

## Beth Lillard James

November 18, 1944 - February 14, 2024

Beth Lillard James, age 79, of Newport, Tennessee, went to her Heavenly home on February 14, 2024. She was born on November 18, 1944, at Mims Clinic in Newport to Hazel Elizabeth Murrell Lillard and Thomas Vincent Lillard, Sr. Beth is survived by her husband of 57 years, Freddy James; children, Amy Evans (Chucky) of Newport and Freddy James (Jurron Bradley) of New York, NY; her grandchildren, Elizabeth Long (Saxton) of Powell and Charlie Evans (Alee) of Newport; her brother, Tommy Lillard (Carolyn) of Newport; brother-in-law, Gary James (Margaret) of Knoxville; and a host of nieces and nephews. She was a member of English Creek Baptist Church where she taught Sunday School and was the church pianist for many years. Beth met the love of her life, Freddy James, in fourth grade. They began dating in high school, went to college together and married in December 1966. Beth attended Newport Grammar School, Cocke County High School and graduated from Carson Newman College. Later, Beth earned her Master's Degree from Union College and her advanced EdS Degree from Lincoln Memorial University.

After graduating from Carson Newman in 1966, Beth began teaching at Newport Grammar School. She taught third grade for two years, first grade for a year, then taught kindergarten for the rest of her 35-year teaching career. Music had always been a big part of her life. She started playing piano at church her sophomore year in high school. She also had many students on the Newport Grammar School stage. One of her favorite productions was "Li'l

Hee Haw" in 1979. It was filmed for the local PBS Channel, and you can still find it on YouTube. Later, she discovered a new love, the hammered dulcimer. She joined the Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club and enjoyed going to group sessions at Big South Fork to play with the club.

Beth joined the Newport Theatre Guild in the 1990s and starred as M'Lynn in "Steel Magnolias." She played Lenny in "Crimes of the Heart" and Sister Agatha in "The Sound of Music." She designed backdrops for her many kindergarten and church programs, as well as helped paint many sets for Theatre Guild productions, including "The Sound of Music" and "Guys and Dolls."

Beth retired from teaching in 2003 and discovered other hobbies. She joined Bags of Love, a quilting group that made quilts for children in need, and The Good News Club, an after school ministry for kids.

Freddy and Beth loved camping and always enjoyed hitting the road. They have been to Niagara Falls, Yellowstone, Jackson Hole, Las Vegas and many other places. They took a family vacation to Hawaii, a cruise to Alaska and a church mission trip to New Mexico.

Special thanks to Newport Health and Rehabilitation Center and Amedisys Home Health Care.

The family will receive friends at Manes Funeral Home from 5:00-7:00 PM on Saturday, February 17. The funeral service will follow at 7:00 PM. A graveside service will be held at Union Cemetery at 1:00 PM on Sunday, February 18, 2024

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to English Creek Baptist Church, 2305 Bogard Rd, Newport, TN 37821.

Family and friends may sign the guest register online at: [www.manesfuneralhome.com](http://www.manesfuneralhome.com).

Arrangements with Manes Funeral Home.

# Previous Events

## Receive Friends

FEB 17. 5:00 PM - 7:00 AM (ET)

Manes Funeral Home Chapel  
363 East Main Street  
Newport, TN 37821

## Funeral service

FEB 17. 7:00 PM (ET)

Manes Funeral Home Chapel  
363 East Main Street  
Newport, TN 37821

## Burial

FEB 18. 1:00 PM (ET)

Union Cemetery Inc  
420 Mineral St  
Newport, TN 37821-3900  
(423) 623-6918

# Tribute Wall



“ *Manes Funeral Home, Inc. created a Tribute Video in memory of Beth Lillard James*



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**Manes Funeral Home, Inc.** - February 14, 2024 at 02:57 PM

AF

*So sorry for your loss. Beth was a beautiful lady inside and out. She was so talented! Prayers*

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**Angel Fowler** - February 14, 2024 at 06:24 PM

AK

*Freddy I am so sorry to hear of your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. I am Mike Lewis's sister.*

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**Ann Knott** - February 15, 2024 at 10:42 AM

SD

*My deepest sympathy for your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you!*

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**Sherrie Dillard** - February 15, 2024 at 11:58 AM

JT

*Freddy I am so sorry for your loss. She will be missed by everyone that knew her. She was so talented.*

