



## Mr. Thomas Lee Bates

January 17, 1949 - May 6, 2026

Mr. Thomas Lee Bates lived a full life dedicated to his family and friends. He was born on January 17, 1949 in Pike County, MS to Celestine Rollins and Tom Bates. He was a man of peace, love, positivity, calmness and gentleness. He was humorous, playful, and loved watching WWE wrestling, Godzilla and King Kong movies (even the movies when the actors mouth moved before the words came out). He was a great cook. It is a mystery of how he could take minimal ingredients and make the best homemade hamburgers. If you gave him a plate of food and a remote, you'd forget that he was in the house. He could keep a secret very well.

He was a member of Holy Temple Church of God in Christ. He enjoyed church services and reading his lessons. He was baptized and kept his faith throughout his sickness and challenges. He attended Booker T. Washington and graduated from North Pike High School. He worked at Avondale Shipyard and retired from New Orleans Sewage and Waterboard Company after nearly 40 years of service.

On July 25, 1970, Thomas and Leola (Pittman) joined together in holy matrimony. Thomas said, "She brought the sunshine into my life". Through this union, they welcomed four children: Priscilla, Thomas, Elisa, and Douglas. They raised their children with love, faith, consistency and dedication. They balanced each other out. Leola was the disciplinarian and Thomas was the

negotiator, defender, and interventionist. Thomas was soft-hearted and if you ever found yourself in a corporal punishment situation, he would apologize immediately after. He intervened on behalf of the children, often undoing punishments and making every effort to prevent corporal punishment situations. If his efforts failed, he would leave the room or walk outside. When he felt like Leola's disciplinary methods went on too long, he would return and say, "Ok Leola that's enough". He would allow the children to go outside while on punishment with the agreement that they would be back in the house by six which was one hour before Leola's shift ended at work. His theme could have been "help me help you". He would say "come on, don't make your momma get you". He was the number one protector and guide.

Thomas was raised and loved by his older sister, Dorothy Mae Bennett and her wonderful husband Mr. Euel Bennett after the death of his mother. They can only be described as selfless and dedicated angels. Selfless by prioritizing the needs, well-being and interests of others over their own desires.

Thomas was the baby of the sibling group of seven. He was loved tremendously, spoiled, nurtured and guided in life. Thomas was raised among his siblings, nieces, and nephews of the Bennett household. He was grateful for and loved his siblings and their spouses.

Thomas leaves to cherish his precious memories; a devoted wife of 56 years: Leola Pittman- Bates, daughters; Priscilla (Norman) Brown, Elisa Ann (David)Bates-Williams, Sons; Thomas (Lawanda Jackson) Bates and Douglas Bates. Grandchildren: Jessica, Daniel, Devin, Dr. Normanda Brown, Justyn, David III (Mouse), Denver- Danae, and Kaiden. His four great-grandchildren; Karasi, Jacob, Hayden-Penelope, and Demi-Danae. His bonus grand-children: Shajuana, Joanie, great-grands; Ari, Reaghan and Gernie. Siblings: Evorn (Robert Lee) Brown, Donice Nell Ard, Samuel Rollins and Jimmie Rollins.

Thomas was preceded in death by his parents, sisters; Dorothy Mae Bennett, Mary Lee Allen and a brother Johnny Rollins Jr. Also, his brother-in-laws & Bonus- Father Euel Bennett, great nephew and two great nieces.

His legacy lives on forever in each child, grandchild, and generations to come. Pieces of his spirit shine through the little things: a grandchild who loves wrestling (Justyn), the family trait of sleeping with their eyes slightly open, covering their heads while they sleep, enjoying hamburgers, and even watching shows like Tyler Perry's Sistas & Zatima. He has instilled core values of gentleness, kindness, patience, humor, dedication, work ethics and love for God.

He could keep a secret. It was often questioned why Thomas kept his hair but both sons, not so much. A couple of years ago, Thomas explained that he had been using a "sprinkle potion" to keep his hair growing. He said while gesturing with his hands "I just do my little sprinkle potion, comb it out and keep moving". He never revealed what it was or where this potion came from. But obviously it worked.

Thomas was funny and just down to earth. One day, he was asked by one of the children if his cellphone was still on silent from church. He responded " I don't do none of that stuff with that phone, I just put it in my shirt pocket and go to church, y'all should know not to call me at that time, y'all know that I'm in church". If the cellphone ever went off during the service, just know that he meant well.

A visitation for Thomas is scheduled for 11:00am, Saturday, May 16, 2026, at Craft-Dillon-Ginn Funeral Chapel, with Funeral Services to follow at noon.

Pastor Harvey Cleaves will officiate the Funeral Service, with interment to

follow in Ulyses Pittman Family Cemetery in Summit, MS.

Please share your condolences online at [www.craftfuneralhome.org](http://www.craftfuneralhome.org)

# Cemetery Details

## Ulyses Pittman Family Cemetery

1037 Mars Hill Road  
Summit, MS 39666

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 16. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Craft-Dillon-Ginn Funeral Chapel  
219 Highway 98 West,  
Tylertown, MS 39667  
(601) 876-5175  
craft.ginn98@gmail.com  
<https://info@craftfuneralhome.org>

## Funeral Service

MAY 16. 12:00 PM (CT)

Craft-Dillon-Ginn Funeral Chapel  
219 Highway 98 West,  
Tylertown, MS 39667  
(601) 876-5175  
craft.ginn98@gmail.com  
<https://info@craftfuneralhome.org>

# Tribute Wall

AM

“ May Almighty Father God bless and comfort the family 💖🙏 and strengthen the family 🙏❤️



Anthony Martin and jashon Johnson martin - May 20 at 12:21 PM

TF

“ Wow such a shock to me Mr bates was truly a good friend i remember when him and his wife use to watch me over at there house everyday at church I use to always ask him for this watch a gold and black one he replied I don't know ford I really like this watch I use to say me to lol he was a real calm man I never saw him get mad at all he always had positive vibes Mr bates u will be truly miss I hate I missed ur service but u will always be alive in my heart take ur rest .....

thomas ford - May 18 at 08:35 PM

NB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Normanda Brown - May 12 at 04:25 PM

NB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Normanda Brown** - May 12 at 04:21 PM

EB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Elisa Bates-Williams** - May 09 at 12:10 PM