



Gerald W. Lay

September 17, 1924 - April 19, 2025

Gerald Wilferd Lay, born September 17, 1924, near Jasper, Tennessee, passed away on April 19, 2025, in Knoxville, Tennessee, at the age of 100. Gerald was the fourth of eight children born to Rev. William Marshall Lay and Vivian Bryan Hudson. From an early age, Gerald's life was shaped by faith, family, and a deep sense of duty-values that would guide him through a century marked by faith, service and steadfast commitment. On the day he turned 18 in 1942, Gerald volunteered for the U.S. Army Air Corps (later the U.S. Air Force), answering the call to serve during World War II. As a pilot and co-pilot of the B-17 heavy bomber, Gerald flew two missions over Germany. On his second mission, the crew of the airplane "Pennsy Belle" were shot down and captured, spending five months as prisoners of war in Stalag 1 in North Germany. Despite these harrowing experiences, Gerald's resilience never wavered. He continued his military career in the Air Force reserve with distinction and retired as a Major from the United States Air Force in 1968. Following military service, Gerald dedicated four decades to engineering excellence as a Structural Engineer at the Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant. His work contributed to one of the most significant scientific efforts of the era and reflected his unwavering dedication to national progress and security. Gerald shared more than seventy years of marriage with Mamie Esther Tinker (1927–2016), building a life rooted in love and mutual devotion. Together they raised two children: Shirley Ann Lay, who married Buford Wade Herrell; and Gary Steven Lay, who married Rebecca Lynn Lay. His legacy

continues through his grandchildren: Steven William Lay, who married Missy Leah Monk; and Bradley Steele Lay, who married Ashley Janell McReynolds. Gerald was also blessed with five great-grandchildren: Caleb Joshua Lay and Anna Elizabeth Lay from Steven's family; and Carter Bradley Lay, Meredith Janell Lay, and Sara Elizabeth Lay from Bradley's family. A man deeply devoted to Christ; Gerald lived his faith daily-not only through words but through actions that inspired those around him. His life served as a quiet yet powerful testament to grace, humility, and strength of spirit.

A Celebration of Life will be held on May 18, 2025, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM at Kingston United Methodist Church located at 212 West Church Street in Kingston, Tennessee. Gerald Wilferd Lay leaves behind a legacy defined by courage in adversity, excellence in service, devotion to family, and unwavering faith. May his memory bring comfort to all who knew him. The Lay family would like to offer our sincere gratitude to three special caregivers who took extra special care of Gerald in his last years, Tabatha, Kenzi and Lexi. Also, our thanks to Hospice who made his transition peaceful and comfortable as possible. Kyker Funeral Home of Kingston is serving the Lay Family.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 18. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Kingston United Methodist Church
212 W. Church Street
Kingston, TN

Tribute Wall

SH

“ Had the privilege of getting to know him as a caregiver to him a few years ago wonderful man heaven gained another angel god speed my friend ❤️

stephanie hughes - May 03, 2025 at 04:22 PM

TF

“ The Guay Family purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Gerald W. Lay.



The Guay Family - April 29, 2025 at 11:39 AM

SM

“ Gary and Becky so sorry to hear of Gerald's passing. Love and prayers.

Sandi Manning - April 25, 2025 at 10:23 AM