



Gary Lee Bates

August 2, 1947 - November 16, 2025

Gary Lee Bates, 78, of Hartsville, South Carolina, passed away peacefully on November 16, 2025, after a lengthy illness. Born on August 2, 1947, in Carthage, Tennessee, Gary lived a life defined by dedication, humor, and generosity.

A proud veteran, Gary served in the United States Coast Guard from 1965 to 1967, stationed in the Great Lakes region, where he contributed to icebreaker operations. Following his service, he built a successful career as a salesman for several national companies, earning the respect of colleagues and customers alike through his integrity and charisma. His sense of humor was unmatched, and his kindness left a lasting mark on everyone he met.

Gary was active in his community as a committed member of American Legion Post 251, where he found fellowship with fellow veterans and friends. Above all, Gary cherished his family. He was a devoted husband to Becky, a proud father to Kaylee (Bates) Stewart (Brandon), Amanda (Bates) Royals, Justin Bates (Nova), and stepdaughter Shelby Waggaman (Jay). He adored his grandchildren—Ashlyn, Avery, and Bennett Stewart; Cadence and Audrey Royals; Joshua Bates; Izabella; Corbin Heustess; and Gage and Bay Waggaman—who were his greatest joy.

Gary's warmth, laughter, and love will be deeply missed but forever

remembered by those who knew him.