

James “Jim” Thomson, a dedicated educator, public servant, and beloved family man, passed away peacefully on May 7, 2026, in hospice care at Monument Health Sturgis Hospital. Following a long and courageous battle with dementia and Alzheimer’s syndrome, Jim leaves behind a legacy of hard work, community devotion, and a deep love for the South Dakota hills he called home.

Jim was born on June 29, 1947, in Mitchell, SD, to Louis and Norma (Porter) Thomson. His family eventually settled in Custer State Park where his dad Louis maintained facilities, and he developed a lifelong fondness for bison. The family then moved to the base of Crow Peak to operate a dairy farm in Spearfish. It was here, during early morning milkings, that Jim developed the tireless work ethic and love for animals—particularly bison and dogs—that defined his character.

A proud member of the Spearfish High School Class of 1965, Jim was an avid wrestler. He continued his education at Black Hills State University, where he met the love of his life, Kathleen “Kathi” Barber, in English class in 1965. They married in 1969, and Jim graduated in 1970 with a BS in Education.

Jim’s calling was teaching. After a brief start in Vivian, SD, he spent over 30 years with the Meade 46-1 School District, teaching 7th and 8th-grade math and science. Known to many as a coach for wrestling and football, as well as a driver’s education instructor, Jim took immense pride in shaping the lives of local youth.

His commitment to others extended far beyond the classroom. Jim served as an EMT for Meade County for 12 years, a part-time Deputy Sheriff for 12 years, and the Deputy Meade County Coroner for 3 years. During the summers, he was the cherished bus driver for the Sturgis Macy Titans—earning the affectionate nickname “JT Bussey.” Jim was a man who truly needed to stay busy. He spent many summers working alongside fellow teachers and Larry Hines harvesting grass seed and wheat. He also helped Mr. Gary Lippold get Glencoe Camp Resort up and running and worked at the Kick Start Travel Center for 10 years after retiring from teaching, where he loved visiting with everyone who stopped through.

When he wasn’t working, Jim could be found tinkering with his classic 1955-57 Chevrolets, participating in shooting sports, or walking his beloved dogs, Hershey and Miller, through the hills.

Jim is survived by his wife, Kathi Thomson; son Loren Thomson (Anjie); daughter Donnelle Frear (Greg); and bonus daughter JoDee Allen (Sam). He is also survived by his brother Paul Thomson (Michelle) and sister Carolyn Schuldies (Gerald). He leaves behind 14 grandchildren: Casey Frear (Carissa), Avery Frear Logue (Hunter), Taylor Frear, Ayden Thomson, Taylor Mossey, Brooke Mossey Humphry (Hayden), Carter Mossey (Lindsay), Madyson Mossey, Meagan Iddings Hendrickson, Drew Iddings (Marissa), Matt Greenfield (Kelsae), Alexis, Elizabeth, and Olivia Allen; as well as 11 great-grandchildren and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Jim was preceded in death by his parents, Louis and Norma Thomson; his brother, Keith Thomson; his grandparents; and his mother and father-in-law Donald and Ellenore (Koontz) Barber.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to the Oglala Pet Project (where Miller was adopted) www.oglalapetproject.org or LifeSpring Youth – 605.720.5448.



In Loving Memory
James Carl Thomson
June 29, 1947 - May 7, 2026

Psalm 121:1-8

I lift up my eyes to the mountains-

where does my help come from?

My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip-
he who watches over you will not slumber;

Indeed, he who watches over Israel

will neither slumber nor sleep.

the Lord watches over you-
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

The sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all harm-

He will watch over your life;

The Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

Thomson



In Loving Memory

James Carl Thomson

BORN

June 29, 1947

Mitchell, South Dakota

PASSED AWAY

May 7, 2026

Sturgis, South Dakota

MEMORIAL SERVICE

May 17, 2026 - 12:00 PM

LifeSpring Church

Sturgis, South Dakota

OFFICIATING

Pastor Matt Shulaw

SPECIAL MUSIC

“It Is Well With My Soul”

“Amazing Grace”

SOLOIST

Ryan Smith

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Lowell Schwartz Ross Lamphere David Hartman

Paul Thomson Gerald Schuldies Samuel Allen

Matt Greenfield Matt Fockler Greg Frear Will Norton

FINAL RESTING PLACE

Bear Butte Cemetery

The family invites everyone to join them for a time of
food and fellowship immediately following the burial at
Foothills Community Church, 3501 Avalanche Rd in Sturgis.