



Sanders Wayne Whitley

May 2, 1958 - January 24, 2026

Sanders Wayne Whitley, age 67, passed away suddenly on Saturday, January 24, 2026, at his residence in Tuscumbia, Alabama.

He was known by several names, sometimes Sanders, maybe Wayne or Whit and sometimes even Poppa Whit, Uncle Wayne, and Dad. He graduated from Colbert Heights High School in Tuscumbia in 1976. Wayne proudly served in the U.S. Navy and retired after 24 years as a Gunner Mates Chief. During that time, he met his soul mate, Maryee, and they were happily together for over 35 years. They enjoyed their time in the Navy and being able to travel the world. At the time of retirement, they settled in Hampton, Iowa where they raised their children and a variety of animals.

After Maryee's passing in 2021, Wayne moved back to Alabama to help take care of his mom. He was a simple man who had a dry, sarcastic sense of humor but always saw the potential in people. He enjoyed smoking, drinking his Cokes, and enjoying his stash of peanut butter and jelly. Wayne was often found sitting on the porch or watching wrestling with his best friend, Cooper.

He is preceded in death by his wife and the love of his life, Maryee Whitley; mother, Izella Sartin Lanford; father, Emory Sanders Whitley; bonus dads, A.D. Wright, Robert Lanford and stepson, David Benavidez.

He leaves to cherish his memories, his children, Damien Whitley, Calisto Whitley; stepsons, Mike Benavidez (Tammy), Mark Benavidez, Jacinto Benavidez; daughter-in-law, Shelly Benavidez; sister, Carol Wright Bolton (Gary); nephews & nieces, Matthew Bolton, Zachary Bolton (Brooke), Abby Wade (Joe); great-nephews and nieces, Jayce Bolton, Grayson Bolton, Madeline Wade, Olivia Wade, soon to arrive, Hallie Bolton; a host of aunts, uncles, and cousins, the Lanford family; and last but not least, his best friend, Cooper.

The visitation will be 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Saturday, February 07, 2026, at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville, AL 907 Jackson Avenue, Russellville, AL. A memorial service will follow in the chapel at 12:00 noon with military honors.

The family would like to offer a special thank you to Justin Gasque, Matt Moore, and the first responders who were there to help us. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family. To leave a personal condolence, please visit the website @ sprymemorialchapel.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 7. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Spry Memorial Chapel/ Funeral Home
907 Jackson Ave S
Russellville, AL 35653-2625
(256) 332-1122

Memorial Service

FEB 7. 12:00 PM (CT)

Spry Memorial Chapel/ Funeral Home
907 Jackson Ave S
Russellville, AL 35653-2625
(256) 332-1122

Tribute Wall



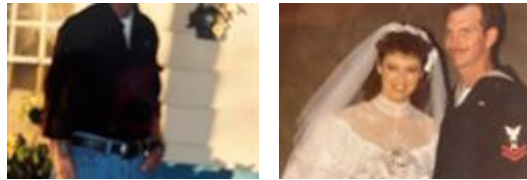
“ *Spry Memorial Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Sanders Wayne Whitley*



Spry Memorial Chapel - February 06 at 10:18 AM



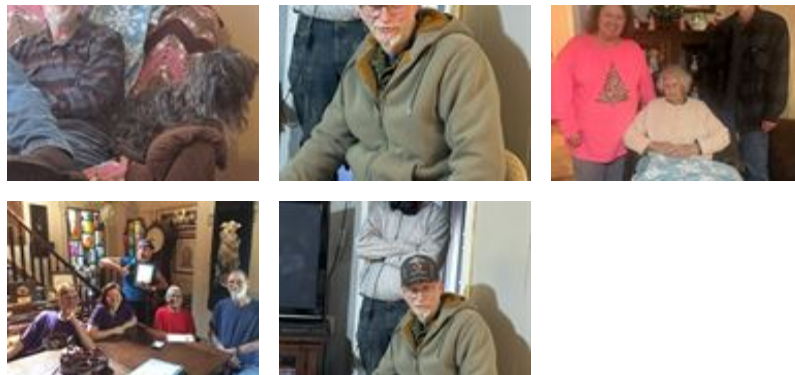
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Spry Memorial Chapel - February 06 at 10:05 AM



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Spry Memorial Chapel - February 05 at 05:09 PM