



## James "Coach Al" Davidson

November 10, 1927 - October 25, 2016

Long time St. Albans resident, James Allen Davidson, better known as "Coach Al" Davidson, died on October 25, 2016 at home from complications of heart disease and cancer. He was 91 years old.

Al was a revered teacher and coach in St. Albans having accepted a job in 1948 at St. Albans High School which at the time was combined with the Junior High. When the schools separated, he remained at St. Albans Junior High. His 35 year coaching career in St. Albans included many winning teams and championships in multiple sports and in 1966 he was voted Coach of the Year in Kanawha County. And for over 25 years he officiated high school basketball and football. The St. Albans Junior High Gymnasium was named in his honor in 1983 and he was inducted into the St. Albans High School Hall of Fame in 1996.

Al Davidson was born in Northfork, West Virginia in 1924, the eldest son of Zelphia and Allen Crockett Davidson. His academic career at West Virginia Tech was interrupted by World War II and he served as a ball turret gunner on a B-17 with the Eighth Air Force based in Nutt Hampstead, England. Active in the West Virginia Eight Air Force Historical Society, he was elected president in 1996.

After the war, Coach returned to Tech and when he graduated, he had earned

11 athletic letters. He was second in the nation in punting in his senior year with a 43.3 yard average. In 1977 he was voted into the Tech Hall of Fame as an Outstanding Athlete.

After posting a 28-2 record as a pitcher for the Golden Bears, Al was offered a contract by the Brooklyn Dodgers but when he was offered fifty dollars more a month to coach, he passed up the chance at professional baseball and moved to St. Albans. He never regretted that decision and was proud of having taught and coached 22,500 students. He later earned his Master's Degree in Education at West Virginia University.

After retiring in 1983, Coach served on the St. Albans City Council for four years and spent six years as a dedicated volunteer for St. Mark's Food Pantry. Coach was a congregant at First Presbyterian Church in St. Albans for over 30 years and served as an Elder and Trustee.

His wife of thirty two years, the former Lucille Chittum predeceased him as well as his sister, Libby Lyon of San Antonio, TX. Coach is survived by his daughter, Diann Williams of St. Albans, son James and wife Debra of North Myrtle Beach, S.C., son Jerry and wife Mary of New Providence, NJ, five grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and his sister, Janet Barbour of Huntington.

Funeral service will held 2pm Friday, October 28, 2016 at First Presbyterian Church, 201 Kanawha Terrace, St. Albans with Rev. Paul Romine officiating. Visitation will be held from 5-8pm Thursday at Bartlett-Chapman Funeral Home, St. Albans and one hour prior to the service Friday at the church. Entombment with military honors will follow in Cunningham Memorial Park, St. Albans, WV. You may visit his tribute page at [ChapmanFuneralHomes.com](http://ChapmanFuneralHomes.com) to share memories with the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be directed to Alzheimer's

Association, 1601 Second Avenue, Charleston, WV 25387.

Bartlett-Chapman Funeral Home, family-owned and located at 409 Sixth Avenue, St. Albans is honored to serve the Davidson family.

# Cemetery Details

## Cunningham Memorial Park

815 Cunningham Lane  
Saint Albans, WV 25177

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **27**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Bartlett-Chapman Funeral Home  
409 Sixth Avenue  
St. Albans, WV 25177  
(304) 727-4325  
[info@chapmanfuneralhomes.com](mailto:info@chapmanfuneralhomes.com)  
<http://www.chapmanfuneralhomes.com>

## Visitation

OCT **28**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church  
201 Kanawha Terrace  
St. Albans, WV 25177

## Funeral Service

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OCT **28**. 2:00 PM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church  
201 Kanawha Terrace  
St. Albans, WV 25177

# Tribute Wall



“ James "Coach Al" Davidson

October 06, 2023 at 08:41 AM



“ The West Virginia and Kanawha County Associations of Retired School Employees extend their sincere sympathy to you, the family, in your sorrow. Blessings to all.

Kan. Co. Retired School Employees - November 11, 2016 at 04:46 PM



“ Diane, Jim and Jerry,

*I was saddened to hear of the passing of your beloved dad. I will always remember his beautiful smile, kind words and pleasant personality. He was so admired by my Mom and Dad as a wonderful caring man and role model for all the students that he coached and mentored. My brother has always talked about how Coach Davidson was always able to motivate him without ever raising his voice and expressed that he may have been the nicest man that he has ever known. He gave so much to his community, you must be so proud! What a wonderful legacy to leave his children and grandchildren ...he lived a life well lived and left a wonderful footprint on this earth. May his love and the memories you shared bring you comfort. My prayers are with you.*

