



## Reverend Robert L. Hays

February 11, 1933 - June 15, 2023

Reverend Robert L. Hays, age 90 of Charleston, IL was victoriously ushered into the eternal presence of His Lord Jesus Christ on June 15, 2023, peacefully passing away with his wife by his side at Odd-Fellow Rebekah Home in Mattoon, IL.

A private funeral service will be held for family on Saturday, June 17, 2023, at Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home, located at 1200 Wabash Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938; Reverend Richard Hoffman will officiate. A committal service will follow at Dodge Grove Cemetery in Mattoon, IL.

He was born in Murdock, IL on February 11, 1933, to the late Reverend Voyles and Irene Hays. He married Dona Borrer on July 25, 1953; she survives and resides in Charleston, IL; Other survivors include one son, Scot Hays and wife Terri; one daughter, Tami Duzan and husband Bruce; grandchildren, Jenna Hays (Otis White), Lynne Cameron and husband Craig, Jordan Hays (Samantha Neville); great-grandchildren, Christian and Kinsley Hays, and Jetta Barcus. He is preceded in death by two brothers, James, and Duane Hays; stepmother; and two brothers-in-law.

After being ordained in 1955, he shared a lifelong ministry with his wife, Dona. Together they used their talents and hard work to advance God's Kingdom. He devoted his life to his ministry, family, and pastoring churches in Chicago Heights, IL, Carbondale, IL, Mattoon, IL, Hollywood, FL, St. Thomas, VI, and Charleston, IL. He was blessed to preach in many countries and had the privilege of hosting several Holy Land tours. Robert shared his love for Jesus

and ministry with his family at church and throughout everyday moments of life. He loved nothing more than to see people give their hearts to Jesus, be baptized in Jesus' name, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Memorials in his honor may be made to Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospice House, 1004 Health Center Drive, Mattoon, IL 61938.

Please visit [www.mitchell-jerdan.com](http://www.mitchell-jerdan.com) or [www.facebook.com/mitchelljerdanfuneralhome](http://www.facebook.com/mitchelljerdanfuneralhome) to light a virtual candle in his honor or share a memory with the family.

# Cemetery Details

## Dodge Grove Cemetery

917 North 22nd Street  
Mattoon, IL 61938

# Previous Events

## Private Service

JUN 17 (CT)

Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home Ltd.  
1200 Wabash Ave  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
(217) 234-8828  
[contact@mitchelljerdan.com](mailto:contact@mitchelljerdan.com)  
<https://www.mitchell-jerdan.com/>

# Tribute Wall

“ I first met Rev. R.L Hays at my wedding ceremony to William Max Browning in 1973. Mr. Hays seemed kind, but I felt he was very reserved in our presence. I wish I had understood Bro. Hays “aura” that day. He had known and been involved with Bill and the entire Browning family for many years. I barely knew Bill. If only, OH, if only Bro. Hays had required that we go through a series of classes or something before he agreed to marry us. Unknowingly, I had stepped into a deep chasm full of demons when I married Bill Browning. By the time I realized how seriously flawed Bill was, especially mentally, it was too late. I was already pregnant with a son, Shane Max Browning. I was delighted with beautiful, healthy baby boy. But, Bill rarely even looked at Shane, much less interact with his own baby son. I won't go into his many faults and mental health issues here. His father, Max Browning, was the only bit of support I got from anyone in the Browning family. I only knew Max for less than a year before he died of a tragic heart attack at age 35. He was a wonder man in every way, and truly loved Shane. I recall Max holding Shane and slowing dancing around the room, on afternoon and singing, “ May I Have this Dance for the Rest of My life.” Shane was only 7 months old when his grandpa, Max Browning passed away, at age 45 of a massive heart attack. Max's nickname for Shane was “ Turtle.”

