

## If Tears Can Build A Stairway

If tears could build a stairway  
and memories were a lane,  
we would walk right up to heaven  
and bring you back again.  
No farewell words were spoken,  
no time to say goodbye,  
you were gone before we knew it  
and only God knows why.  
Our hearts still ache in sadness  
and secret tears still flow.  
What it meant to lose you  
no one will ever know.  
But now we know you want us,  
to mourn for you no more,  
to remember all the happy times,  
life still has much in store.  
Since you'll never be forgotten,  
we pledge to you today,  
a hallowed place  
within our hearts  
is where you'll always stay.



Deer Season

## In Loving Memory CELEBRATING A LIFE

### Funeral Service:

11:00 a.m., Friday, January 2, 2026  
Wessington Community Center  
Wessington, South Dakota

**Minister:** Pastor Robert Brooks

### Casketbearers:

George Brown - Michael Conquering Bear  
Justin Hanks - Kevin Hanks  
Spencer Allen - Josh Walth  
Andy Aukes - Nathan Daak - Travis Daak

### Honorary Casketbearers:

Heavy Constructors  
Kleinsasser Boys

**Pianist:** Cleo Kleinsasser

### Musical Selections:

"Amazing Grace"  
"How Great Thou Art"  
"What A Friend You Have In Jesus"

### Ushers

Derek Kleinsasser - Brandon Rinehart  
Dalton Nohr - Elliott Nohr  
Brandon Rojo

### Burial:

St. Joseph's Cemetery  
Wessington, South Dakota

*The family warmly invites you to join them for  
lunch and continued fellowship at the  
Wessington Community Center following the burial.*

# In Memory Of



James "Big Jim" Hanks

March 9, 1960  
December 20, 2025





James Alan Hanks, 65, lovingly known to many as "Big Jim," passed away peacefully on December 20, 2025, at Monument Health in Rapid City, surrounded by his family.

James was born on March 9, 1960, in Miller, South Dakota, to Gerald and Mary (Oligmueller) Hanks. He was later raised by his stepfather, Vern Hill, who played an important and meaningful role in his life.

Big Jim was a fun-loving man who truly enjoyed life and the people around him. He was a caring brother, devoted husband, loving father, and proud grandfather. Family was always the most important part of his life, and he cherished every moment spent with those he loved most.

James had a deep love for the outdoors and could often be found hunting or fishing. He also enjoyed working with his hands and took great pride in his work. He dedicated over 30 years to Heavy Constructors in Rapid City, South Dakota, worked for five years at Casavan Apiaries, and spent several years working on and off at Vern's Manufacturing.

Much of James's free time was spent with his family, especially his children and grandchildren. He loved watching his two sons play basketball during their school years and was always proud to support them. He was also a beloved uncle to many nieces and nephews, each of whom held a special place in his heart.



# Honor Loving Memory

James is survived by his loving wife, Denise "Peach" Hanks; his son, Jimmy Hanks (Kimberlie and Hayes); his stepson, Michael Miller (Ellie and Aralynn); and his three loving brothers, John Hanks, Don Hanks (Linda, Jamie and Josh Walth, Amber and Spencer Allen, Katie and Andy Aukes), and Jerry Hanks (Shari, Justin and Kendra Hanks, Kevin Hanks).

He was preceded in death by his mother, Mary Hill; his father, Gerald Hanks; his stepfather, Vern Hill; his son, Nick Hanks; his grandparents on both sides of the family; and several cousins.

James will be remembered for his big heart, strong work ethic, and the love he shared so freely with family and friends. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.



**Luce, Lutz & Reck**  
FUNERAL HOMES

Miller, South Dakota  
[www.luceluzereck.com](http://www.luceluzereck.com)