a wide variety of cars. He personally restored a number of automobiles. He also gave the Heritage School permission to auction his prized Mercedes 190SL. At 83 he flew to Seattle to purchase a 1995 BMW 840 which had quite a history. He took a Defensive Driving Course for Seniors to drive this car until his passing.

Love of travel continued, fostered by his early excursions in the Navy. Although the family had traveled to favored locales in Europe and Hawaii, now his sites were focused on places where he found his children and grandchildren. The West beckoned as he spent months in Colorado, traveling up Pike's Peak, Breckenridge, CO, Cheyenne, WY, and Wichita Falls, TX. Grandchildren in Georgia along with great-grandchildren could always count on a visit from Papa. A joyous night was spent recently on the front row of the Alan Jackson concert surrounded by family and friends. Although Jimmy and his wife Susie were generous in their gifts to others, their community, and their church, most of their contributions were anonymous as they felt fortunate to share with no need for acknowledgment and preferred privacy. Jimmy's most recent project involved the printing of his beloved mother-in-law's wisdom in a small volume, "Stepping in the Light."

Perhaps Jimmy is famously remembered as a true raconteur, as he adored sharing memories and stories with a photographic sense of detail as dates, settings, dialogue were most precise. This talent and pleasure were always served with generous humor, gesticulation, and laughter. To have his family present as the narratives emerged was his idea of true joy. All in all, Jimmy was best described by an inscription on a recent family gift "Loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brilliant physician, healer, innovator, civic leader, historian, teller of marvelous tales, a man of great character and impressive wit".

Jimmy is survived by his daughters; Mildred Thomasson Gosch (Andy) and children Katie Arnall Salsi (Beau), Ronald Steven Sale(Natalie), Andrew Finley Gosch Jr; Emeline Thomasson Loughlin (Edward) and her children Edward Christopher Forbes Loughlin, Jr. (Allison) and Evan Wirt Thomasson Loughlin; son James Jefferson Thomasson, III (Jennifer) and his children James Jefferson Thomasson IV (Joanna) and Cheney Thomasson Eldridge (Harris).

His seven great-grandchildren include Susie Thomasson Salsi, Kathryn Elise Salsi, Avery Harper Sale, Emerson Palmer Sale; Edward Christopher Forbes Loughlin III; James Jefferson Thomasson V, Resin Bass Thomasson. Jimmy was preceded in death by his sister Emily Thomasson Sealy and is survived by his brother William Warren Thomasson (Marianne) as well as a niece, Elizabeth Thomasson Neely (Clay) and nephew, Albert Lanier Sealy, III.

Jimmy Thomasson died peacefully November 23, 2021, at Piedmont Hospital Newnan, surrounded by his children Mildred, Emeline, and Jim. A private family service was held graveside Friday, November 26 by former Central Baptist Church minister Joel Richardson and the present pastor Matt Sapp. Jimmy would have been humored by his great-granddaughters' excellent behavior at the service, while the great-grandsons had to be walked around by the outlaws.

The family would like to thank the following caregivers, assistants and nurses: Charlotte Tucker, Augusta Cannon, Denise Berry, Linda Ard, Cassandra Dunham, Kendra McLaren for their love and dedication during these last few years. Thank-you!

As a man of great faith, a deacon and chairman of its board, memorials may be made to Central Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1221, Newnan, Georgia 30264.

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

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory (770) 253-4580

# Previous Events

## Family and Friends

NOV **30**. 8:00 PM (ET)

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory  
38 Jackson St.  
Newnan, GA 30263

# Tribute Wall

HH

“ JJ was a wonderful person !We met at. Med School and we're closely associated for four years and kept in touch thru the years.God has blessed those who were lucky to have knownJim.H Barrett Heywood MD

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**H Barrett Heywood** - December 05, 2021 at 11:12 PM

FF

“ We are so sorry to hear about Dr. Thomasson. He was a great man and was always so nice to us. Our prayers are with all the family during this difficult time.  
Frank and Melody Farmer

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**FRANK AND MELODY FARMER** - December 03, 2021 at 11:51 AM

HB

“ As a long lost cousin in California, I'd like to offer my condolences to Jimmy's immediate and extended family. We talked a few times of these past few years, but I wish I had been closer. Folks don't come much finer than Jimmy, obvious to all who knew him. He did me a favor in 1958, that I'll never forget. He got me a Press Pass from the Newnan Georgia Times Herald (from his father) when I went to Europe after graduation from Vanderbilt. And with it, I was able to get into the play "My Fair Lady" with Rex Harrison on a standing room only basis (it was sold out) because of my bluff as a reporter with my Times Herald Press Pass. And I'll never forget the visit that Jim Jr. paid me in Southern California on his bicycle honeymoon down the West Coast. I stayed somewhat up to date with Jimmy throughout the many years through my sister, Ann. RIP, Love, Cousin Harry

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**Harry Boon** - December 02, 2021 at 06:01 PM

BM

“ I knew Jimmy in high school and in medical school. One could never have a better friend. Susie and Jimmy were our best friends in Emory Medical School. We spent many Saturday nights at Dale's Cellar or some other fine restaurant in Atlanta. We both lived in the University Apts. in Decatur for the four years in med school. Our daughter, Beth, and Mildred played together. I treasure all of my memories of this fine man and excellent surgeon. He made the world a better place for all of us.  
Bill Sasser, MD St. Louis.

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**Bill Sasser, MD** - December 01, 2021 at 03:53 PM

MD

“ I'm so sorry to hear of Dr. Thomasson's passing. My sincere condolences to his family and friends. I had the pleasure of caring for Dr. Thomasson a few times in the past few years. I loved talking with him and his daughter. They had a beautiful bond. He was truly an amazing man. Praying for peace & comfort in this hard time.  
Sincerely, Melissa Davis

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**Melissa Davis** - November 30, 2021 at 08:39 PM

MD

“ Dr Thomasson was the best of the best. He truly was an angel to the Horne's back in the good ole days.

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**Marcia Horne Dees** - November 30, 2021 at 02:40 PM

WN

“ I am forever grateful to this man for his care of my father in 1990. My dad thought the world of this man and always referred to him as JJ. Dad didn't see him as his doctor, dad saw him as his friend. Dr. Thomasson was a great man and a wonderful doctor. RIP Dr. JJ.

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**Wendy Newman** - November 30, 2021 at 12:54 PM