



*Carissa Ann James
Guthrie*

Dec. 10, 1948 - Oct. 3, 2026

Carissa Ann James Guthrie, age 77, of Morganton, NC, died on October 3, 2026 from injuries sustained after a car accident earlier in the week. She was a spirited lady with a wit that cut like a hot knife through butter, and she loved her golden retriever, Bentley (fondly also known as her "North American House Sloth" who cost her a small fortune with eye surgery and his special diet and medications) more than she liked most people.

Born in Wilkes County, NC, on December 10, 1948, Carissa was the middle daughter of John Beckley James and Mary Elizabeth Brown James. Carissa's older sister, Carol Lou James Tucker, as well as her parents, precede her in death. Also waiting to greet her on the other side is her husband, Linwood Brothers Guthrie, who left this world in March, 2020. Lin and Carissa were a devoted couple and always together. They had a wonderful and full life, traveling, playing golf, and spending time enjoying each other's company. She missed him deeply and would often talk about him. Carissa and Lin met when they were students at Western Carolina University. She studied to become an elementary school teacher; and Lin attended WCU using the GI bill after serving in Vietnam. Once they met, they were inseparable, and they married September 13, 1970. They eventually moved to Lockhart, South Carolina, where he worked at Milliken & Company, and she taught at the local elementary school. Their

daughter, Sherissa, was born on December 7, 1972.

Eventually, they moved to Morganton, NC, where Carissa took a job teaching in the Burke County Public Schools. She would entertain her family members at gatherings with stories about her kindergarten students, whose shenanigans would have us peeling with laughter. She had a special place in her heart and extra patience with the children of immigrant families who worked at the local factories in Morganton, and would often speak about finding ways to help them learn English and get them the resources they needed. She was a caring and devoted teacher, and with one look she could level a room (a technique she would also use on her relatives). She loved James Brown's music (Get up off of that thang!) and going to the beach. She was very close to both of her sisters, talking often to her sister Carol on "gossip Sundays" until Carol's death in 2023, and talking, texting and roadtripping with her sister Carmen, usually on some adventure involving wine and questionable choices. She was always sending funny memes to the family chat, and we learned that it was better to save some of what she sent us to review when NOT at work.

She was a member of the North Morganton United Methodist Church, where she enjoyed listening to her husband, Lin, sing in the choir, and where she supported the church's various service activities, talking with people, and talking about people (remember, it's not gossip if you pray about it). While Carissa may have had a sharp wit, she would give you the shirt off her back, and she was often quietly helping others behind the scenes. She had a strong faith that kept her going when she faced both health challenges and personal hardships in her life.

Left behind to cherish her memory include her younger sister, Carmen Elizabeth James (North Wilkesboro, NC), daughter, Sherissa Anne Guthrie (North Wilkesboro, NC), two granddaughters - Emily Smith (Boone, NC), Morgan Smith Iraheta & husband Lance Iraheta (Blowing Rock, NC). In addition, she leaves behind nephew David Tucker, nieces Donna Petherbridge, Deborah Sessoms, Della Deal, and nine great-nieces and great-nephews that will miss her immeasurably. She also leaves behind special friend Reid Caroway (Morganton, NC), who she loved like a grandson, and Ricky and Beverly and the rest of the Caroway clan who were the best neighbors that looked after her like family.

The family will receive friends from 2 to 3 p.m. Sunday, October 18, 2026 at

The family will receive friends from 2 to 3 p.m., Sunday, October 18, 2020 at Sossoman Funeral Home in Morganton, NC with the funeral starting at 3 p.m. in the funeral home's Colonial Chapel. Family members will gather afterwards for fellowship and food at North Morganton United Methodist Church.

Flowers are welcome at the service. Memorial contributions can be made to any organization that helps teachers or students get school supplies, your local Veteran's Associations Women's Groups, and/or North Morganton United Methodist Church, 990 Sanford Drive, Morganton, NC 28655.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



—Anonymous