*Karen West Comfort*

Karen West Comfort - October 31, 2016 at 07:55 PM

SM

“ Dear Folks,

*I know Al was a part of the lives of thousands of people. I am one. I just wanted to share with you a few of my memories.*

*I was a 12 year old seventh grader when I first met him. I lived only two blocks from old Crawford Field and he had just graduated from WV Tech and starting his first job as a teacher and assistant football coach at SAHS. By my senior year I was his student assistant in teaching phys ed classes and considering a career in journalism and coaching. I can still remember the many times we played "kickback" (a punting contest) when I was a boy. I never beat him. I saw Al infrequently over the years. I was attending physician to some members of his wife's family and we played golf a number of times in the 70's and 80's. I couldn't beat him there either.*

*I have played with and seen many athletes over the past decades and can honestly say that Al was one of the two best all-around athletes I have ever seen. He could do anything...in any sport..and excel. He could have been a major league pitcher, an NFL punter, and, except for his size, a pro basketball player. I still remember him being the first person I ever saw hit a baseball over the left field fence and out onto route 60 at the old SAHS field located by the St. Albans-Nitro bridge. But his family came first.*

*Al Davidson was the epitome of the decent, kind, and caring human being. His type is rare and you were fortunate if you got to meet and know at least one of his ilk during your life-time. To put it simply, his was a life well lived.*

*Even at his great age I know he will be missed. You have my deepest sympathy.*

*Sincerely,*

*Sam Henson, M.D.*

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**Sam Henson, M.D.** - October 30, 2016 at 11:54 AM

SH

“*"Sending my deepest sympathy." Former student of Jim Davidson at Sissonville High School class of 1976 Susie Burdette-Haynes*

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**Susie Haynes** - October 28, 2016 at 04:56 PM

MG

“*Jerry. We (the Giles family) were saddened to hear about "Coach". He not only was someone I respected and looked up to, he was a friend. Through my time at SAJH and years after. We lost dad last November and I know he felt the same way about Al. A true friend. They are probably together getting ready to work a game as we speak. They both will be sadly missed. Love and prayers go out to you and your family today as you say goodbye to a great man.*

*Mike Giles*

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**Mike Giles** - October 28, 2016 at 11:47 AM

BB

“ Jerry,  
Kem and I send our condolences in the passing of your wonderful father. It seems just like yesterday that you and I along with all the other gang were running down the SAJH basketball court with Coach teaching and directing our practices in great detail. He was a great teacher and coach ! He exemplified great patience and support for both students and players whose lives he touched and that was many. I remember him teaching me how to execute the proper bounce and chest pass. Coach was great at teaching the fundamentals of basketball. He taught and coached my father in 1948 and 1949. My dad had great respect for Coach as both a coach and a person. I remember him saying and I quote, " Al Davidson is one of the nicest men I ever knew". What a legacy your dad leaves behind ! Your dad epitomized what a real leader exhibits; discipline, bravery, compassion, kindness, and patience. With these great attributes he touched countless lives for the good. The world is definitely a better place for him being in it. You and your family were very blessed to have had such a Good man as a father. I am honored and privileged to have had him as a coach, teacher, and a friend. His memory will live on in the hearts of many. Sleep well Coach. You deserve it. Jerry, you and your entire family are in our thoughts and prayers. With love, Bill and Kemmie Bayliss

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**Bill Bayliss** - October 28, 2016 at 06:39 AM

AW

“ My absolute favorite coach at St Albans Jr High school! He was such an excellent role model! He made such an impact on so many young lives! RIP coach ! I would really like to have one of your sweaters! 😭

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**Amy Ware** - October 27, 2016 at 09:39 PM

JM

“ So sad to hear that Coach Davidson has died. He was a genuine leader and very pivotal man to many of us from St. Albans. I remember him fondly from time at SA High until my graduation in 1967. Please know his impact remains alive in many students who he touched all those years ago. Prayers and comfort as you mourn him during this difficult time.

*John Mallory*

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**John Mallory** - October 27, 2016 at 04:14 PM



“ To all the family...I am so sorry to hear of your Dad's passing. What do you say about such a special man. Met him at SAJHS in the 60s. Then I worked with him at the food pantry at St. Mark's. He'd always say, "Diane, ya need to take some food home to those kids"... Then I had the pleasure of caring for Cindy at Sweetbriar. I always looked forward to Coach coming in and we'd sit and talk. He was so attentive to her. If the weather was bad he'd ask if he could drive me home. It was a nice relief to get to spend some quiet time with him. As others have said, he'll truly be missed by so many. God bless you all at this time and give you comfort and peace. He walks with the angels. Diane Blake

