



Elmer J.R. Thomas

July 3, 1952 - June 21, 2020

Elmer J.R. Thomas, 67, of Searcy, Arkansas, passed away peacefully on June 21, 2020 in Little Rock, Arkansas after a long battle with cancer. JR, as he was known to most, was born on July 3, 1952 to the late Elmer Jackson and Lola Crain Thomas in Grants Pass, Oregon. JR grew up in Searcy, Arkansas and was a member of Searcy First Baptist Church where he sang in the choir for many years. He was a 1971 graduate of Searcy High School and a 1988 graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. In 1970, JR met Dianne Sims of Searcy, Arkansas and they went on to wed in 1981, having two children Amanda and Jai. JR served the citizens of Searcy and White County and the State of Arkansas with a distinguished career in law enforcement beginning in 1977 as a police officer in Searcy, Arkansas, eventually serving 18 years as Chief of Police. He went on to work as the Director of Tobacco Control for Arkansas from 2007 to 2015 and served on numerous boards. Throughout his career he was known for his compassion and desire to help people. It was especially important to JR to get out in the community to form relationships with the citizens he served. JR enjoyed acting in and attending theater, music, art, golf, fishing, grabbing a cup of coffee with friends, and in retirement enjoyed watching animals in his backyard while smoking his favorite cigars. JR is preceded in death by his parents Elmer and Lola Thomas. He is survived by his wife, Dianne Thomas, his two children Amanda Thomas McClish, Jai Thomas Ratliff, sons-in-law Shawn McClish and Steve Ratliff, grandchildren Keely and Carson McClish, and Ryan Ratliff.

A celebration of JR's life will be held on July 3, 2020 from 6:00-8:00 pm in the Searcy First Baptist Church Family Life Center. Masks and social distancing will be observed. In lieu of flowers the family requests that honorariums be made to a favorite cancer association. Arrangements entrusted to Powell Funeral Home of Searcy. www.powellfuneralhome.net

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 3. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church, Searcy
Spring & Center Sts.
Searcy, AR 72143

Tribute Wall



“ Powell Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Elmer J.R. Thomas



Powell Funeral Home & Cremation Services - June 26, 2020 at 12:08 PM

CR

Thank you for posting the video. I served on The White County Domestic Violence Prevention Board with JR and he used to stop to chat at our business before we moved ten years ago. He was such a welcoming person with a humble heart and so smart. He had great ideas and devotion for the community he loved so much. I think of him with nothing but admiration. Through the video I can see what a loving family he had. My love and compassion goes out to each of you who deeply feel his loss, but especially his family.

Cas Rifkin - June 30, 2020 at 02:07 PM

TM

“ Diane, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this time. We are so sorry for your loss. Treva, Bill, and Lauren

Treva Mills - July 02, 2020 at 09:59 AM

VA

“ I didn't know JR for a long time but I had the pleasure of meeting him when I worked at Tobacco Control. He took a chance on me and I worked hard so that I wouldn't let him down. We became friends during our conversations about faith and family when my Dad took ill. I will always treasure our conversations in the "truth zone" where honesty was expected.

Vicki Albertoli - July 01, 2020 at 01:15 AM

EH

“ We had a lot of good times together
Sympathy to Diane and family

Eddie and Joyce Hightower - July 01, 2020 at 12:27 AM

YG

“ Your friends at ATC and Steve Goode purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Elmer J.R. Thomas.



Your friends at ATC and Steve Goode - June 29, 2020 at 02:06 PM

MJ

“ J.R. We go back a long way. You will be missed, My love to all family.

sincerely,

Beth Kennedy

Mary Beth Jackson - June 29, 2020 at 10:17 AM

KO

“ I always enjoyed my time around J.R. - rest in peace Sir!

Kathy O'Kelley - June 28, 2020 at 07:28 PM

TR

“ Dianne and family, my thoughts and prayers are with you. I will always remember the kindness you and JR showed me during the election.

Tiffany Rogers - June 28, 2020 at 11:25 AM

SI

“ He was a visionary. Always looking for new challenges and ideas to make the community a better place. I had the privilege of serving while he was Chief. My sincerest condolences to his family. RIP Chief!

Stephaine Inman - June 27, 2020 at 02:21 PM

CA

“ My deepest sympathies to JRs family. JR was a great friend and SHS Class of 71 classmate! Loved watching the video pictures of his life, your family life. He will be so missed! Love to all —

Cindy Musick Alexander - June 27, 2020 at 11:50 AM

RL

“ RIP Chief, you were great man and I was glad to have known you.... Our prayers and thoughts are with you and the family...

Randy and Laura - June 26, 2020 at 10:56 PM

LD

“ I knew JR since first grade. We were playmates. Good memories. I'm proud of the man he became.

Larry Davis - June 26, 2020 at 10:45 PM

EW

“ Rest in Peace Chief.

Eric Webb - June 26, 2020 at 08:57 PM

MC

“ So sorry to hear about the loss of JR, he was a good man, my dad thought alot of him, prayers for all of you.
Melissa Carter (daughter of JD Carter)

Melissa Carter - June 26, 2020 at 07:45 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Elmer J.R. Thomas.



June 26, 2020 at 04:18 PM