



Donald James Held

NOV 15, 1937 - MAR 7, 2026



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Donald James Held

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Donald James Held, of North Fort Myers, concluded his remarkable life journey on March 7, 2026, at the age of 88, leaving behind a trail of laughter, encouragement, and countless reminders to live with purpose and possibility.

He was widely known for his infectious sense of humor, zest for life, and remarkable energy. Until recently, Don had the vitality of a man half his age—often outpacing those much younger than himself. He had a special gift for bringing joy to others, especially children, whom he delighted in making giggle and “dance.”

Born in Columbus, Ohio, Don was raised by parents who instilled in him a strong work ethic and encouraged his entrepreneurial spirit. From an early age, he refused to accept life as it was. Instead, he imagined what it could be—and pursued those possibilities with determination, optimism, and faith.

Don was a devoted husband to his beloved wife, Jan. Together they built a life rich with adventure, learning, and service. They traveled extensively, generously shared their knowledge, and opened doors of opportunity for many along the way. Whether speaking to large audiences or sharing wisdom in quiet conversations, Don often reminded others: “Life is not a dress rehearsal. You must have goals and dreams, or you’ll find your life spent rather than invested.”

One of Don’s greatest joys was being a grandfather. He treasured summers traveling with Jan and their grandchildren in their motor coach—creating memories, sharing lessons, and passing along his love of learning, curiosity, and laughter. Time with family was among his greatest blessings.

Don’s faith was the foundation of his life and shaped how he treated others—with humility, compassion, and integrity. His work and teaching touched lives around the world, yet he remained grounded, focused on people rather than recognition, and committed to giving others the same opportunities he had been given.



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Don was welcomed into Heaven by his parents, Oliver and Doris Held, his son, Alan, his sister, Carolyn, and his brother, Bob.

He is lovingly remembered by his wife, Jan; his children, Denny, Rick (Donetta), and Ron (Amy); seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; his brother, Jerry (Brenda); his sister, Betty (Jerry) Jaynes; and many nieces, nephews, and friends touched by his encouragement.

While we mourn Don's passing, we celebrate his homecoming. Don finished his race faithfully and now rejoices in the presence of his Lord. We take comfort in the promise of peace beyond this life and the hope of reunion.

Don lived fully, loved generously, and left the world—and all of us—better because he was here.

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” — 2 Timothy 4:7

A celebration of Don's life will be held on April 1, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. at Fort Myers Memorial Gardens Funeral Home in Fort Myers, Florida.

Interment and a memorial service will be held later this year in Columbus, Ohio.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Don's memory to either the Foundation for American Christian Education <https://www.face.net/your-gift-is-greatly-appreciated/> reflecting Don's passion for teaching and learning America's Christian history, or to Hope Hospice in Cape Coral, Florida <https://www.hopehospice.org/donate/> whose compassionate care supported him in his final days.



Events

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Celebration of Life

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

10:30 AM ET

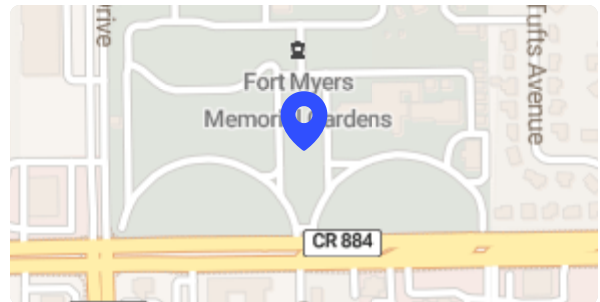
Fort Myers Memorial Gardens Funeral Home
1589 Colonial Blvd, Fort Myers FL 33907



Cemetery Details

Fort Myers Memorial Gardens Cemetery
1589 Colonial Blvd, Fort Myers FL 33907

(239) 243-0014





Tribute Wall

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Fort Myers Memorial Gardens shared a **Service for Donald Held.**



March 27 at 5:45 PM



Carole Adams posted:

We at the Foundation for American Christian Education, among many, were recipients of Don and Jan's generous encouragement, love of sharing the truth, and faithfulness in serving and helping others. One favorite memory was their effort to instill a love of books and reading in their grandchildren. They stopped at our offices in Chesapeake during one of their motorcoach trips to buy classics for the grandchildren to read. Our president at the time, Rosalie June Slater, loaded the children down with a lifetime load of classic literature. I always hoped the onslaught of great books did not have the opposite effect! Don's enthusiasm for America's Christian history was contagious.

March 31 at 1:28 PM



Anonymous sent a Full Of Love Bouquet to the Held family.



March 30 at 8:05 PM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Donald.



March 30 at 8:05 PM



Judy A. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Donald.



March 18 at 11:12 AM



Tribute Wall

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Mary T. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Donald.



March 17 at 10:21 AM



Media

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March 27 at 5:45 PM





Memories only last if you share them

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



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