



James Franklin Finch

June 10, 1943 - January 29, 2026

James Franklin Finch, 82, known to all who loved him as Jim or Jimmy, was born on June 10, 1943, in Forrest City, Arkansas, as the third child and only son of William Monte and Sally Lillian Parker Finch. His sudden passing on January 29, 2026, leaves behind a life modeled by devotion to family, pride in achievement, and a legacy that generations will carry forward.

Jimmy was a proud native of Forrest City and a standout athlete whose talent and discipline carried him through his years as a basketball, baseball, and football champion at Forrest City Junior and High School. His athletic achievements were later recognized with his induction into the Forrest City Mustang Football Hall of Fame in 2019, honoring his excellence throughout the 1950s and 60s.

Jimmy attended the University of Arkansas, where he was a member of the legendary 1964 Arkansas Razorbacks football team. The undefeated squad claimed a national championship and remains one of the most celebrated teams in Razorback history. The team finished 11-0, defeating Nebraska in the Cotton Bowl to secure the National Championship title, and Jimmy was named an All-Southwest Conference Player that year. Being a Razorback was a lifelong source of pride for Jimmy, an accomplishment he carried with humility and gratitude.

His team was inducted into the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame in 2010 and has continued to be recognized over the years at Razorback games and throughout the campus. The team has also been immortalized with the National Championship Monument outside the Donald W. Reynolds Stadium in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

There are very few homes or commercial spaces in Forrest City and the surrounding area that Jimmy, or his father, did not help build, repair, or improve. He took great pride in creating beautiful, custom homes and spaces for friends and family and delighted in pointing them out as he drove around town. His children can easily recount the stories behind each project, having grown up hearing about the care, artistry, and craftsmanship he poured into every space he created.

A master carpenter and woodworker, Jimmy was deeply fascinated by the art of building, a passion evident in all his work. He trained under his father and assumed leadership of the family business after Monty's passing in 1969. Jimmy's craftsmanship earned recognition in Architectural Digest, Progressive Architecture, Timber Frame Homes, and many others. One of his most notable achievements was working under renowned architect Fay Jones on the Don and Ellen Edmondson home in Forrest City. Jimmy was awarded the AIA Builder of the Year Award. The home received the AIA Gulf States Region Award and was later included in the AIA Gold Medal awarded to Jones. The Edmondson House is widely regarded as a masterpiece of mid-century modern design in Arkansas.

Despite these accomplishments, Jimmy's most treasured creation was Countryland, the home on Newcastle Road he built for his family, where he lived and made memories for more than 50 years.

As a long-time member of the First United Methodist Church, Jimmy spent

many Sundays in the first row of the balcony. His baritone voice carried throughout the sanctuary that he restored and maintained. He also built the UMAC Building behind the church and loved hearing the sounds of children enjoying the space.

Jimmy was a seasoned hunter who spent countless early mornings on a deer stand deep in the woods, where he felt most at peace. He loved being outdoors and found his greatest joy in nature. He was both a sport fisherman and a leisure fisherman and spent many years hunting squirrel, pheasant, turkey, duck, and deer. Jimmy is recognized by Boone and Crockett for his award-winning deer, tagged in 1999, which still holds the typical white-tailed deer Arkansas record as the thirty-second largest in the state, and the largest deer ever from Mozart Hunting Club.

One of his favorite stories involved a rare standoff with a black bear over a deer near his cherished hunting cabin in Mozart, Arkansas. Jimmy ultimately brought the deer home, complete with a sizeable bite mark. He said no one would have believed the story otherwise.

Above all else, Jimmy was a devoted family man. He shared nearly 61 beautiful years of marriage with the love of his life, Katherine A. Finch, affectionately known as Kathy. Together, they built a life grounded in deep love, constant laughter, and an unwavering devotion to their family. Nothing brought Jimmy more joy than talking about his girls, his grandchildren, and, most of all, his Kathy. His love for them was evident in every story he told and in the pride that shone whenever he spoke their names.

Jimmy is survived by his wife, Kathy, his girls, Hallie Wilson, Jimmie Kay Finch, Monte Clair Greer, and Jamie Freyaldenhoven. His cherished additions Phil Wilson, Jill Anderson, and James Greer. He was the proud and devoted

grandfather known as “Big Daddy” of Phillip James Wilson, his wife Nicole, and James Paul Freyaldenhoven. Jimmy is also survived by his mother-in-law, Dolores Simpson, as well as a host of extended family members, nieces, nephews, and friends who were blessed to know him.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his sisters, Marilyn Carmikle (James), and Monta Sue Finch DeVazier (James Howard), his nephew and hunting buddy, Monty Carmikle, his niece, Deborah DeVazier Dendy, his father-in-law, James Simpson, and his sister-in-law, Deborah Eberman.

Jimmy will be remembered as a gentle giant whose steady presence, quiet strength, and deep love for his family defined his life. He carried great pride in his Razorback roots and even greater joy in those he loved. His legacy lives on in the lives he shaped, the family he cherished, the remarkable homes he built, and the countless memories that will be held close and treasured always. Go Hogs.

Funeral services will be held Friday, February 6, 2026, at 2 PM at the First United Methodist Church.

Those wishing to honor his memory may make memorial contributions to First United Methodist Church, 101 South IZARD Street, Forrest City, Arkansas 72335. Stevens Funeral Home of Forrest City is in charge of arrangements. You may sign an online guestbook at www.stevensfuneralhome.net.

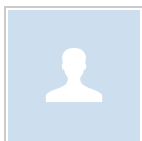
Previous Events

Funeral Service

FEB 6. 2:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church of Forrest Ctiy
101 S. Iazard Street
Forrest City, AR 72335

Tribute Wall



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of James Franklin Finch.*



February 05 at 08:45 AM



“ *Jimmy was a fine man! My condolences to Kathy and “the girls”! S. Sharum Dinning*

Sharum Dinning - February 04 at 09:06 PM



“ *So sorry to hear of Jimmy's passing.*

Wonderful memories of our neighbors on Brookside Drive long ago. Jimmy bailed us out of a DIY concrete pouring. He and Kathy encouraged Larry by getting him to carve relief carvings of all the homes Jimmy had lived in, make carvings for Duck's Unlimited and the carved rooster for a housewarming gift to Don Edmondson. Then there is the stormy night when the tree came crashing down in their living room. Jimmy had fixed in record time.

Our thought and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

Larry and Carol McCaghren

Carol McCaghren - February 04 at 01:04 PM

PH

“ Kathy and family. So sorry to hear about Jimmy. PRAYERS for you and your family at this difficult time

Patricia, Stephanie and Skipper Higgs



patricia higgs - February 04 at 10:23 AM

CF

“ Christy & Jack Frost purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of James Franklin Finch.



Christy & Jack Frost - February 03 at 03:17 PM

CF

“ Christy & Jack Frost planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Franklin Finch.

Christy & Jack Frost - February 03 at 03:17 PM

JT

“ Mama and I are so sorry to hear of Jimmy's passing. Our family spent many hours together on Short Street. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Janet and Elaine Toney

Janet Toney - February 03 at 02:59 PM

BB

“*Heartfelt condolences to you and your family for the loss of your husband and father. His love and legacy will live on. Wishing you strength, peace, and comfort during this incredibly difficult time, and know that you are in our thoughts and prayers.*



From the Sims Family

Brenda Ann Brown - February 03 at 01:38 PM

LM

Kathy, I saw where Jimmy left this world to spend eternity with the Lord. I am sending prayers your way for comfort, peace. Blessed to have go to school with him and follow his career. Linda Johnson Mathis

linda johnson Mathis - February 04 at 01:31 PM