



## Don Joseph Cummings

March 9, 1956 - March 1, 2024

March 1, 2024, Don Joseph Cummings, 67, of Cordova, AL, passed away at home with his beloved wife (Suzy) at his side. In the last hours of this evening, the clouds lifted, and God welcomed Don to his eternal home. Don and Johnnie Sue were married in 1975 and one year and five days short of 5 decades resided within the confines of Walker County as a happily married couple. This year would have begun their Golden 50th year Wedding Anniversary. Don will always be known as the hardest worker anyone had ever known.

Don began his first career with Drummond Coal as a very young man in 1976. In 1993 Don & Johnnie Sue pursued Don's dream of owning and operating a golf course and went in with partners to purchase Union Chapel Golf Course & eventually Don decided to move forward with ownership of "The Rock" as a family owned and operated business. Don, Johnnie and his children (Nicholas Brandt Cummings & Michelle Brooke Cummings "Baugh") ran the business together while Don continued to work full time in the coal mines. As business increased and the demand rose on Don's time, he froze his retirement to dedicate time to the golf course. Don returned to working in the coal mines at Shoal Creek and finalized that part of his career in 2011 when he retired. Don dedicated several years at the Terrace Retirement Community as the beloved maintenance man. He decided to pursue the purchase of a beautiful golf course called Riverbend in 2000 in Cordova, Alabama and moved into a

beautiful home on the Black Warrior River beside the golf course. When the toll of maintaining and running two golf courses simultaneously became too much, Don transferred his attention solely to Riverbend Golf Course in 2006. Don & Johnnie Sue worked hard to provide the golfing community with a quality golf course at a working man's price to keep golf affordable and accessible to everyone.

Don had a legendary ability to develop relationships with everyone. After the April 2011 tornado destruction, it was a struggle to physically get Riverbend back to playability. Don worked hard doing everything that he could. At this point in his career, the physical demand was too much; and he made the challenging decision to close the golf course and finish his career with the City of Dora as the General Manager of Horse Creek Golf Course in Dora, Alabama. In Don's 11 years of service at Horse Creek; he had many accomplishments. The one that he was most proud of was the opening of the beautiful new clubhouse in June 2017. Through his career, he was the beloved boss and friend to all who worked with him. Don began his journey as a golf course owner with the know how to work very hard and the interest to learn the ins and outs of turf management. Industry professionals invested their knowledge and time into dad's education and for his own education purposes he joined the Alabama Golf Course Superintendents Association. He was well respected amongst the industry professionals and eventually he took on a board position, became acting president, and carried on a tournament to support the Legacy Scholarship given by the organization each year long after his leadership involvement ended.

Those who would prefer an in lieu of flowers we will be providing an address for donations to the Franny McLemore Legacy Scholarship offered by the AGCSA.

Don was a fortunate man who had a wife who is a cook for the ages and his favorite meals always included butterbeans and cornbread; but he was also known for making a meal out of something as simple as popcorn. He also had a Little Debbie & Mountain Dew sweet tooth. Johnnie Sue put together a

beautiful spread for Thanksgiving this past year for all her children and grandchildren and wanted to ensure that we were able to take pictures to capture what would sadly turn out to be the last time we can all be together on this side of heaven. We value these pictures with every part of our being. Don cooked once a year and that was Christmas morning, and it was always epic. This past Christmas will forever be etched in the minds of his grandsons because they got to open their presents and eat the famous Christmas morning spread with their Papa.

His canine companions were dear to him. They loved him as much as he loved them. He has always had a chosen dog in the house to be his best buddy and there was always an outside dog who chose him.

Don chose to lead his family in faith as a follower of Christ. He was the true example of a Christlike man, and he treated all people with respect and kindness. He was a true testament to the love of Christ.

Don was predeceased by Father Fred Cummings, who passed February 2001 and Mother Mary Cummings, who passed November 1993 & his beloved friend and brother-in-law Donald Watts, who passed October 2021.

