



James Noel "Precious and Motown" Best

April 23, 1936 - January 27, 2026

James Noel Best, affectionately known as “Precious” and “Motown,” passed away peacefully on January 27, 2026, in Lady Lake, Florida, at the age of 89.

Born on April 23, 1936, in Highland Park, Michigan, James lived a life marked by service, dedication, and joy. From his early days as an altar boy to his later years as a devoted parishioner of Saint Theresa’s Catholic Church, faith was a guiding force throughout his life.

James proudly served his country in the United States Army during the Korean War. His skill and discipline earned him recognition as both a sharpshooter and marksman—honors that reflected his commitment and precision.

Following his military service, James embarked on a remarkable career in the hospitality industry. Starting from humble beginnings, he rose through the ranks to become a respected Hospitality Specialist. His passion for people and natural charisma led him to not only manage properties but also sell motels and place individuals in management positions across the country. He often said he never worked a day in his life—a testament to how much he loved what he did.

James was known for his vibrant personality—funny, outgoing, charming—and

always eager to meet new people. Whether playing cards (especially Bridge), shooting pool, enjoying trivia nights at the American Legion, or hitting the golf course followed by music and drinks at the 19th Hole, James embraced life with enthusiasm and warmth.

He was deeply devoted to his family. James shared 51 cherished years of marriage with his beloved wife Lorraine Best until her passing. He is also predeceased by his grandson Christopher Best.

He leaves behind a loving legacy through those who survive him: his special friend and companion Gail Niciu; son James Best and daughter-in-law Penny Best; daughter Kelly Esposito and son-in-law Michael Esposito; daughter Shannon Proffitt; daughter Nicole Best Faigle and son-in-law Rob Faigle. His family includes numerous grandchildren—five from James and Penny; five from Kelly and Michael; four from Shannon; five from Nicole and Rob—as well as many great-grandchildren: five from James's line; seven from Kelly's; seven from Shannon's; and eighteen from Nicole's.

A man of deep love for family and friends alike, James brought light into every room he entered. His legacy lives on through generations who carry forward his humor, kindness, and zest for life.

May his memory bring comfort to all who knew him. A Funeral Mass will be held on February 17, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM at Saint Theresa's Catholic Church 11528 US 301. The Burial will follow at Bushnell National Cemetery at 1:30 pm.

Cemetery Details

Florida National Cemetery

6502 SW 102nd Ave
Bushnell, FL 33513-8914
(352) 793-7740

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

FEB 17. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Saint Theresa's Catholic Church
11528 US 301
Bellevue, FL 34420

Inurnment

FEB 17. 1:30 PM (ET)

Florida National Cemetery
6502 SW 102nd Ave
Bushnell, FL 33513-8914
(352) 793-7740

Tribute Wall

DC

“ Donna Compitello purchased the *Pretty Please* for the family of James Noel "Precious and Motown" Best.



Donna Compitello - February 16 at 12:07 PM

YF

“ Your FHM Family purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of James Noel "Precious and Motown" Best.



Your FHM Family - February 14 at 10:25 AM

YF

“ Your FHM Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Noel "Precious and Motown" Best.

Your FHM Family - February 14 at 10:25 AM