



James Donald Ashley

June 26, 2016

James Donald Ashley, 68, of Sopchoppy, died at the Margaret Z. Dozier Hospice House June 26, 2016. He was born April 15, 1948 in Orlando, Florida. Don Ashley was a passionate family man and wildlife conservationist. He is survived by his wife Pamela, sons Brett (Juliet) and Kevin (Aimee) and daughter Jennifer Browning (Bert). He counted his ten grandchildren as a true blessing. Also survived by his 3 brothers Ronnie, Tommy and Johnny.

His love of nature began when he worked for Ross Allen at the Silver Springs attraction doing alligator and rattlesnake shows. He attended the University of Florida and went to work for the Florida Fresh Water Fish Commission in the early 1970's. He attained the rank of Major and met his future wife Pamela there, who was working a summer job in the radio room while attending FSU.

He went on to become an advocate for the alligator industry and lead the way to change state and federal laws allowing the sale and export of this new industry. He developed a grading system for alligator hides that was accepted worldwide and worked with alligator farmers to develop the original egg and hatchling collection program on public lands. National publications like National Geographic, the Wall Street Journal, the Economist magazine and the New York Times regularly contacted him for his updates on the alligator and crocodilian industry.

In the past he served on the Florida Wildlife Federation's Board of Directors served as a Board of Trustee for the FSU Coastal and Marine Lab. Upon making Franklin County his home in the late 1980's he served on the Riverkeepers Board of Directors as well as the original Franklin County Habitat for Humanity.

He peacefully passed away from cancer surrounded by his family. In lieu of flowers the family asks for a donation to be made to the Franklin County Habitat for Humanity. A celebration of his life will be held at the historic Breakaway Lodge in the near future.

Rest in peace, you are with nature. Your loving family.

Arrangements are under the care of Skip Young with Family Funeral Home & Cremation Services. 850-926-5919*Familyfhc.com

Cemetery Details

Arran Annex Cemetery

Arran Road
Crawfordville, FL 32327

Tribute Wall

MK

“ I want to offer my belated condolences to Pam and all of Donnie's family. I'm so sorry for your loss. Donnie was one of my best pals when we were in high school and Lake-Sumter Community College. We spent a lot of time hunting, riding around in his old Falcon, and picking guitars and playing old blues and rock and roll with our friends. And we shared one big adventure right after we graduated. He and Jack Buckley and I loaded up in Jack's old '57 Ford and drove north toward Lorraine, Ohio, where he planned to get summer jobs at the Ford factory. Jack had family there who worked at Ford. The trip up was quite a thrill for three small-town Florida kids. We strayed off the interstate and into the mountains, and as we neared the Ohio line, the radiator on the old car sprung a leak. You might think we'd have to stop and get it fixed, but we were resourceful, and figured out that if we packed the front grill of the car with ice, it would keep the temperature low enough to drive for a few miles. And so, we limped along from one town to the next, watching the temperature gauge rise and stopping at motels to beg for ice from their ice machines. It worked. Unfortunately, Ohio schools got out before those in Florida, so local kids had already snatched up all the auto factory jobs. We got a ratty apartment and scouted for work and Ohio girls. We lived on fried bologna sandwiches, that being all we knew how to cook. We were also attracted to Ohio because they had something called "low beer," a lower alcohol content beer, that was available to people between the ages of 18 and 21. The three of us worked briefly at a Howard Johnson's restaurant as dish washers, but the owner was half crazy (once said to have chased the cook into the meat locker with a butcher knife in a fit of rage). That didn't work out, so we tried our hands at selling encyclopedias in suburban Cleveland. After a couple of weeks trudging door-to-door with a satchel of sample books and sales contracts, none of us had sold any books, and had earned nothing. We asked for money to have our suits dry cleaned, and the boss gave us \$10. We talked it over and decided our sales careers were over. Jack's cousin had repaired the radiator, so we set out for home. We came back broke, but had a great memories and stories to tell. We lost track of one another as the years passed. I wish we'd been able to reconnect

and reminisce. He was a great friend and a fine man. We all admired his ecological work.

Morris Kennedy - July 21, 2016 at 04:47 PM

LH

“ *Don and Pam were my neighbors, friends, and our entire family grew up knowing and enjoying their friendship.*

Don always seemed bigger than life with his alligator stories, hunting and fishing endeavors and FSU motor home tail gating parties.

But, the most memorable experience for me, was his special talent of always being positive about his future, his family, and his next fun project just around the corner in his life.

Memorable moments last for ever.

Lou Hyatt and family

Lou hHyatt - July 05, 2016 at 09:41 AM