



James Dewey Bennett, 90, of Red House passed away peacefully on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at his residence. He was the devoted husband of Barbara Scott Bennett for 66 years.

Born on April 11, 1933, in Campbell County, he was the son of the late Paul Dewey Bennett and Hannah Baldwin Jennings Bennett. He was an active member of Providence Baptist Church. James proudly served his country as a member of the United States Army. James was honorably discharged from the service in 1957, one month early to get home in time for planting. Upon his return, he married his childhood sweetheart, Barbara.

Over a 60-year career in the beef seedstock cattle business, James was a performance pioneer, master breeder, industry leader and consummate gentleman. His influence in the industry had a positive impact locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. James led a life of honor and service, serving as a role model for young and old. His thoughtful, steady, and respectful leadership style shepherded numerous organizations through both good and difficult times.

In the fall of 1950 at age 17, James left the farm to attend Virginia Tech, majoring in Animal Science. His college career was cut short after his father suffered a series of heart attacks in late autumn. James returned home to run the farm full time, but returned to Virginia Tech in 1981 when he was appointed by the governor to the Board of Visitors. He was reappointed by a subsequent governor for a second term, serving as vice-chair and then chairman of the board.

James was a dedicated cattleman and agriculturist. He was involved in many local, state, and national organizations that promoted the advancement of cattle breeding and agriculture. This involvement resulted in many recognitions which began in the early 1950's with the coveted FFA American Farmer Degree. He received the National Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Seedstock Producer of the Year in both 1978 and 1998, was inducted into the American Hereford Association Hall of Fame, and the Virginia Livestock Hall of Fame. He also received both the BIF Continuing Service Award and

Pioneer Award. For many years his time was spent serving on various boards, including Chairman of the American Polled Hereford Association Board, President of BIF, National Cattleman Beef Board, Virginia Beef Expo, Dominion Bank, Central Fidelity Bank, and First Bank and Trust Agriculture Advisory Board. He twice served a gubernatorial appointment to the Virginia Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

James was instrumental in developing a missions humanitarian support cattle project in Croatia and Liberia. This project is still an operating success. He also traveled to Israel as part of the Virginia/Israel Committee of Agriculture.

While growing up with James at the helm of the Bennett family, his children remember the many nights he spent sitting in the hallway at the "phone table" talking with people all over the country about the betterment of the cattle industry. It is comforting to them now to think that he is reminiscing with many of these people in Heaven. The cattle/agricultural industry was a place of passion and phenomenal people in which James thrived. He always knew, and his children and grandchildren know now, that the agricultural community consists of the best people in the world, making every day a blessing.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by five children, Elizabeth B. Holthaus and husband, Lowrey of Richmond; Paul S. Bennett and wife, Tracy; James G. Bennett and wife, Annette; Brian R. Bennett and wife, Cara; and Jonathan H. Bennett and wife, Melissa, all of Red House; ten grandchildren, Scott Bennett and wife, Sarah; Hunter Holthaus and wife, Brandi; Dalton Bennett and wife, Monica; Sarah Grigg and husband, Matt; Olivia Fanney and husband, Dylan; Leighanne Saunders and husband, Andrew; Anne Bennett Kemp and husband, Richard; Meredith Bennett and fiancé, Cory Wingo; Audrey Bennett, and Hannah Bennett; five great-grandchildren, Kennedy Ann Bennett, Hadley Mae Bennett, Eller Grey Saunders, Brooks Bennett Holthaus, and Mallorie James Fanney, and four expectant great-grandchildren coming spring/summer 2024; one sister, Mae Bennett Guthrie of Harrisonburg; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by an infant son, James Dewey Bennett, Jr.; and a brother Ralph Jennings Bennett.

A funeral service will be held 2pm, Sunday, January 28, 2024, at Providence Baptist Church with Pastor Mike McDowell and Pastor Anthony Reeves officiating. Burial will follow in the church cemetery.

The family will receive friends 4-6 pm Saturday, January 27 at Providence Baptist Church, and other times at the residence.

In lieu of flowers the family has requested that friends honor James' memory by making contributions to the Hereford Youth Foundation of America, [11500 N. Ambassador Drive, Suite 410, Kansas City, MO 64153](https://www.herefordyouth.org/), or the Angus Foundation, [3201 Frederick Avenue, St. Joseph, MO 64506](https://www.angusfoundation.org/).

Robinson Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the family. An online condolence may be sent by visiting www.robinsfuneral.com.