



James Francis Hilton

July 3, 1950 - May 12, 2026

James “Jim” Francis Hilton, born July 3, 1950, in Mount Victoria, MD, peacefully departed this life on May 12, 2026, surrounded by love.

Jim was an adored husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle and friend. The firstborn to the late James and Evelyn Hilton. Jim graduated from La Plata High School, class of 1968. In October of that same year, he began working at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head Division, assembling rocket motors. He proudly answered his country’s call when drafted in 1970 and served with honor as a Military Police Officer in Vietnam. Once returning home, he built a distinguished career at the Smithsonian Institution Hirshhorn Museum and the National Zoological Park. Jim retired in 2009, after 40 years of service as a Supervisory Safety Officer.

On December 3, 1983, Jim married Melissa, and together they created a life filled with love and family. They shared a son, James Tyrone (1974–1977), who is lovingly remembered. Jim was a devoted father to their daughter, Crystal French (Phillip). He cherished his grandchildren, Deonte’ Sifuentes, Corey and Chloe French. He poured love into Khalil, Khyree, and Decota Watson and had a very strong hand in helping to raise and mentor them. He was a proud godfather to Keyonna Brooks, Jewel McFadden, and Katina Reid.

Jim shared a special and enduring bond with his siblings: Charles; Dwight (Judy); Stanley (Cheryl); Thomas (Bonnie); and his late sister, Doris “Eloise” Dodson (John), who remained close to his heart throughout his life.

He is also lovingly remembered by his extended Watson family—Don, Lillian, Dorinda Warren (Larry), Fabian, Arnold, Sheryl, Deborah, Cindy Miller (Carlos), Adriene; and the late Jeffrey and Tyrone Watson—along with many relatives and dear friends with whom he shared countless moments of joy and fellowship.

Jim was a pillar in the motorcycle and veterans’ communities—serving as the chapter President of the Harley-Davidson Maryland Chapter 1 and an active member of the Rolling Thunder MD1 Charter and the Boys II Men Motorcycle Club. He served as the Muscular Dystrophy Association Coordinator for the Fort Washington Chapter of the Harley Owners Group and volunteered with the American Gold Star Mothers, supporting families who lost their children in service.

Known affectionately as “Jimmy” or “Jim,” he was a perfectionist who loved home improvements, fishing, playing pool, bowling, and riding through various locations on his motorcycle. He took great pride in his role as family Photographer, capturing the moments that mattered most. He spoiled all his nieces and nephews and was regarded as an excellent teacher, attentive listener, and reliable role model.

As a faithful member of St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Washington, D.C., Jim served as Minister of Hospitality, welcoming all with warmth and generosity.

Jim will be remembered for his strength of character, generous spirit, and the many ways he served others—at home, at work, in his community, and his

country. Though he has taken his final ride, his legacy will live on in all who knew and loved him.

The family asks in lieu of flowers and gifts donations be made to;

Alzheimer's association : <https://alzfdn.org/donate/> And/ or MDA: https://giving.mda.org/page/EndALSwithMDA?_gl=1*1eos8rl*_gcl_au*MTcwODA0Mjk3NC4xNzc4ODkzODk4

Cemetery Details

Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery

11301 Crain Hwy
Cheltenham, MD 20623

Upcoming Events

Burial

JUN 25. 1:45 PM (ET)

Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery
11301 Crain Hwy
Cheltenham, MD 20623

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 22. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Holy Ghost Catholic Church Issue
15848 Rock Point Road
Newburg, MD 20664

Service

MAY **22**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Holy Ghost Catholic Church Issue Cemetery
15848 Rock Point Road
Newburg, MD 20664

Tribute Wall

BA

“ We'll miss him dearly We will miss him dearly forever, we went to every school together for Wayside elementary to BelAlton junior school to LaPlata Senior high high where we graduated 🎓

Blanche Allen - May 29 at 03:15 AM

BB

“ To the Hilton Family - I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of James. You have my deepest sympathy. I will cherish the good times with my classmate. I'm Praying for the family.
Bettie Ann Greenfield (Davis)

Bettie Davis Boston - May 15 at 02:00 PM

MB

“ Farewell friend. We shared so many years of fun and memories as far back as when you were in your Mt Victoria home. I'll remember you fondly. You gave so much to so many. Melissa, I'm so sorry for your loss.
Jimmy I know you have been received and are resting among the angels in heaven.
Mary (Smothers) Bumbry

Mary Smothers Bumbry - May 15 at 01:47 PM

SS

My sincere condolences to you Melissa and the Hilton family. Jimmy was always a joy to talk with and I know he is truly missed by so many family, friends, motorcycle group and co-workers, etc. May Jimmy, a good man rest in Heavenly Peace.
Psalm 34:18 ("The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart").
Sherella Swann, cousin

Sherella Swann - May 15 at 06:49 PM

LK

*To The Hilton Family,
You have my deepest sympathy. He was always a joy to talk with when he came to Walmart and I was always happy to see him. I was his favorite Cashier. We talk about family, crabs and crazy people. I would see him at the Annual Crab feast, we would laugh and dance to the music. I know he is truly missed by so many family and friends.*

Linda M. Knott

Linda Knott - May 18 at 10:06 AM

EJ

*To the Hilton Family
Deepest sympathy on your loss, James was a classmate of mine and good friend. I remember his quiet dignity..God bless you all and may he RIP.*

Evelyn Turner Jupiter - May 18 at 11:40 AM

MS

To the Hilton family my sympathy to all of you: James was a very SPECIAL classmate and friend. He always attended our class reunions and he will always be remembered. I'm glad we got to visit him. I'll keep all of you in prayer. RIP James

Mary Gross Settles - May 18 at 01:18 PM

KS

*To the Hilton Family,
We are deeply saddened over the loss of Jim. He was a very special member of the Harley Owners Group(HOG). Jim, was one of the longest tenured members, if not the longest. His presence has already been missed. Thank you Hilton family for sharing him with us. Harley Owners Group, Fort Washington...*

Kirk L. Spells - May 20 at 04:40 PM