The reason ? Shane was still too little to hold his head up completely independently. But, when Shane heard Max's voice he looked Max's direction and attempted to hold his head up and look at Grandpa Max. His head would non up and down like a turtle swimming across a pond. So “ Turtle” was Max's Nickname for Shane. Max would also make funny sounds out of his mouth that sounded like Donald Duck. Shane always smiled and one afternoon, when Max was doing this with Shane, Max was the first one to hear Shane “ chuckle” out loud. His father, Bill, went to California to live when Shane was 8 years old. I still remember when Bill stopped by on his motorcycle to tell Shane “ Goodbye,” and he might not see him again before he grew up. As Bill left, without looking ●● back, Shane ran down the sidewalk shouting, “ Please don't leave Daddy ! I love you! Please don't leave

*! Shane only saw his father 2x more before he graduated from high school. Bill's choice, no one else. I later learned that at times Bill was homeless, begging on city street corners for cash and food. All his own choice. A few years later Bill called me on the phone and told me, " He was dying in a Sacramento hospital and wanted to tell Shane*

*" Good-Bye." It took me 10-15 minutes to get Shane to agree to come to the phone. I then did not realize how much anger Shane had inside about Bill deserting him, and about why his paternal grandmother, Browning had completely rejected him. After marrying and having his first child, a daughter, he took Alexis to the bank to show his baby to his grandmother Browning. 2x Shane and his wife took the baby to see her, and 2x Velma sent word out that she did not want to see Shane and his family, and that she would call the police if he ever ever made another attempt. I told Shane, " I have no answers, except that for most, if not all of Bill's life his mother had completely rejected Bill. Prior to his death, Max told me this, with tears in his eyes. The only explanation Max had was, " She's a Ward."*

*I will end with, this was my first experience with a UPC Pentecostal Church. I am glad to have had the contact. I later prayed through to the Holy Ghost. I also met many nice, sane people through that experience, some of whose friendships I still enjoy today. I think today, Max Browning would be proud of his namesake grandson, Shane Max. Shane is a college graduate who graduated in the top 10% of his H. S. Class, he received a " Full ride, scholarship" for college, graduated and has a good career and is well liked by his colleague's.*

*He has been 25 years to the same woman, and has 2 grown children, Alexis Marie, age 24 and*

*Preston Max age 22. Both children are intelligent, have made good, safe life choices and are happy contributing members of society. It is hard to believe that Shane just turned 51 years old. I feel certain Max is looking down at them with pride and love.*

*May Bill find the Peace in Death he never found on Earth. May God Bless Bro. Hays in Heaven, his wife, Dona, here on earth and their children Scot and Tammy and grandchildren.*

**Rebecca Moran** - June 05, 2025 at 11:28 PM



“ *Reverend Robert L. Hays*

October 08, 2023 at 07:40 PM



“ *Brother Hayes hurried to a hospital in Champaign the morning after he baptized me in Jesus' Name and I prayed through at the Mattoon Church. He pulled a chair close to my hospital bedside, prayed for me, and told me the devil was after me but not to worry because God wins! That was late October 1971. Hallelujah! Jesus is STILL winning in my life! Pamela Eastin Taylor*

**Pamela Eastin Taylor** - October 07, 2023 at 09:40 AM



“ *I was blessed to know bro hays since i was born.He was a very kind and good man.Growing up I was at his house about evry sunday afternoon.scot,tami and i grew up together,such a house of love to be around.Bro Hays (that was his name to all of us). Will be in all my memories forever.In my heart he was a angel.Scot and tami.mydeepest condolences.I ty my pastor and freind bro hays. Greg Mattox 1 and Family*

**Greg mattox** - July 08, 2023 at 07:28 AM



“ *Andrew W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Reverend Robert L. Hays.*

**Andrew W.** - June 17, 2023 at 11:05 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Reverend Robert L. Hays.*



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June 16, 2023 at 02:46 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Reverend Robert L. Hays.*



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June 16, 2023 at 10:51 AM



“ *Brother Hays was my first pastor after receiving the Holy Ghost on May 8, 1974. His gentle manor and wonderful teaching were one of the things I remember the most. He was so kind and supportive when Jeff and I came to him and said we wanted to get married. We were so young, 20 and 18, but he didn't discourage us. He just advised us to keep Christ at the center of our marriage. That was 49 years ago! I am so thankful to have known and had the influence of such a godly, gentle man.*

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**Marilyn Taylor** - June 16, 2023 at 07:50 AM



*Uncle Bob was such a kind and caring man. He pastored us for around 20 years....appreciated he and Aunt Dona so much! Love, John and Patty Hays*

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**John and Patty Hays** - June 17, 2023 at 12:24 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Reverend Robert L. Hays.



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June 15, 2023 at 07:10 PM