



## James and Josephine Bowers

September 9, 1932 - September 16, 2025

In Loving Memory of James “Skip” and Josephine “Jo” Bowers

James “Skip” Keith Bowers – September 9, 1932 – September 16, 2025

Josephine Betty (Ponton) Bowers – April 2, 1934 – December 23, 2022

James “Skip” Bowers and Josephine “Jo” Bowers of Kankakee, Illinois, shared nearly 68 years of devoted marriage before Jo’s passing on December 23, 2022, followed by Skip’s on September 16, 2025. Together, they built a life grounded in family, service, faith, and quiet strength. Now reunited, they rest together in eternal peace.

Both Skip and Jo were born in Clifton, Illinois—Skip on September 9, 1932, and Jo on April 2, 1934. They married on January 22, 1955, and raised two children, James and Jeanette, in a home filled with love, laughter, and enduring values passed down through generations.

Skip served in the U.S. Army as a cook in the 3rd Armored Division at Fort Knox, Kentucky, earning the rank of Corporal and an honorable discharge. He spent many years as a groundskeeper and florist at Kankakee State Hospital (now Shapiro Developmental Center), where he found purpose and peace in the natural world. An entrepreneur at heart, he later owned a landscaping business and partnered in a pest control company. More than just work, nature was Skip’s sanctuary—a place he loved to share with others. He

mentored many, including Roger and Andy Bowers, Dan Hanson, and Dave Ciaccio, who followed in his footsteps.

Even in retirement, Skip remained dedicated to helping others. Through the Bowers Foundation, he distributed clothing, food, and household goods to those in need—quietly touching countless lives. A lifelong learner and creative spirit, Skip was a lover of books and poetry, a master of crossword puzzles, and at age 75, fulfilled a dream by writing and recording a song, “Autumn Gold,” which aired on local radio. He also found joy in museums, music, and the theater—interests he shared with his family, leaving behind a lifetime of cherished memories.

Jo was the heart of the home—steady, kind, and full of grace. She worked hard both inside and outside the home, holding roles as a waitress, housecleaner, and longtime school bus driver. She loved the children she transported, treating each one with care and affection. Jo's warmth, generosity, and quiet strength touched everyone she met. She delighted in music and musicals, and was an avid reader who especially loved the novels of Zane Grey and Danielle Steele. Her home was always a place of comfort and care.

Though never ones to seek the spotlight, Skip and Jo's gentle strength, humility, and generosity left a lasting impression on everyone fortunate enough to know them. As parents, they led by example—showing what it meant to be kind, loyal, and endlessly giving. Their legacy lives on not only in their family, but in the many lives they quietly uplifted along the way.

Together, Skip and Jo created a life rich in love, laughter, and unwavering support—for each other, their family, and their community. They filled their home with creativity and compassion, sharing books, music, and the arts with their loved ones, building a legacy of kindness and connection.

They are survived by their children, James Kevin Bowers (Carol) and Jeanette Bowers Fritz (Mark); grandchildren, James Andrew Bowers (Cathy), Kristie Bowers DeLuca (Peter), Stephanie Bowers Mackin (Andrew), Bridgette Fritz Martin, and Benjamin Fritz; and great-grandchildren, Hailey “Alvi” Bowers, Kinsley Mackin, Briggs Mackin, Oliver Martin, and Ruth DeLuca.

Skip is also survived by his brother, Ronald Bowers (Dolores), and Jo by her sister, Harriet Ponton Harwood (Ronald), and brother, Leo Ponton. They also leave behind dear friends Abraham and Ruth Kurien, Dave and Sandy DeKoster, and many extended family members and friends who will forever miss Skip’s quiet wisdom and Jo’s enduring love.

A joint celebration of life for James “Skip” and Josephine “Jo” Bowers will be held on October 18, 2025 from 12–3 PM at Schreffler Funeral Home, 1900 West Court St, Kankakee, Illinois. All who knew and loved them are welcome to attend.

Their family takes comfort in knowing that Skip and Jo’s legacy lives on in the lives they touched, the values they lived by, and the memories they created—forever carried in the hearts of those who loved them.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life Service

OCT 18. 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Schreffler Funeral Home - Kankakee Chapel

1900 W. Court St.

Kankakee, IL 60901

(815) 932-2421

<https://www.schrefflerfuneralhomes.com/>

# Tribute Wall

SR

“ *I just adored Skip. He was the kindest man I have ever met. I will miss him!* ”

**Sue Rayman** - November 02, 2025 at 08:54 PM

PW

“ *Always kind and friendly. We worked on their vehicles at Joes Automotive when I worked there. Enjoyed them immensely!* ”

**Pat Ward** - September 28, 2025 at 03:35 PM

GB

“ *Gloria Bydalek lit a candle in memory of James and Josephine Bowers* ”



**Gloria Bydalek** - September 27, 2025 at 10:57 AM

GB

*Keith my cousin who made everyone laugh and his laugh was contagious. He worked hard and long. Jo was a sweet one a great Mother loving Labor day on stage entertainment. Hugs and sympathy to the family as the angels lift them up*

**Gloria Bydalek** - September 27, 2025 at 11:02 AM

MM

“ *MR MRS lit a candle in memory of James and Josephine Bowers*



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**MR MRS** - September 27, 2025 at 09:24 AM

JW

“ *Aunt Josephine was always so kind to me when I was a child. She was a very loving lady. Uncle Keith always came by to help Dad out when jobs were too big for my brother and me to handle with Dad. He kept me employed as an older boy and paid pretty well for the work we did. He was always kind to me and the other boys. Rest in eternal peace with the Lord, Aunt Josephine and Uncle Keith Bowers!!!*

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**Jerry Waters** - September 26, 2025 at 09:50 PM

TH

“ *Tom Hatting lit a candle in memory of James and Josephine Bowers*



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**Tom Hatting** - September 26, 2025 at 04:34 PM