



Mr. James Byron Ponder

July 28, 1944 - January 4, 2022

Mr. James Byron Ponder age 77, of Forrest City, passed away on January 4, 2022, after a lengthy illness. Byron was born on a hot and humid day on July 28, 1944, at the Wilson Clinic in Wynne. His parents were Joseph “Jeff” Ponder and Omie Sampley Ponder. He had three older brothers, Jerry, Kenneth and Wayne Ponder. His parents preceded him in death as well as his brother Jerry Ponder.

Byron was raised in the Summersweet area of St. Francis County and received his education at the Caldwell and Forrest City Schools and graduated in the class of 1962. After graduation he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served 4 years. During his military service he served in Adak, Alaska for one year as overseas duty, he also served on two navy ships, The USS Hector AR-7 and The USS Sylvania AFS-2. Stationed in Naples, Italy for two years, and was Honorably discharged as storekeeper 3rd class in December 1966. In January of 1967, he was employed by Stromberg-Carlson Corp. and trained as a PBX (private business exchange) installer & repairman and traveled all over the Eastern U. S. and the Bahama Islands for four years.

In 1970 he met and married Joann Brooks of Birdeye. He is survived by his wife of 51 years and three Children, Stephanie Ponder Kerlin and husband Thomas of Arlington, Tennessee, Jeff Ponder and Brent Ponder both of Forrest City. Three grandchildren also survive him, Kaitlyn, Meredith and

Nathan Kerlin.

In 1972 Byron was hired by Forrest City Post Office as a city carrier. Years later he became a Postal Clerk and eventually became Supt. of postal operations at Wynne, he was also postmaster of Covington, TN for 14 years and retired as postmaster of Millington, TN with 32 years of service.

Byron was an Arkansas Freemason, a perpetual member of Forrest City Lodge #198 F&AM and Rensellear Vann Lodge #494 F&AM in Wynne. He was past Master of both lodges. A recipient of the Arkansas Grand Lodge Pillars of Solomon award for his dedicated service to the Fraternity. He was proficient in all of the ritual work and was a certified lecturer and certified instructor for the Arkansas Grand Lodge of Masons. Byron was a York Rite mason and a life member of the Grand Royal Arch chapter of Arkansas, a perpetual member of West Memphis Chapter 54 RAM, Chasadim Council #51, and perpetual member of Chandos Commandery #14, and Knight Temple, a member of F. J. Scully Council #267 of the Allied Masonic Degrees. He was a Scottish Rite Mason, a 32nd degree Master of the Royal Secret, a 32nd degree Knight Commander of the Court of Honor and 33rd degree Inspector General of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Past Wise Master of Jonesboro Valley of AASR, and personal representative of the Sovereign Grand Inspector General in Arkansas, Jonesboro Valley and a perpetual member and a Shriner. He was also past chapter Dad of the Forrest City International Order of Rainbow for Girls and past state Dad and a recipient of the Grand Cross of Rainbow Girls. Byron was the recipient of Arkansas Grand Lodge Medal of Honor in 2018.

Byron was a long time Director of Woodruff Electric Coop. Corp., having served since 1975 as, Chairman, Vice-Chairman and secretary of the board of directors.

Funeral services will be held Friday, January 7, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. at Stevens Funeral Home. Burial will follow at Forrest Park Cemetery. Visitation will be from 6 to 8 at the funeral home on Thursday. The family request memorials be made to Forrest City Masonic Lodge #198, P.O. box 145, Forrest City, AR 72336, Rensellear Vann Lodge #494, P. O. Box 548, Wynne, AR 72396 or Eastern Arkansas Scottish Rite Bodies, P. O. Box 657, Jonesboro, AR 72403. Visit online registry at stevensfuneralhome.net.

Zoom meeting ID will be 9292196229 and passcode is 4B3k1e

Cemetery Details

Forrest Park

Hwy 1 South
Forrest City, AR

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 6. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Stevens Funeral Home
220 North Washington
Forrest City, AR 72335
(870) 633-5400
info@stevensfuneralhome.net
<https://www.stevensfuneralhome.net/>

Funeral Service

JAN 7. 11:00 AM (CT)

Stevens Funeral Home
220 North Washington
Forrest City, AR 72335
(870) 633-5400
info@stevensfuneralhome.net
<https://www.stevensfuneralhome.net/>

Tribute Wall

PO

“ *Pastor Silvester & Mrs. Mona Owens purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Mr. James Byron Ponder.*



Pastor Silvester & Mrs. Mona Owens - January 15, 2022 at 03:42 PM

KA

“ *Kathy Armstrong lit a candle in memory of Mr. James Byron Ponder*



Kathy Armstrong - January 07, 2022 at 10:17 AM



Praying for all families strength very nice man

Minda Brown - January 07, 2022 at 05:14 PM

LM

“ *So sorry to hear of Mr Ponder's passing, he performed the Masonic Service for my son and did an awwwesome job, I will always cherish those words that were so heart felt given. Prayers for all of his family*

Louie & Betty McLain - January 06, 2022 at 09:54 PM



“ *Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Mr. James Byron Ponder.*



January 06, 2022 at 10:48 AM



“ *Our deepest and sincere condolences to the Ponder family. Our mother, Barbara Smith, has been extremely blessed by the entire Ponder family. We are so blessed and privileged to have known Mr. Ponder and the rest of the family. The generosity that has been given to her and our family over the years is truly amazing. It speaks of such abundance, Mr. Ponder has for other people. And we want to express gratitude for all things that has been done by he and his wife and children. We deeply love you all, from your family, Barbara Smith, Silvia, Troy, Ralph and Terry*



Silvia - January 06, 2022 at 10:34 AM



“ *FCI Memphis Financial Management purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mr. James Byron Ponder.*



FCI Memphis Financial Management - January 06, 2022 at 09:47 AM

PA

“ Thoughts&prayers,&love go out to each one of you. May you find some comfort in knowing that you will see him again but until that day comes just know that he's looking down upon you&he shall always be with you. Sincerely, Paula Renee (Smith)&Branden Adams, & Ms.Terry Smith&family

Paula Renee Adams&family - January 06, 2022 at 01:20 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mr. James Byron Ponder.



January 05, 2022 at 11:05 PM

CR

“ So sorry for your loss. Our thoughts & prayers are with you and your family.

Doug & Cindy Rushing



Cindy Rushing - January 05, 2022 at 09:36 PM

AH

“ I've been friends with Stephanie since college. I didn't really get to know her Daddy until Stephaine's kids birthday parties. Her Daddy would come and give me a hug every time I would see him. He would ALWAYS ask how I'm doing and what's going with my family. I won't ever forget his kindness. I do know one thing, he loved all his family so much. I'm so sorry I'm not able to be there for you Stephanie, you know I love you so much, Amy Hobbs

Amy Hobbs - January 05, 2022 at 03:12 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mr. James Byron Ponder.*



January 05, 2022 at 03:05 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mr. James Byron Ponder.*



January 05, 2022 at 09:58 AM