



## Chief James Parsons

July 10, 1933 - June 5, 2013

### Funeral Arrangements for Chief Jim Parsons

James C. "Chief" Parsons, retired Chief of Police of Birmingham passed away on June 5 at the age of 79. He was preceded in death by his parents, Clarence and Nell Parsons, son James Michael (Mike) Parsons, and brothers Jack Parsons, Bill Parsons and Larry Parsons. He will be lovingly remembered by his family including his wife Ann (Sissy) Parsons, son Todd Parsons (Lori), grandchildren Morgan Parsons, Josh Parsons, Triston Parsons, Bailey Parsons and brother, Jerry (Delilah) Parsons. Upon graduation from high school, he enlisted in the Navy and served his country for four years. He returned to Alabama and in 1954 was accepted into the Police Academy and married the former Ann (Sissy) Anderson. These two events set his course for the rest of his life and were the wellspring of his happiness and pride. He met Sissy at the ballpark of the Mineral Springs School in Watson, Alabama, within sight of where they built their home, raised their children and lived most of their married life. This year, they would have celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary. She was everything to him - his sweetness, joy and strength. They were blessed with two children, Mike and Todd, and four grandchildren, Morgan, Josh, Triston and Bailey. He loved them all so fiercely and proudly bragged of their every success, especially, his grandchildren. The saddest day of his life was in 1992 when he and Sissy buried their son, Mike. After graduating from the Police Academy, he was

employed with the Birmingham Police Department as a patrolman. Over the next 20 years he was police Detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Commander of the Crime Prevention Bureau, Captain, Commander of Vice and Narcotics, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor, and Commander of the Precinct. His proudest career accomplishments were the changes he brought to the Birmingham Police Department to make the patrolman's job safer. In 1972, on the strength of his record inside the Department, he was appointed by the City of Birmingham as Chief of Police. In 1978, when he retired from the City of Birmingham as Chief of Police, the Birmingham Police Department was ranked number 5 in the nation. He was recruited by New Orleans to be Superintendent of the Police Department and served from 1978 to 1981. He returned to Birmingham and worked with the Homewood Police Department and then in 1984, retired from public service and went to work for the law firm of Johnson and Cory as "chief" investigator. From 1995 until 2006 he worked for the Cory, Watson, Crowder & DeGaris law firm. He launched a third career as the founder and president of Eagle Security, and worked there every day until his death. During his law enforcement career he was a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Alabama Association of Chiefs of Police, Jefferson County Mental Health Department Advisory Board, Fraternal Order of Police, Young Men's Business Club of Birmingham (President), American Red Cross Board of Directors, A. G. Gaston's Boys Club Advisory Board, Boy Scouts of America (Warrior District Chairman), National League of Cities (Consultant on Law Enforcement), State of Alabama Standards and Goals Advisory Board, and Boston Police Department - University of Boston Policy Making Advisory Committee. He was recognized as Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer of 1971 and given the Merit of Appreciation Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement by the VFW. In 1973 he earned his undergraduate degree from UAB. He was awarded his Masters in Education and Administration in 1977 from UAB, and started work on his doctorate in Education Administration. He loved being a police officer and helping people. To the day he died, Birmingham citizens called him "Chief" and came to him

for help. He was born in the middle of the Depression and grew up incredibly poor. Perhaps this was the source of the generosity that marked the rest of his life. He could not refuse to help the working family and he always had a soft spot in his heart for children. He "adopted" more than a few people that call him "pawpaw" because of the support and guidance he gave them. He changed lives, and his family has grown to include people like Jermaine Dunn, who fondly thinks of Chief as a father and mentor. Chief's kindness and charity are the legacies he leaves. He loved hard work, but was happiest when he was sitting with his grandchildren or on his lawn tractor. He was avid about his landscaping and his politics. He never lacked for not remembering a name because everyone he met was "buddy" or "honey." He loved people. He had an infectious belly laugh and loved a joke. He always had a hilarious story to share. Although his many years in law enforcement confronted him with so much that was evil, it never hardened his heart. He was so compassionate that witnessing tragedy, even in strangers, moved him to tears. His family and friends extend their gratitude to the doctors and nurses at Brookwood Medical Center, especially Dr. Luis Pineda, who gave Chief and Sissy such compassionate care through the best and the worst. Visitation will be Friday, June 7 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at The New Gardendale Funeral Home. The funeral service will be Saturday, June 8 at 11:00 a.m. at The New Gardendale Funeral Home. Burial will follow at Bivens Chapel Cemetery, Brookside. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the YWCA KIDS Korner in Birmingham, Big Oak Ranch in Springville, or the Ronald McDonald House Charities Alabama.

The New Gardendale Funeral Home  
2214 Decatur Highway, Gardendale, AL 35071  
205-631-8810

Directions:

Northbound on I-65, Exit 272

Turn right at exit.

Turn left at second traffic light.

Second building on the left up on the hill. (Next to Mormon church and tabernacle)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 7. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Gardendale Heritage Funeral Home  
2214 Decatur Highway  
Gardendale, AL 35071  
(205) 631-8810  
gardendalefuneralhome2@gmail.com