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**Diane Hill-Blake** - October 27, 2016 at 02:16 PM

TE

“ I am so sorry to hear of his passing. He was my football coach and gym teacher SAJS. He was a great coach and wonderful man



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**Tim Erwin** - October 27, 2016 at 02:05 PM

LW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Lee Williams** - October 27, 2016 at 12:34 PM

JG

“ *I was saddened to hear of Coach Davidson's passing. He was a good coach and a better person. He didn't teach me how to throw an interception or miss a free throw. He taught me how to act after I did so. His influence goes way beyond those he coached and taught. We have passed those lessons on to our children and their children. We were fortunate to have shared our lives with him.*

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**Jim Gilbert** - October 27, 2016 at 11:26 AM

DF

“ *Diann, I was saddened to hear of the passing of your Dad yesterday. Although I only got to meet him and his wonderful wife twice a year when they came to get their taxes prepared, they acted like they knew me forever. The area has lost a great man and you have my condolences.*

*D. David Fisher*

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**David Fisher** - October 27, 2016 at 11:23 AM

TL

“ My heartfelt condolences go out to the Davidson family. Coach Davidson always attended the Kanawha Valley Football Official's Association annual banquet. He always shared great stories about his coaching and officiating career. He also always had inspiring words for officials regardless of their experience. He will truly be missed.

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**Tom Light** - October 27, 2016 at 11:05 AM

SM

“ So sorry about your loss. Nice man. Class of 1950 Bob Smith "Smitty"

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**Smitty** - October 27, 2016 at 09:49 AM



“ Not only was Coach my teacher at SAJS, but he was one of the faces that I saw each Sunday in church. When I compare him to a certain retired soccer coach in Putnam County, you can understand what a quiet and caring gentleman he was.

*He made a huge impact on a lot of people, and he will be missed.*

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**Cindy Howerton** - October 26, 2016 at 09:24 PM

PH

“ Sorry to hear this. He was my basketball coach when I went to Saint Albans Jr. High. I transferred to Nitro because we moved my Freshman year and we beat Saint Albans for the Kanawha County Championship. Coach Davidson came into Nitro's locker room after the game and complimented me to my Nitro coach. I will never forget that compliment. R.I.P Coach Davidson. You were a man among men. 🙏

Paul Hartling  
Hurricane, WV

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Paul Hartling - October 26, 2016 at 08:25 PM

DC

“ Diane.. so sorry to hear about Coach's passing... your dad was always a mentor to me especially since I couldn't shoot-dribble-pass but he always gave us with less talent a chance. Probably, along with Coach LeRose will always be St. Albans legends.. Dale Carter

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Dale Carter - October 26, 2016 at 06:17 PM



“ Diane, Jim, Jerry. I am so sorry about your loss. He meant so much to me. I was his manager for my 3 years of Junior high. Afterwards he encouraged me into officiating for 32 yrs of which the last 20 working in the NCAA. I have great memories with him. Sorry I cannot attend his service. Debbie & I will be out of town. Thoughts & Prayers.

Jim Perry

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James Perry - October 26, 2016 at 01:15 PM

TJ

“ Jerry,  
So sorry to hear of the passing of your father. He was a great man and I have found memories of him from St. Albans Junior High gym classes. I will never forget memories of him.

Terry Johnson

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**Terry Johnson** - October 26, 2016 at 07:40 AM

LB

"Success is not a definition. It is a constant, continuous journey." What a great man that influenced so many. Thanks Coach! Little Burdette...Pawleys Island, SC

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**Little Burdette** - October 27, 2016 at 08:45 AM

BS

Jerry,  
I am so sorry to hear of the passing of your father. Coach was a wonderful man. I always think of him when I hear the song 25 to 6 to 4 by Chicago. One day in study hall he put that album on the record player and let us listen to it. I can remember that day like it was yesterday because he had just had his head buffed to a golden shine. He is all what a coach and a man should be. God Bless you and your family

Bobby Sparks

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**Bobby Sparks** - October 27, 2016 at 07:11 PM

BB

*Jerry,*

*It seems like yesterday that you and I were running plays out there on the SAJH gym floor under the direct supervision of your father. He taught me how to make that perfect bounce and chest pass. I have many fond memories of him as a coach and as a mentor. Your dad epitomized what a real leader is all about. He was really great with kids and exemplified great patience. He will always be remembered for his kindness and supporting nature. Just know that I had the utmost respect for him and his memory will live on in the hearts of many others who were privileged to have known him as coach, teacher, mentor, and friend. Just know that you and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. You were very blessed to have such a wonderful father. Bill and Kemmie Bayliss*

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**Bill Bayliss** - October 27, 2016 at 08:01 PM