



James Donald "Don" McClelland Jr.

February 5, 1961 - May 18, 2025

James Donald (Don) McClelland, Jr., lovingly known as “Papa” to his family, passed away peacefully at his home on May 18, 2025, at the age of 64.

Don was a master craftsman with remarkable skill in construction, drywall, and painting. Throughout his career, he lent his talents to numerous projects, including the restoration of the Copiah County Courthouse and was the groundskeeper for over 25 years of Tabernacle Methodist Church—just a short walk from his home.

A true outdoorsman, Don found joy in hunting, fishing, and above all, tending his beloved garden. He took particular pride in growing tomatoes—“the best you’d ever taste”—alongside a wide variety of vegetables. When he wasn’t working in the garden, Don could most often be found caring for his devoted wife of 42 years, Mary Nell. He embodied the spirit of Ephesians 5:28: “In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.”

Don was known for his honesty and wisdom. He had a way of offering his opinion with clarity—sometimes catching you off guard—then softening it with his signature quick smile.

He was preceded in death by his parents, James Donald McClelland, Sr. and

Carolyn Stockton McClelland, as well as his siblings: Patricia, Deborah, Pamela, and Julie.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Nell McClelland; his brother, John A. McClelland; and his half-brother, David McClelland. He is also survived by his children: Jan Mattingly, Julie Mattingly, John (Jennifer) Mattingly, C. Allen Knott; grandchildren: Calla Smith (Jordan), Matthew Gaddy, Zach Mattingly, Brynner Mattingly (Nikki), and Rett Mattingly; and great-grandchildren: Brooklynn Kate Russ, Mackenzie Earles, Archie Mattingly, and Jagger Smith.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to Arden Hospice and to his compassionate nurse, Dennis, for their devoted care and support during Don's final months.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Tabernacle Methodist Church, in honor of Don's legacy of service and faith. Donations can be made to Tabernacle Methodist Church and send to 208 Ingleside Drive, Madison, MS 39110.

The family will hold a private memorial ceremony at a later date.