



Mr. Larry "Smokey" Edward Caldwell

March 13, 1941 - March 12, 2022

Larry "Smokey" Edward Caldwell age 80, passed away Saturday - March 12, 2022. He was born in Dalton, Georgia to the late Edward Franklin Caldwell and Martha Hazel Edwards Caldwell. Smokey had many layers to his life and had resided in the LaFayette area for the past sixty years. He served his country for six years in the U.S. Navy as a Gunners Mate. He excelled in a career with the Georgia Forestry Commission including fire-fighting, leading and teaching rescue. This took him across the United States. During those years he also was a foster parent, Sunday school teacher, had an upholstery shop and enjoyed caving. As a former Walker County Rescue Chief in 1976 he developed a safer rope for Rescuers and Cavers and founded Pigeon Mountain Industries. This grew with partners into PMI Rope Company in LaFayette, Georgia that still operates today. Smokey was a cave explorer with several discoveries and rescues all over the world to his credit. He assisted in mapping 37 miles of Mammoth Caves and lead the mapping of Ellison's Cave. In 1992 he went to work for Voice of America, the U.S. Government International Radio Network, where he taught radio tower riggers rope safety around the world. Smokey's next vision was to develop the event venue known as Cherokee Farms in Mineral Springs, which will continue to operate. He was of the Baptist faith, a member of the National Speological Society and humbly donated to all branches of the Walker County First Responders. Along with his parents, he is preceded in death by his step-father: Hoke Miolen, brother and sister-in-law: Lloyd (Patricia) Caldwell and nephew: Larry

Caldwell. He is survived by his daughter: Kimberly (William) McNeese of Cleveland, TN, caring companion: Debbie Yancey, brothers: Kenneth (Judy) Caldwell, Steve Miolen, Chris Miolen, sisters: Lyonne Walker, Rita (Phil) Miolen, grandchildren: Jessica Jean and Jesse Andrew McNeese, nieces and nephews: Joy (Ladane) Caldwell Miles, Kenneth "Casey" (Anna) Caldwell, Eddie Caldwell, Doug Caldwell, Rob Walker, Paul (Alecia) Walker, extended family and many special friends to be the keepers of his legacy. The family will have a Celebration of Smokey's Life at Cherokee Farms at a later date. Arrangements by Wilson Funeral Homes - LaFayette Chapel. Online register book at www.wilsonfuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall



“ *smokey is my friend.....i have had rough spots with every caver i have known.....thank goodness only a few permanent.....never had any with smokey.....first met him at the dug entrance to ellisons cave.....i was coming out with my wife and he had just finished flagging the main route from the blue hole to the cave that we all use.....he offered us a place to sleep and an invite to a political speech and barbeque dinner....smokey always admitted me to the events on his farm.....many good times and lots and lots of memories.....farewell smokeythe second time i have lost a best friend*

Danny Twilley - August 28, 2022 at 10:16 PM



farewell smokey, no more late night testing experimental rope sheaths, diameters and stretch....in the warmup pit.....i remember how fast that teflon one was.....we also placed art where he wanted.....thanks for helping me eat all those oysters, crawfish, and spicey hush puppies..and.i wouldn't go back to goat cave if you paid me.....

Danny Twilley - August 28, 2022 at 11:02 PM

SK

“ *Smokey was the most kind, happy, and generous person that I have ever met. It's hard to imagine a world without Smokey. He earned his angel wings many decades ago.*

Sharon Keener - March 22, 2022 at 09:35 AM

GD

“ *Smokey was that rare individual who liked you until you gave him sufficient reason not to. And even then he'd forgive you like as not. He had the biggest heart you'll ever see and was never shy about expressing himself with a twinkle in his eye. Yeah, he was THAT guy. I can't begin to thank him and the many many friends I met along with him over the years we visited. He was always welcoming but I will always be grateful for time he and Debbie spent with Lynn and me over the last few years as we got to know each other. His life story would be a bestseller if it could ever be told! Just sayin'... Fare thee well my friend. Your generosity of spirit and love will always be treasured and inspirational to we who knew and loved you and I hope that those who follow will continue the tradition of open arms and welcoming hearts!*



Glenn Deans - March 21, 2022 at 06:19 PM

DR

What an honor to know Smokey. I'm grateful for the time we spent together and the long heartfelt conversations we had about caving and his mom's homemade biscuits. He was a unique soul and a treasured man.

Dark Rush - March 22, 2022 at 11:47 PM

CD

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Cindy D'Agostino - March 18, 2022 at 05:45 PM

CD

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Cindy D'Agostino - March 18, 2022 at 04:58 PM

CD

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Cindy D'Agostino - March 18, 2022 at 03:53 PM

KM

“ *Smokey was a good manThank you Smokey for sharing and being a part of my life/family and all the memories at the farm with family & friends. Thank you for loving my aunt Deborah and introducing me to John who was the love of my life. Your light will always shine and you will always be remembered by so many. Love Kathy Moore*

Kathy Moore - March 17, 2022 at 10:32 AM

TP

“ *There is so much that could be said about Smokey, but I will just say one. Some say hospitality is the greatest of all virtues. This man was a giant. Rest in peace and rise in glory, Brother.*

Timothy Patton - March 17, 2022 at 06:51 AM

DM

“ I had a theme camp on Smokies land Cherokee farms called area 51. We had so much fun deep in the woods setting up a living room playing live music . Smoky always encouraged us to have fun responsibly till late late hours of the night! He was a godfather to so many people the leader and keeper of sacred land for sacred events. His door was always open. Smoky made me want to be a better me.

David Morris - March 17, 2022 at 02:11 AM

CD

“ Smokey will be so missed by an untold number of people who have known and loved him over the many years. He was the most interesting person, full of stories and tales, humor and tidbits of wisdom. He had the biggest heart and would give his shirt to those in need. I grew into adulthood around Smokey and he had a huge influence on me, like a big brother I never had, protective, caring, generous, and always there if I had a need. He did a lot of good for this world and is the kind of man as they say..."Just don't make them like that anymore!". I know his legend will live on and he will not be forgotten. Rest in peace my dear friend. We will love you always Smokey.

Cindy D'Agostino - March 15, 2022 at 01:02 PM

BC

Smokey will be forever missed. I have never met such a bold, positive, strong, and caring person as smokey. I loved sitting around talking to him about all of the stories and extensive knowledge about forestry, cave exploration, and things about life in general. He had a unique way he went about his life, and I admired him because he went out the way he wanted to exit....his way. I will miss you my brother...RIP Smokey Caldwell.

Bruce Coker - March 15, 2022 at 06:01 PM

DM

Smokey caldwell was a unique soul, always loving ,caring and admired by all. The knowledge and wisdom shared by him will never be forgotten.he has had such an impact on my life that I could never explain. We love you and will forever be missed.God has called you home brother rest easy my friend.

David McGuire - March 15, 2022 at 09:12 PM