



## James Allen (Alan) "Sonny" DeGraffenried

June 22, 1941 - March 24, 2025

Funeral Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9354912908?pwd=pYaJcTy5Kq8d3uLWhFjOaK8DGS6juD.1>

Meeting ID: 935 491 2908

Passcode: 683634

James Allen (Alan) "Sonny" DeGraffenried, 83, passed away peacefully on the evening of March 24, 2025, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tucson, Arizona. He was surrounded by his family both in person and virtually. Alan's sudden passing resulted from injuries sustained in a recent car accident, which were compounded by prior health conditions related to his age.

Alan DeGraffenried was the second of five children born to George Lee DeGraffenried and Betty Helena Greenberg DeGraffenried. He was born on June 22, 1941, and was one of the first babies born in the newly built Providence Hospital in Anchorage, Alaska. A fond memory of his mother's was the old Alaskans visiting them and bringing gifts to celebrate his birth.

As a youth, Alan was a skilled marble player, competing and taking second place in the state championship. He graduated from Olympus High School in 1959, where he participated in football, along with track and field throwing the javelin. In addition to sports, Alan was taught to be a great outdoorsman by

his father, Lee, who instilled in him a love for hunting wild game and fishing the many streams and lakes in the Wasatch and Uinta mountains. He especially loved hunting with a bow and was skilled with a rifle and shotgun. Alan loved sharing stories of his thrilling adventures and memorable hunting and fishing experiences with all who would listen. He also loved downhill skiing; however, around 18 he injured a knee that bothered him for the remainder of his life.

He served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the Southern States Mission. He served faithfully bringing many souls to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and often shared stories of his experiences with his children and others.

After his mission, Alan returned to Atlanta, Georgia, where he met Lana Gayle Wortham at a Mutual Improvement Association dance. Gayle said it was love at first sight. Alan and Gayle fell in love and married on August 9th, 1963 in Holladay Utah, and were later sealed for time and all eternity in the Salt Lake Temple on January 20, 1964. They were blessed to have a large family of five sons (Dana, Mark, Matthew, Jared, and Peter) and four daughters (Cherry Gayle, Wendy, Heather, and Rachael). Not wanting to be apart they traveled with Alan's work early in their marriage living in many states, finally settling in Highland, Utah, where they lived for nine years. In 1982, they moved to Homer, Alaska, where they spent 36 years cherishing each other until his loving companion of 54 years, Gayle, passed away in 2018. Alan's great Magnum Opus was the construction of a family home in Homer, which he worked on for 40 years in tribute to his unwavering love and devotion to Gayle.

Alan was a faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and loved his Savior, Jesus Christ. He enjoyed singing church hymns, serving congregation members, and teaching the gospel. He served as a ward missionary, on the High Council, and the Homer Ward Bishopric.

Alan was a skilled bricklayer and mason. When he first started, his father insisted that he not begin work with new, shiny tools and gave him an old canvas work bag with a used trowel, tuck points, joint rake, level, tape measure, and other valuable tools. With this trade, he supported his growing family. Over the years, he built and worked on 42 LDS churches and temples. Along with churches he built prisons, schools, and other buildings. His favorite work was with stone. His family home boasts a large stone fireplace with stone he gathered from a state quarry in Coopers Landing, Alaska. The same quarry provided the stone he used to lay in the late Brighton LDS Chapel, where the Alaska Anchorage temple is.

Alan was an avid moose hunter in Alaska. With the guidance of family friend Dee Johanson, in 1964, he built a 6-wheel drive hunting rig from an old military 6x6. With that old rig, he and his hunting friends hunted the Nelchina River, Oshetna River, and Coal Creek regions for moose and caribou. Here, you may view some footage of their 1960s and early 1970s trips: <https://youtu.be/cZOJurZ8up4>. He and his sons, Mark and Matthew, made fabulous hand-forged hunting knives. He worked in the commercial fishing industry, owning several commercial fishing boats that he restored and did the mechanical work on: The Blizzard, Cari Marie, and Thelma Jean. He was also a highly skilled sport fisherman. This is a short film of his last Alaska fishing trip with Dana, Matthew, and Ethan (grandson), where he caught two dandy Sockeye salmon on the Kenai River near Skilak Lake. <https://youtu.be/26kS1PZFtOU>