He is survived by wife Johnnie Sue (Helms), his son Nicholas Cummings and his children Jonie Elizabeth Cummings, Julianna Marie Cummings, Grayson Dwayne Cummings & his daughter Brooke Baugh (Tom) & their children Aiden Julian Valente and Hodges Edward Valente as well as son-in-law Joseph Valente. He is also survived by a host of siblings & their families who have stayed active in annual family holidays. Sister Barbara Swindle (Haskel), Sister Janett Watts (Donald) nephew Jason Watts (Shannon) children Kendall & McKlain & niece Shelly Cofer (Jason) children Riley and Rhett, Sister Camelia Giambrone (Ross) nieces Tiffany (John) children John Wade, Rhianna, Zachary (Ila) their daughter Wrenlee Ann, and Nathan & niece Shea (Allen) & their daughter Ava, Brother Robert Cummings and his children Monica son Chase & Jeremy (Regina) children Josh (Mary) and Emily, Sister Wanda Elliott (Joe) daughter Celeste, Brother and Best Friend Steve

Cummings (Deidra) niece Jillian (Sam) children Ollie and Teddie and niece Jade (Andrew) son Griffin, and nephew Joshua (Taylor) son Tate, and nephew Jacob.

The Facebook page comments and messages, phone calls, cards, and visits Don received during the final weeks of his life were a tremendous source of joy, peace, and comfort to him. To be reunited with all his siblings during this trial was a blessing beyond measure.

Arrangements to honor the life of Don Joseph Cummings are as follows on March 16th. New Horizon Memorial Gardens 5203 Hollis Goodwin Road, Dora, Alabama 35062 at 11am.

An expression of sympathy and remembrance may be made in any form desired. If you would like to donate to an organization that was near and dear to Don's heart; the Franny McLemore Legacy Scholarship given annually by the Alabama Golf Course Superintendents Association would be truly appreciated. Please mail any donation checks payable to: Alabama Golf Course Superintendents Association - Legacy Scholarship Fund to PO Box 661214 Auburn, Alabama 35040. In the memo line please include Don Cummings.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAR **16**. 11:00 AM (CT)

New Horizon Memorial Funeral Home  
5203 Hollis Goodwin Road  
Dora, AL 35062  
(205) 648-2323

# Tribute Wall



“ *RIP... Ol' Friend , you will be missed !*



**Garry Butler** - July 29, 2024 at 05:22 PM



“ *A close friend, and a good man ... RIP Don and prayers for the family.*



**Garry Butler** - May 24, 2024 at 05:32 PM



“ *115 files added to the album LifeTributes*



**New Horizon Memorial Funeral Home** - March 15, 2024 at 03:03 PM

F,

“ From John ,CHarles,Albert,Henry purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Don Jospeh Cummings.



---

**From John ,CHarles,Albert,Henry** - March 14, 2024 at 03:05 PM

F,

“ From John ,CHarles,Albert,Henry planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Don Jospeh Cummings.

---

**From John ,CHarles,Albert,Henry** - March 14, 2024 at 03:05 PM

RC

“ So very sorry to hear of the lose of my former coworker at Shoal Creek and my dear friend he will for ever be missed by everyone who knew him.

---

**Robert Cagle** - March 13, 2024 at 05:30 PM

CG

“ I lost the Facebook page to post and follow and I regret that. I got to know Don at Horse Creek and he was truly a respectful, caring, man of God who made you feel special. I wish that I had gotten to know more of his life story and pilgrimage before now just like I wish that I knew even more details of my parents lives before it was too late. I'll be praying for comfort and peace that only God can provide. Jesus wept even being God incarnate knowing the loss we feel from death, etc. That loss on earth will never go away but I'm so thankful that Don is with our Lord and not suffering.  
Cathy

---

**Cathy Gresham** - March 11, 2024 at 11:55 PM

CC

“ Carbon Hill Coca-Cola purchased the Enduring Grace for the family of Don Joseph Cummings.



Carbon Hill Coca-Cola - March 11, 2024 at 12:17 PM

CC

“ Carbon Hill Coca-Cola planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Don Joseph Cummings.

Carbon Hill Coca-Cola - March 11, 2024 at 12:17 PM

MC

“ I worked with Don @ the assisted living. He was a jewel to work with. The residents just loved him. He was always willing to help and repair anything that needed fixed. He treated all of us like his own family.

Michelle Clifton - March 05, 2024 at 12:19 AM

DM

“ Doug McCarty purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Don Joseph Cummings.



Doug McCarty - March 04, 2024 at 01:14 AM

DM

“ Doug McCarty planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Don Joseph Cummings.

---

**Doug McCarty** - March 04, 2024 at 01:14 AM

MD

“ We met Don when he was at River Bend Golf Course. My daughter was on the DHS gold team. He encouraged her each time he saw her. There were times he would come out on the course and watch her play! Then he came ti Horse Creek. By that time Ashely had already graduated from DHS but he never forgot her! He will always be remembered for his kindness and that smile!



---

**Melanie Dale** - March 03, 2024 at 08:50 AM