



# Jerry R. Patton

MAR 16, 1946 - FEB 17, 2017



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# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
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## **Jerry R. Patton**

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**J**erry R. Patton of Bridgeport, Alabama: March 16, 1946 – February 17, 2017 “When a person becomes aware of their genius and they live it and they give generously from it, they change the world, they affect the world. And when they depart everyone knows something is missing.” – Michael Meade Jerry Patton departed this world last Friday at the age of seventy, leaving it poorer for his loss. Raised in the small town of Arcadia, Florida, he was the eternally grateful beneficiary of I. D. Eller, who wholly subsidized his undergraduate education at the University of Florida. This set in motion a lifetime love of learning and a loyalty to the Florida Gators. While working full-time, he received a master’s degree and then a Ph.D. in chemistry, leading to a forty-plus research career in fields spanning fluorine and pharmaceutical chemistry. His early exposure to the cultural influences at UF fostered his later interest in philanthropy, art, and music. Over the decades he sought out and supported young artists, collecting far more paintings and sculpture than he could ever display. Profoundly tone-deaf (his wife always told him it was perfectly acceptable to lip-sync the national anthem at ballgames), he nevertheless enjoyed attending concerts – especially when he could bring friends and teachers with him. Jerry’s lifelong passion for gardening was evidenced by the thousands of daylilies he grew and hybridized, alongside irises, peonies, daffodils, and other varieties of flowers too numerous to mention. Even in the context of his hobbies, he found ways to express a profound generosity; his immense vegetable garden provided summer-long produce for an entire community (including massive quantities of okra which he only grew to give away). With his wife Jonnett of thirty-nine years, he raised a daughter Brandi Couse, a son Brian, an honorary son Jason Polk, and prot??g??s too numerous to mention in science, math, and art. He took immense pride in their achievements, and talking about them was his favorite pastime. Above all, Jerry displayed a deeply held passion for lifelong learning. He and his wife volunteered at



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local elementary and middle schools, teaching science and math enrichment to hundreds of students. His unfailing generosity, his kindness and his humor, his devotion to the many people he loved far and wide – these are qualities that made him so beloved in Bridgeport and beyond. He will be greatly missed.



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Jerry by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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