



James Wendell Leeck

July 23, 1943 - June 20, 2026

James "Jim" Wendell Leeck, 82, of Denton, Texas, passed away peacefully on June 20, 2026.

Jim was born on July 23, 1943, in Salem, Illinois, to George Maurice Leeck and Carrie Mae (Roach) Leeck. Although he spent much of his life in Texas, his heart never drifted far from the southern Illinois farm and family that shaped him.

His earliest years were marked by both the uncertainty of World War II and the steadfast love of his mother. While his father served in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific, keeping Landing Craft Infantry vessels operational during the war, his mother Carrie cared for Jim at home with the help of his grandmother, Zilphia, Uncle Henry, and extended family. Jim often said his mother deserved the credit for "keeping the wolves at bay" until his father returned home. One of his favorite stories was that when his father finally came home after the war, young Jim pointed to his father's photograph and insisted, "That's my dad."

Those difficult years also left him with a lifelong appreciation for kindness. He never forgot the neighborhood store owners who allowed his mother to purchase groceries on "credit" while his father was overseas, an act of generosity he said helped keep the family going during hard times.

After the war, George Leeck partnered with Mr. Moore repairing used

automobiles, while Mr. Moore handled sales. Their business also became a Harley-Davidson dealership, and Jim enjoyed remembering that his parents had ridden motorcycles together before they were married. Those early experiences fostered his lifelong appreciation for craftsmanship, mechanics, and honest work.

As a boy growing up in Mount Vernon, Jim found his greatest joy on his grandparents' farm. Nearly every Sunday the family gathered around a table filled with chicken, beef or pork, fresh vegetables from the garden, and enough food to send everyone home with leftovers. He often recalled the warmth of the coal stoves in winter, the glow of kerosene lamps before electricity reached the farmhouse, and the countless hours spent helping care for cattle, hogs, chickens, horses, and crops.

Later in life, when people asked where he grew up, Jim would smile and answer, "My folks and I lived in a town called Mt. Vernon... but I grew up on the farm."

The farm taught him lessons that lasted a lifetime. By eight years old he was helping operate tractors during hay season. He learned responsibility by mowing neighborhood lawns, earned merit badges through Boy Scout Troop 104, enjoyed hiking, camping, swimming, bicycling, baseball, and basketball, and even took violin lessons. His interests in trains, airplanes, automobiles, woodworking, and metalworking reflected a lifelong curiosity and a love of learning how things worked.

Jim also possessed a quiet sense of humor. Remembering his junior high years, he joked, "The girls got prettier... I got dumber... and more timid." He often shared the story of breaking a steel hoist in shop class with a friend while the teacher was out of the room. The punishment required extra hours in the shop, but Jim later described it as one of the greatest lessons of his

education because it became an opportunity to learn from a mentor. Throughout his life, he believed mistakes could become valuable teachers when met with humility and perseverance.

Family remained the center of Jim's life. He treasured his many aunts, uncles, cousins, and the memories they created together. Those experiences shaped the husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather he would become.

Above all, Jim was a man of deep Christian faith. He believed a father's greatest responsibility was not simply to provide for his family, but to lead with integrity, encourage others with his words, teach his children God's truth, pray for wisdom, and continually grow in his own walk with the Lord. He understood that no father was perfect, but that God's grace was sufficient for every weakness. Those convictions guided his life and became the legacy he hoped to pass on to future generations.

Jim is survived by his beloved wife, Mary Beth Leeck; his sons, Jim Leeck and wife Lynette, and Jay Leeck and wife Deborah; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; sister-in-law Marilyn Haenig; cousin-in-law Cindy Leeck; and numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, George Maurice Leeck and Carrie Mae Leeck, and his cousin, Doug Leeck.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. at Slay Memorial Funeral Center, followed by a funeral service at 1:00 p.m. Interment at Belew Cemetery will immediately follow.

Jim believed that our greatest inheritance is not found in possessions, but in the faith we live, the character we demonstrate, and the love we leave behind.

His family will remember him for his quiet strength, his gratitude for life's simple blessings, his devotion to Christ, and the stories he carefully preserved so that future generations would always know where they came from.

Arrangements are under the direction of Terri Slay and Slay Memorial Funeral Center.

Cemetery Details

Belew Cemetery

9500 Belew Road
Aubrey, TX 76227

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUL 1. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Slay Memorial Funeral Centers
400 US-377
Aubrey, TX 76227

Funeral Service

JUL 1. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Slay Memorial Funeral Centers
400 US-377
Aubrey, TX 76227