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**Jewelene Travis** - February 15, 2024 at 12:31 PM

LB

*My deepest sympathy, Freddy, to you Tommy, and all the family. Lonnie Butler*

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**Lonnie Butler** - February 15, 2024 at 01:36 PM

ER

*Freddy  
I am so sorry to hear about Beth. Such a sweet lady.  
You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers 🙏*

**Evelyn Brooks Reese** - February 15, 2024 at 01:58 PM

KG

*I am so very sad to hear of Beth's passing. She played her dulcimer at my wedding and was one of my mom's best friends. She was such a wonderful, kind, and talented woman. Freddy and family, I am praying for you all, now and in the days ahead. Much love to you.*

**Kathy (Bryant) Gehl** - February 15, 2024 at 04:09 PM

 Rick  
Conard

*Mr. James, I always remember Beth as a beautiful, kind lady. I am very sorry for your tremendous loss. My thoughts are with you and your family.*

*-- Richard Conard*

**Rick Conard** - February 15, 2024 at 08:36 PM

CA

*Love and prayers*

**Charlotte Atkins** - February 15, 2024 at 10:32 PM

LJ

*I am so very sorry to hear of Beths passing. She will be missed by so many. Love and prayers*

**Lisa James** - February 16, 2024 at 03:38 PM

DB

*Freddy and family you are in our thoughts and prayers. Love, Don and Donna Ball*

**Donna Ball** - February 17, 2024 at 12:27 PM

BP

*The James family and the English Creek Baptist Church family are in our prayers. My heart rejoices for Beth as she gets to be with her Savior, Jesus Christ, who she loved and served so faithfully throughout her life, but I am heartbroken for her family and for every person (and there are a bunch of us) whom she meant so much to. I have many fond memories of Beth: her beautiful and worshipful piano playing, her sweet and friendly demeanor to everyone she met, her exceptional performances in the Cricket County Christmas plays (she truly transformed into the character and owned the stage), and all of her collective and continued kindness toward a young pastor and his family as they moved to a new town away from their families. She was such a jewel, and now she has received her crown.*

*Love,  
the Parrish family*

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**Brian Parrish** - February 20, 2024 at 10:31 AM

SC

“ *Samantha Campbell lit a candle in memory of Beth James*



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**Samantha Campbell** - April 10, 2024 at 01:34 AM

BG

“ *Sending our love and prayers. Buck Gregg and Family*



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**Buck Gregg** - February 26, 2024 at 09:22 PM

JD

“ I learned of Beth's passing today and am sending thoughts of comfort and peace to all family members, especially Freddy and Amy, both of whom were my very special students at NGS.

Judith L Duvall - February 26, 2024 at 09:41 AM

KD

“ My heart goes out to you Freddy and all your family as you navigate your grief. I will always remember Beth as a lovely, kind, talented Christian wife and mother. Kay Dockins

Kay Dockins - February 22, 2024 at 03:20 AM

TR

“ So sorry for your loss, Ella Mae Large and family

Tracy - February 18, 2024 at 01:13 PM

TR

“ So sorry for your loss, prayers for the family. Thelma Williams and family

Tracy - February 18, 2024 at 01:11 PM

LM

“ So sorry for your loss. Praying for the family. —Manney and Liz Moore

Liz Moore - February 18, 2024 at 10:51 AM

RS

“ Wishing you peace to bring comfort, courage to face the days ahead, and loving memories to forever hold in your heart.

Rosa Sutton - February 18, 2024 at 08:20 AM

CW

“ So sorry to hear about your loved ones passing. I know you all will Miss her greatly. Prayers for all.  
Love,  
Cindy Wise

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**cindy wise** - February 17, 2024 at 04:33 PM

JF

“ James Gail Frisbee lit a candle in memory of Beth James



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**James and Gail Frisbee** - February 17, 2024 at 04:32 PM

JF

“ Freddy, children, and all of Beths family, we are very sorry for your loss. We will be keeping you in our thoughts and prayers. James and Gail Frisbee

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**James and Gail Frisbee** - February 17, 2024 at 04:31 PM

PB

“ I am so sorry for your loss. May family and friends find peace and comfort in the days to come.

