



Jerry Lee Laws

February 12, 1941 - May 8, 2025

Jerry was born the first child of Agnes Marie (Landrum) and James Edward Laws on February 12, 1941, in the coal camp community of Tinsley, Bell County, Kentucky. The young family relocated to coal camps in McDowell County, West Virginia, because the mines there were unionized, offering safer working conditions and better wages. They lived in Buchanan, then Bartley.

Jerry's coalmining father often bragged that Jerry shared the birthday and initials of John L. Lewis, longtime president of the United Mine Workers of America.

During high school, Jerry formed a band, Jerry Lee Laws and the Blue Cats. He played guitar, sang, and sported a Ducktail hairstyle. The band performed at area dances and school assemblies.

Jerry met his future wife, Delores "Dottie" Vance, in high school. He awoke every morning with the goal of making her day better. In retirement, that meant he made coffee and breakfast for her.

Jerry graduated from Big Creek High School of War, West Virginia, in the class of 1959 on a Friday night. On Monday morning, he enlisted in the US Army. He hurried home after basic training to marry Dottie. When she died in July of 2024, they were a week shy of celebrating their 65th wedding anniversary. Family members do not need to see a death certificate; they know the main cause of his death was grief.

Jerry earned a retirement from military service, having risen to the rank of Sergeant Major and earning two master's degrees, one in hospital administration and the other in organizational psychology. He completed tours of duty in Korea, Germany, and Vietnam. He suffered from most of the diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange. Jerry was a recruiter in Newark, Ohio. In 1971, He was named the Army's Recruiter of the year. The news story announcing the award described Jerry as having the ability to sell kimonos on Bali. His army assignments continued in Illinois and Texas.

Jerry's professional career after the military involved managing dental practices in Texas and Ohio.

Jerry possessed a flawless memory, an appreciation of family, and a gift of gab. He entertained young and old with his stories and card tricks. Jerry had a melodic voice that drew attention by tone, not volume; you always knew when Jerry was in the room. He often opened family gatherings with a prayer or a speech that expressed his appreciation for people who had chosen to see

him. It was not unusual for Jerry to name each person present and weave one of their traits or events into his theme for the occasion.

In addition to his wife, Jerry was preceded in death by his parents; a sister, Connie; and his daughter-in-law, Grace (Donahue)Laws.

Jerry is survived by a son, Jerry Lee Jr. (fiancée Renee), granddaughter Nicole Marie - Nikki (Chris) Tagliaferro, brother James (Pam), sisters Rita (Alfred) Fowler, Jane Ellen (Bill) Johnson, aunt Dolly Powell, uncle James (Sue) Landrum; nieces Robin (Joe) Perez, Sarah (Sam) Maitra; five nephews Shawn (Anna) Kelly, Brian Kelly, Kevin (Dee) Kelly, Russell (Michelle) Johnson and Joey (Catherine) Laws and their families.

Jerry and Dottie participated in a Monday brunch at Clay's restaurant with friends for over twenty years. Friends are the family you choose.

Jerry and Dottie will continue to be celebrated by their loved ones.

Tribute Wall

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“ *We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Joseph J. Earthman
Generations*

A Memorial Tree was planted for Jerry Lee laws - May 11, 2025 at 11:43 AM