For years, he worked summers for Doyle and Helen Carlson, running their fish processing dock and plant in Kasilof, Alaska, and with the Thelma Jean, he drift-fished for salmon in Cook Inlet, catching hundreds of thousands of pounds of salmon. He also fished the Cari Marie for Dungeness Crab, Tanner Crab, and halibut and even tried the herring fishery one season. One

Summer, he ran the Carlsons' tender, the Jade V, to the remote village of Quinhagak and up the Kuskokwim River to tender salmon. Filling the holds of his boats with fish was a thrilling experience for Alan.

After Gayle's death, he married Junietta Claridge, September 11, 2021 in Homer, Alaska, and they enjoyed a wonderful 3 1/2 years together. Alan and Junietta spent winters in Arizona. He enjoyed the warmer weather in the winters, where he could avoid shoveling and moving snow. He enjoyed the new wild critters of Arizona and working on fixing up their home on the old Claridge homestead, and getting to know the Claridge family and Junietta's long-time friends. Having grown up with chickens and roosters, he once again had a flock of chickens to enjoy feeding in Willcox, Arizona. Junietta and Alan found solace and companionship in one another as they cared for each other during their marriage. His children are eternally grateful for her love and companionship she shared with their father.

Alan was preceded in death by his wife, Lana Gayle Wortham DeGraffenried, whom he had been married to for 54 years; parents, George Lee and Betty Helena DeGraffenried; sister, Carol Ann DeGraffenried Martin; brother, Dennis Lee "Buck" DeGraffenried; daughter, Cherry Gayle DeGraffenried who passed away on October 25, 1971 at 10 weeks old; and granddaughter, Georgia L. DeGraffenried (Jared).

He is survived by his wife, Junietta Childers Claridge. Siblings: Penny Lee DeGraffenried; Jon Kelly (Kristine) DeGraffenried. Children; Dana A. (Sarah) DeGraffenried; J. Mark DeGraffenried; Matthew J. (Jill) DeGraffenried; Wendy M. DeGraffenried (Jonna Naylor); Jared P. (Melinda) DeGraffenried; Heather M. (Gregory) Jensen; Rachael H. (Joseph) Sanger; Peter E. DeGraffenried. 28 Grandchildren: 9 step-grandchildren: 7 great-grandchildren: 1 step-great-grandchild

Funeral services will be held at 12:30 PM MDT, April 11, 2025, at 2550 West 9800 South, South Jordan, Utah 84095. A viewing will be held at 12:00-12:30 PM at the same location.

James Alan DeGraffenried will be interred at South Jordan City Memorial Park in South Jordan, Utah, located at 10630 S 1055 W, South Jordan, UT 84095. His final resting place will be next to his wife Lana Gayle, daughter Cherry Gayle, and grandparents James Monroe and Sadie Jane DeGraffenried. He will be greatly missed by his family.

# Cemetery Details

## South Jordan City Cemetery

10630 S 1055 W  
South Jordan, UT 84095

# Previous Events

## Private Family Viewing

APR 11. 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM (MT)

South Jordan, UT- Chapel  
2550 West 9800 South  
South Jordan, UT 84095

## Viewing

APR 11. 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM (MT)

South Jordan, UT- Chapel  
2550 West 9800 South  
South Jordan, UT 84095

## Funeral Service

APR 11. 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM (MT)

South Jordan, UT- Chapel  
2550 West 9800 South  
South Jordan, UT 84095

## Graveside Service

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APR 11. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (MT)

South Jordan City Cemetery  
10630 S 1055 W  
South Jordan, UT 84095

# Tribute Wall

WD

“ 14 files added to the tribute wall



Wendy DeGraffenried - September 17, 2025 at 03:16 AM

MD

“ 19 files added to the tribute wall



Matthew DeGraffenried - April 01, 2025 at 03:49 PM