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**Paula Bearden** - February 17, 2024 at 04:29 PM

SF

“ *Freddy*

*So sorry to hear about your mother. Our prayers are with you and your family.*

*Sherry and Len Frisbee*

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**Sherry Frisbee** - February 17, 2024 at 01:54 PM

FJ

*Thank you Sherry!*

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**Freddy James, Jr** - February 19, 2024 at 11:37 AM

JB

“ *So sorry for your loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Jimmy and Charlotte Blazer*



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**Jimmy and Charlotte Blazer** - February 17, 2024 at 12:53 PM

BD

“ Sending love and many prayers to all of Beth's family and loved ones. She will be missed here on earth by everyone whose life she touched, but she will be in a much better place than any of us. Thank You, God, for letting your beautiful servant touch our life and share her beautiful talents with us. Please comfort and bless her family during this heartbreaking time and in the days to come.

I had the pleasure of acting with Beth in 1990 , and again in 2002 in ..NTG's "Steel Magnolias". She played M'Lynn and I played the role of Truvy, and that's what we've called each other since. We all loved our M'Lynn. And Freddy helped Bob Mooty with directing. Hope to always remember that! Love ya, Freddy and Amy.

*Sincere Heartfelt Sympathy,  
Linda Dawson*



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**Bud Linda Dawson** - February 17, 2024 at 12:52 AM

ES

“ You are all in our thoughts and prayers. May God bless you with many wonderful memories.



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**Earlene and Julie Strange** - February 17, 2024 at 12:14 AM

JS

“ Our Deepest Sympathy & Prayers  
Doug and Joyce Shoemaker

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**Joyce Shoemaker** - February 16, 2024 at 11:48 PM



“ *Heavenly Grace Spray was purchased for the family of Beth Lillard James.*



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February 16, 2024 at 07:40 PM



“ *Freddy and Family..... So sorry to learn of your loss. Many wonderful memories of Beth and our time as roommates at CNU. She will be missed.*

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**Vera Hatmaker** - February 16, 2024 at 06:18 PM



“ *I wish you and your family peace and comfort, knowing that she waits for you in heaven, as you grieve the loss of Beth.*

*With deepest sympathies,  
John A. Bell*

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**John A. Bell** - February 16, 2024 at 11:50 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Beth Lillard James.*



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February 16, 2024 at 09:47 AM

TP

“ Tracee & Darren Plowell-Page planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Beth Lillard James.

Tracee & Darren Plowell-Page - February 16, 2024 at 09:47 AM

CJ

“ So very sorry to hear this news..praying for your family.

Candy (Wells) Jones - February 16, 2024 at 08:31 AM

JB

“ Beth will be missed by all of us. I remember her from all my life she was a breath of fresh air. She is in a better place no more sickness we all could take lessons from her such a wonderful person she led a great life. prayers for this family

janice bryant - February 15, 2024 at 08:45 PM

PS

“ I am so deeply sorry to hear of Mrs. James passing. She was my Kindergarten teacher back in the early 70's. I still have many fond memories of her. My prayers go out to all of you during this most difficult time. May God give you comfort and peace.

Pamela Suggs - February 15, 2024 at 07:29 PM

TC

“ Beth playing the piano in church, creating elaborate puppet shows for the children in Children's Church, sharing funny stories in her book...these are some of my memories of this beautiful lady . But mostly I remember her sweat smile and the look of love in her eyes

Terry Colson - February 15, 2024 at 06:12 PM

WW

“ Sorry for your loss, RIP Beth



Wilms Webb - February 15, 2024 at 04:21 PM

HM

“ I was saddened to hear the passing of Mrs. James. She was my kindergarten teacher. I will always remember how kind she was to me. Love and prayers

Heather Mullins - February 15, 2024 at 03:26 PM

EA

“ Mr. James, Amy and family, Beth was such a talented lady. I am sorry to hear of her passing. I met her while working at NGS when she volunteered after retirement. When around her I tried to soak up all her knowledge. She was always so kind to me. Prayers for your family during this time. - Emma & Shane Allen ( Addison & Ellis)

Emma & Shane Allen - February 15, 2024 at 03:13 PM

TG

“ We are so sorry for your loss. Praying for you all.

Tim & Teresa Grooms - February 15, 2024 at 12:39 PM

SB

“ So very saddened to hear of Beth's passing however; she is now in a place of peace and beauty our minds can't imagine! Prayers for you each during this difficult time and the days ahead. What a blessing Beth was to so many!



