



Donald James Smith

October 2, 1942 - February 4, 2026

Donald James Smith, 83, passed away on February 4, 2026, in Zion, Illinois, following a courageous battle with cancer and Alzheimer's disease. He was born October 2, 1942, in Oak Park, Illinois, to John and Helen Smith and grew up in Long Lake, Illinois.

Don met the love of his life, Marilee Kiraly, at Grant High School in Fox Lake, Illinois. They married in 1963 and shared 62 devoted years together. In 1975, they moved their family to Montana, later relocating to Lake Jackson, Texas, in 1980 before returning to Illinois in 1984. They cherished time with friends, their faith-sharing group, and especially their grandchildren.

Don worked as a newspaper publisher, corporate sales manager, and marketing agency owner. He was widely known across Northern Illinois as the lead singer of The Galaxies and The Dan Dees, performing rock and roll favorites at record hops and nightclubs. In later years, he dedicated his musical talents to praising his Savior, Jesus Christ, leading music ministry at Villa Desiderata in Johnsburg and performing at weddings, funerals, and special events. He also brought music to incarcerated men in Montana and Illinois and inspired his sons and grandson to pursue music, often performing together.

An avid reader with a passion for world history, especially World War II, Don

was jovial, quick-witted, and full of energy.

He was preceded in death by his brother, John H. Smith II. He is survived by his wife, Marilee (Kiraly) Smith; sister, Judy Foszcz of Long Lake, Illinois; sons, Christopher and Laura (Anderson) Smith of Elmwood Park, Illinois, and Michael and Margie (Rinaldi) Smith of Lindenhurst, Illinois; grandchildren, Andrew Smith, Lauren (Smith) Relich and Steve, Krysta (Smith) Bass and Garrett, and Jason Smith; and great-grandchildren, Thea and Brooks Relich, and Maeve Bass.

A Funeral Mass will be held at 10:00 a.m. on February 19, 2026, at St. Bede Church in Ingleside, Illinois, with a luncheon to follow at Villa Desiderata in Johnsburg. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Alzheimer's Association at <https://donorservices.alz.org>.

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

FEB **19**. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Bede Catholic Church
36455 N Wilson Rd
Ingleside, IL 60041
(847) 587-2251

Tribute Wall



“ So many great memories dancing to the music of the Dan Dee's back in the day at Holiday Park!

Carole & Joe Culotta - February 22 at 06:54 PM



“ Baldemar V.and family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Donald James Smith.



Baldemar V.and family - February 18 at 03:21 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Donald James Smith.



February 17 at 08:23 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Donald James Smith.



February 17 at 03:17 PM

TU

“ To all the Family of Don Smith, we were a bit young to go to dances where *The Galaxies & The Dan Dees* were playing. Dan Pawlak recently at a Historical Society Show & Tell January meeting shared some of the great stories.

Of all the stories that everyone of you have I'm sure there will always be more of Don Smith's legacy. Keep him alive by telling people how great you thought he was. And how he recognized there was a strong family behind cheering him on.

Sincerely, Tina & Robert "Bosh" Uselding.

Tina Uselding - February 17 at 09:27 AM

LH

“ Love, Ernie and Donna Harkreader purchased the *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* for the family of Donald James Smith.



Love, Ernie and Donna Harkreader - February 15 at 08:38 PM