



## James Walter Durdel

December 29, 1932 - May 30, 2009

Mattoon, IL-James Walter (Jim) Durdel, age 76, of Mattoon, IL, was taken to our Lord at 1:25 p.m., Saturday, May 30, 2009 with his loving wife by his side.

He had been completing rehabilitation at Odd Fellow Rebekah Home in

Mattoon, IL. \r\n\r\nJim was born December 29, 1932 to Walter and Allene

(Clow) Durdel in Dorans, IL. He married Mona Gilmer on April 16, 1955 in

Sigel, Illinois. Later, they moved to Arthur, IL, where Jim worked at Progress

Manufacturing Company. His wife, Mona, taught eight grades at an Amish

school there. During that time, they hosted country musicians that came to

play at the county fair such as Ferlin Husky, Dottie West, and Red Sovine.

\r\n\r\nJim was in a band known as 'Jim Durdel and the Drifters' that played all

over central Illinois. He and Mona traveled to Nashville in 1956/57 where he

appeared on the Ralph Emery Radio Show, and was invited backstage at the

Grand Ole Opry. He recorded two 45's for Nashville Records, a division of

Starday Records. He wrote three of the songs, 'Bright Lights Uptown',

'Another's Kisses', and 'Dreamin's a Lonesome Thing', and co wrote one song

with Tommy Hill. 'Bright Lights Uptown' remains on radio station playlists

around the country to this day.\r\n\r\nJim and Mona returned to Illinois and

moved to the Neoga area and then to rural Cooks Mills. He worked at Oil Well,

Blaw Knox, Firestone, and USI, Tuscola. Jim also worked as farm help,

cemetery caretaker, and did woodwork on the side, all while continuing to play

the music he loved. \r\n\r\nWhile Jim did not get to play the Grand Ole Opry,

he did get to see his great niece Jamie and nephew Nick become the

youngest performers at the Grand Ole Opry at the time. Jim inspired his family and others to love music and performing. He and his friends found a home for their sessions in the last few years at the Neoga Truck Stop. They would come together every few weeks to play and invited others to join in with them. The place was packed every session.

Jim is survived by his wife of 54 years, Mona; their children: Crystal (Will) Coffin of Chenoa, Illinois; Tonya Durdel of Mattoon, IL; Jesse (Wendy) Durdel of Arcola, IL; and his 'special daughter', Melissa (JD McCain) Merritt of Oakland, IL; four loving grandchildren: Merritt Bennett and Sara, Allison, and Anna Durdel; a sister, June Sharp of Neoga, IL; a brother in law, Glenn (Linda) Schaefer; and two sisters in law, Marilyn (Paul) Rennels and Joan (Bill) Poorman. He was blessed with 22 nieces and nephews and a myriad of great nieces and great nephews, as well as their children, cousins, and more friends than he could count. He was preceded in death by his parents; a grandson, Michael James Durdel; a brother in law, Norman 'Peg' Sharp; three nephews: Robin Rennels, Duane Sharp, and Rick Rennels; and a great niece, Jamie Sharp.

Jim's wish was to have a memorial service to celebrate his life and family. The memorial service will be celebrated on Saturday, June 6, 2009 at 3:00 pm at St. John's Lutheran Church with Reverend Delton Nack, Reverend Bruce D. Osborn, and Reverend Troy A. Countryman officiating. Private Interment will take place at a later date. Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home, 1200 Wabash Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938, is in charge of the arrangements.

There will be a musical gathering at the Neoga Truck stop on Saturday, June 20 in memory of Jim. The music will begin at 6 pm.

Jim served our country with the United States Army during the Korean Conflict and was a member of the St. John's Lutheran Church.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that any donations be made to his widow at First Mid-Illinois Bank of Mattoon. Please visit [www.mitchell-jerdan.com](http://www.mitchell-jerdan.com) to light a virtual candle or share a memory with his family.

# Tribute Wall



“ *James Walter Durdel*

October 08, 2023 at 07:40 PM



“ *I am sorry to hear of Jim's death just Thursday this past week. My brother Donie was home and he told me. I use to type Jim's music for him while I was in high school. My brother Donie and Jim were friends, working at Progress and later at Blaw-Knox together. They both loved that good ole country music and Donie thought he was pretty special when he was asked to your house when Ferlin Husky was down here for the Arthur Fair. I never knew you were in the Mattoon area.\r\nwe extend our sympathy to you and your family even after just now finding out about it. I don't know how we missed it as I ran the floew shop here in town for the last 32 years.\r\nI got on this computer and found his picture and the obituary. Our love and prayers to you.\r\nElsie Nease Winings*

**Elsie Nease Winings** - November 01, 2009 at 12:38 AM



“ *Remembering the good times from Neoga and Sigel\r\narea group,*

**Donald Mehl** - June 05, 2009 at 04:20 PM

BP

“ mona(mom)crystal tonya jesse and families please know i am thinking about u guys my prayers are with u he will be missed deeply i haven't seen u guys 4 a long time but dnt think i dnt remember the good ole days if i wasnt at ur house crystal was at mine jim treated me just like his other daughter u guys were like my other set of parents what i wouldnt give to have my high school days back so i could still see u guys jim was a great husband and father to u all just remember the good times and wat few bad ones there might have been hes watching over u all now take care knowing he is in ur hearts forever!! i lov u guys.love becky

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becky(shaw) phipps - June 04, 2009 at 05:59 PM

BP

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becky(shaw) phipps - June 04, 2009 at 05:38 PM