*Susan Ball*

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**Susan Ball** - February 15, 2024 at 12:12 PM

VT

“ So very sorry for your loss. She was a sweetheart. Lifting you all in prayers.  
*Vicky Wilson Turner*

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**Vicky Wilson Turner** - February 15, 2024 at 11:29 AM



“ Amy you and your family are in our prayers. So sorry for your loss. Hugs and love sent your way. 🙏❤️👍

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**SherryandDwayne Breeden** - February 15, 2024 at 11:27 AM

AG

“ I am so sorry for your loss. Prayers for the family. She was a wonderful teacher for my daughter.

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**Angie Gentry** - February 15, 2024 at 11:25 AM

LB

“ Our deepest sympathy to Freddy and family!

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**Larry and Vickie Butler** - February 15, 2024 at 10:53 AM

LM

“ We love all of you!!! I (Lisa) had the privilege to teach with Beth in Kindergarten and her daughter, Amy, in pre-K! She was definitely an amazing lady and a great teacher. She was also our cousin. Her mom and my granddad were brother and sister .  
Our love and sympathies go out to this family!!! If there is anything we can do to help or support you please just ask!  
Love, Rob and Lisa Myers

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**Lisa Myers** - February 15, 2024 at 10:01 AM

BH

“ I'm sorry to hear of Beth's passing. But, what an angel God received. May you find peace in knowing she is with our Father in heaven.

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**Betsy Huff** - February 15, 2024 at 08:58 AM

BD

“ Freddy and family my heart aches for you. I have wonderful memories about Beth, Her gift of music has touched many a person. God will be with you during and days to come for the loss of a wife. mother ,grandmothers and sister. Prayers from Barbara Nease Davis

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**Barbara Davis** - February 15, 2024 at 08:13 AM

LF

“ Love, The Bradley and Arch Family purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Beth Lillard James.



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**Love, The Bradley and Arch Family** - February 14, 2024 at 11:42 PM

CW

“ Mrs. James was my kindergarten teacher at Newport Grammar in 1977-78. I am now 51 years old and just reconnected with her on FB a few months ago. She was a wonderful teacher, I remember how she would meet us at the door of the classroom every morning. I will never forget that. She will be missed dearly, thoughts and prayers going out to her family from mine.



Cheryl Wade - February 14, 2024 at 11:26 PM

HP

A wonderful tribute to my friend..I shall miss you..

Heidi pearson - February 15, 2024 at 08:11 AM

CB

“ Our prayers & condolences goes out to Freddy & all her family & friends. Beth was a special lady

Connie & Marsha Ball - February 14, 2024 at 07:59 PM

Pat  
Evans  
Larry  
Stephenson

“ Freddy, We are so sorry to hear about Beths passing...She was a precious lady..Love and prayers for you all.

Patty Evans Stephenson and Brenda McMillan



Pat Evans Larry Stephenson - February 14, 2024 at 06:24 PM

YF

“ *Your Chopped Family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Beth Lillard James.*



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**Your Chopped Family** - February 14, 2024 at 06:02 PM

MR

“ *My name is Mark Reda. I am a member of the Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club and a few years ago I offered to give Beth lessons on playing the saw. She worked on it for while, but decided not to continue to pursue it. She asked me if I would be interested in buying her saw. My largest saw was a 28 in. Hers was a 36 in. I never played on a saw that big, so I bought it from her. Being so long, it gave me a greater range of notes to play. It is now my saw of choice now. I have played it at several places. I am playing it on a YouTube video on my channel. She was such a wonderful person and I was shocked to hear of her passing. I will miss her. It is my intention to use acrylic paint and write In Memory Of Beth James on the blade of that saw so she will be remembered every time I play it. I currently have a temporary medical problem that prevents me from making it to the funeral. If I could have made it I was going to ask permission to play a song on that saw at the funeral. However, if I could provide a video of a song on that saw for the funeral, I would be willing to try to accomplish that. I could easily play songs like Amazing Grace. If the family is interested they can reach me at [majreda@gmail.com](mailto:majreda@gmail.com).*

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**Mark Reda** - February 14, 2024 at 05:44 PM

FJ

*Mark, thank you for the touching note and the sweet offer. I'll email you directly. Thank you!*

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**Freddy James, Jr** - February 15, 2024 at 02:21 PM

LS

“ I will miss playing dulcimers with Beth at Big South Fork with the Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club--Spring Planting Day and the Storytelling Festival. She was always there come rain or shine. This picture was from 2021 at Spring Planting Day. It was a cold blustery day but Beth was still smiling! Rest in peace Beth and I'm sure you are playing in the Angel Band.



