



## Ronald Hayden Gray

May 25, 1944 - August 24, 2020

Ronald “Hayden” Gray, 76, of Tallahassee passed away peacefully on August 24th, 2020. He was born on May 25, 1944 in Medart, Florida, the second of three sons to the late Susie and Rev. Truman Gray. Hayden is survived by his wife of 54 years, Karen Bell Gray, his children; Lisa Hodgson (Todd) of Oviedo, Ronnie Gray (Stephanie) of Live Oak, Nicholas Gray (Lee Ann) of Crawfordville, his siblings Laymon Gray (Dottie) of Crawfordville, Gary Gray (Miriam) of Medart, his best friend Jerome Jones of Tallahassee, and grandchildren; Kyler, Mackenzie, Hayley, Fallon, Hannah, Cooper, and Drew.

Hayden was a lifelong member of Lake Ellen Baptist Church. He was a graduate of Sopchoppy High School Class of 1962, where he was heavily involved in athletics and served as the senior class president. Following graduation, Hayden attended and graduated from Chipola College before moving to Washington, DC to work for US Air (now American Airlines). While at US Air he held several positions, and eventually lead the Finance and Payroll Departments. In 1977, Hayden moved his family to Tallahassee, Florida, where he took a job with the State Department of Labor. For the next thirty-four years, until his retirement in 2011, Hayden selflessly served the constituents of the State of Florida, in various departments, as a Bureau Chief and other administrative positions. He was respected and revered by his colleagues and formed many lifelong relationships with those he worked with. Hayden was a dedicated father first and foremost. He treasured his children

and embraced every moment with them. Hayden was a father figure and role model to many, having coached little league, and been a constant figure at Florida High's sporting events during the time his sons played.

Hayden was admired by many for his unparalleled kindness, knee-jerking humor, charismatic personality, and the love he shared for his family, especially his grandchildren. Hayden, known as "Papa", was a dedicated and loving fixture in all of his grandchildren's lives. There was nothing that he wouldn't do to ensure that they were happy and loved, and to tell the truth there was nothing he loved more than being a grandfather. God really hit the mark when he made Hayden Gray, for there has never been nor will there ever be a "Papa" quite like him. He will be deeply and sincerely missed, but his memory will live on in the many lives of those he touched.

The Gray Family will be having a private graveside service and internment at Lake Ellen Baptist Church of Crawfordville, Florida on Friday, August 28th. No public memorial service has been planned at this time. Flowers are welcome and may be sent to the Family Funeral Home of Crawfordville, Florida.

Skip & Trey Young with Family Funeral Home at Harvey Young Chapel are assisting the family with their arrangements. 850-926-5919 [Familyfhc.com](http://Familyfhc.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Lake Ellen Baptist Church

4495 Crawfordville Highway  
Crawfordville, FL 32327

# Tribute Wall

BS

“*Alecia and I always enjoyed our social time with Hayden and of course Jerome during our working days with the Department of Labor. At one time or another Hayden was our supervisor at Compliance but he remained the ultimate professional. You were a good man Hayden Gray. Rest In Peace.*”

Bob Shally - September 17, 2020 at 03:26 PM

JJ

“*Hayden was one of the athletes I looked up to at Sopchoppy High School. Later in life, we ran into one another in Washington, DC—I was in the service and he was working with the airlines. Hayden was involved in flag football and softball leagues. He got me involved as a player/coach and helped to put me on the path to my coaching career. What a great person - he will be missed.*”

*(Coach) J. D. Jones*

J.D. Jones - August 27, 2020 at 07:48 PM



“*Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ronald Hayden Gray.*”



August 27, 2020 at 04:43 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Ronald Hayden Gray.*



August 27, 2020 at 02:00 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ronald Hayden Gray.*



August 27, 2020 at 09:19 AM



“ *Spent most of the day reminiscing about my best friend during our days in school at Sopchoppy. So many wonderful memories of times together. Overnights spent in Smith Creek and overnights he would spend in Medart. Lots of good natured mischief with many stories I could tell. Some maybe not! Not everyone is given a childhood friendship like the one we shared. The hands of time moved on and we did not see each other frequently, but when we did, we would pick up right where we left off so many years before. Thanks for the memories my sweet friend. Love you.*

**Murray McLaughlin** - August 26, 2020 at 08:03 PM



*I worked with Hayden for many years at the DLES and loved and respected him. You never saw Hayden without Jerome and usually in their office at the Governor's Square Mall. My heart is sad and I know H as Ayden will be greatly missed. Prayers and peace for the family. Affectionately, Aletta Shutes*

**Aletta Shutes** - August 27, 2020 at 02:11 PM

CM

“ *He was always there at the ballpark hanging over the fence watching his boys! A wonderful Dad and great friend to my Ted! He will be missed! Cindy M*

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**Cindy Meredith** - August 26, 2020 at 06:23 PM

WM

“ *What a delight to travel with during our kids baseball years, he always kept everyones spirits up, always had a smile, always followed thru on what he promised, and was simply a class act. I am grateful to have known him and he will be missed by all. Wayne Mayo and family*

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**wayne Mayo** - August 26, 2020 at 06:12 PM

SF

“ *Suwannee High Family purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Ronald Hayden Gray.*



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**Suwannee High Family** - August 26, 2020 at 03:38 PM