



Mr. James 'Gus' Augustus Smith

September 29, 1934 - March 21, 2025

James Augustus Smith, lovingly known as "Gus," passed away peacefully following a short-term illness surrounded by his family. Born in Guntersville, Alabama, on September 29, 1934, Gus lived a life full of passion, dedication, and love for his family, his community, and the many interests that shaped his journey. His faith was steady and genuine, shaping the way he lived and loved.

At the age of ten, Gus enrolled in Castle Heights Military Academy in Lebanon, Tennessee, a place that would forever hold a special place in his heart. During his formative years from elementary school through graduation, he developed lifelong friendships, a strong sense of discipline, and a deep love for his alma mater. During his younger years at school, he had the unique opportunity to sing at the Grand Ole Opry with his roommate, Justin Tubb, and Justin's father, Ernest Tubb. This was an experience he fondly remembered throughout his life. He also spent time singing with the Mitchell Boys Choir of Dallas, Texas.

Gus was a 1952 honor graduate of Castle Heights, where he was the Mid-South Wrestling Champion. In recognition of his achievements, he later became the first wrestler elected to the school's Athletic Hall of Fame. After the school closed in the mid-1980s, Gus continued to attend yearly reunions, cherishing lifelong connections with the Castle Heights community that spanned generations and reflected his deep love for the school.

Gus was a proud member of Kappa Sigma Fraternity at Auburn and graduated in 1956 with both bachelor's and master's degrees. After graduation, he served in the U.S. Army as a lieutenant at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He was granted an early discharge from active duty to teach at Castle Heights Military Academy, intending to make it his lifelong career. However, after teaching for a semester, the passing of his grandmother necessitated that he return to Guntersville to take over the family businesses. He continued his military commitment through service in the National Guard

Gus continued his passion for teaching for several years, first at Marshall County High School in the late 1950s, where he started the school's wrestling program, and later at Snead Community College. In his retirement years, he remained dedicated to education by serving as a substitute teacher at Guntersville High School, where he had the unique privilege of teaching some of the grandchildren of his former students.

He founded Gus Smith Insurance Agency in the 1980s, building a successful career in the insurance industry. His entrepreneurial spirit didn't stop there, as he later opened Grapes and Hops with friends, a local wine and spirits store, and The Video Place, a haven for movie lovers like himself

Throughout his life, Gus was an avid golfer, enjoying many rounds with friends and family. Retirement brought him peace and joy, especially as he spent these years with the love of his life, Susan Stewart Smith, and his beloved children: Robert Augustus (Martha) Smith and Amy Moore Maziarz and his granddaughters, Brownlee Stephens Smith, Julia Wittichen Smith, Abigail Stewart Maziarz and Amelia Frances Maziarz.

Gus will be remembered for his warmth, wisdom, his unmistakable sense of humor, and the remarkable legacy he leaves behind through his family, his career, and the lives he touched.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Inez Runyan Smith; his father, James Woodrow Smith; his brother, Robert Gary Smith; and his sister, Linda Smith Rutledge.

Services will be held on Friday, March 28, 2025 at Guntersville First United Methodist Church.

Visitation will begin at 10:00 am., with the service to follow at 11:00 am.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that any memorials be made to the Heights National Alumni Association, 1045 Woodmont Drive, Gallatin, TN 37066 in memory of Gus Smith, 1952 graduate of Castle Heights Military Academy.

Tribute Wall

MC

“ Missy, carla, mary, kay, alison , cindy planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. James 'Gus' Augustus Smith.

Missy, carla, mary, kay, alison , cindy - March 23, 2025 at 09:37 AM

MC

“ Missy, carla, mary, kay, alison , cindy purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Mr. James 'Gus' Augustus Smith.



Missy, carla, mary, kay, alison , cindy - March 23, 2025 at 09:37 AM