Linda Smith - February 14, 2024 at 04:19 PM

FJ

Nothing could keep her from playing -- not even the rain. Just look at that smile! Thank you for sharing this.

Freddy James, Jr - February 16, 2024 at 11:49 AM

LH

“ Prayers!



Louise & Jimmy Hux - February 14, 2024 at 04:10 PM

RF

“ Freddie and family, deepest condolences to each of you...Our community was blessed to have been enriched from her dedicated service in both the education and the Christian arenas. We are all better off if we follow her examples of service. We pray for comfort from above at this difficult time.

Ray Fancher - February 14, 2024 at 04:00 PM

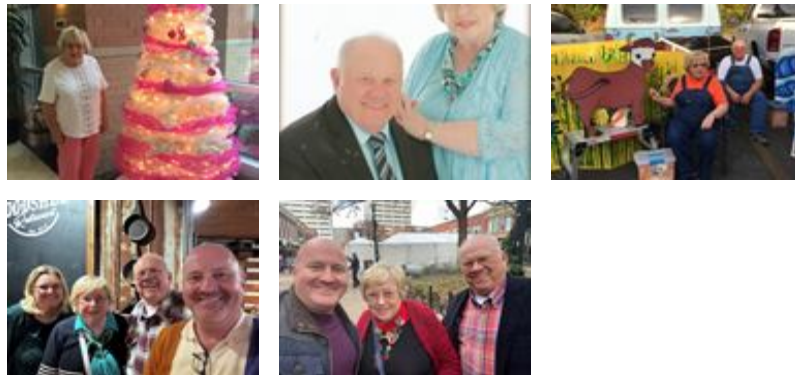
DO

“ Beth was one of the most talented, charismatic, and kind people I’ve have ever known. Our paths crossed numerous times over the years. We swapped stories about our experiences as teachers. (Hers were always funnier than mine!) We shared stage time together. She was always a big help to me when I worked at the newspaper. Her writing skills were superb. Her contributions to her family, friends, and world are myriad. She will be sorely missed. Our sincere condolences to all.

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**Duay and Kay O’Neil** - February 14, 2024 at 02:59 PM



“ 92 files added to the album Life Tributes



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**Manes Funeral Home, Inc.** - February 14, 2024 at 02:48 PM

MJ

“ Freddy and family, We are so very sorry to hear of Beth's passing. You all are in our thoughts and prayers now and in the days to come. May Our Heavenly Father bring the peace and comfort as only He can to each of you during this difficult time 🙏

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**Mike & Sandra Jenkins** - February 14, 2024 at 02:18 PM

CS

“ Freddy, and family, Patti and I are sorry for your loss!! Charlie&Patti Seehorn

Charlie Seehorn - February 14, 2024 at 01:26 PM

RR

“ My deepest condolences to the family of Beth James. So sad on this Valentines Day. My wife and I met Beth through the Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club. I have played my Appalachian dulcimer with Beth many many times. She was always such a talented player. We will miss her on our camps to the Big South Fork. Beth was always there. We will miss her. RIP Beth. -- Rudy and Enid Ryan

Rudy & Enid Ryan - February 14, 2024 at 01:15 PM

CT

“ Catherine & the ASM Team purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Beth Lillard James.



Catherine & the ASM Team - February 14, 2024 at 11:56 AM

CT

“ Catherine & the ASM Team planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Beth Lillard James.

Catherine & the ASM Team - February 14, 2024 at 11:56 AM

LR

“ Love, Karen Bronzo & Jeff Rabb purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Beth Lillard James.



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**Love, Karen Bronzo & Jeff Rabb** - February 14, 2024 at 11:40 AM

LR

“ Love, Karen Bronzo & Jeff Rabb planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Beth Lillard James.

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**Love, Karen Bronzo & Jeff Rabb** - February 14, 2024 at 11:40 AM

NF

“ So very sad to hear this. Beth inspired and touched so many lives during her short time. She will be truly missed. Prayers for each of her family.

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**Nancy & Dale Murrell & family** - February 14, 2024 at 11:17 AM