



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
OUR BELOVED ONLY BROTHER

JAMES

Wyatt Fridge Jr.

SGT. U.S. ARMY

Sunrise: September 26, 1956

Sunset: May 11, 2026 - 0721



Sargent James Wyatt Fridge, Jr. Vietnam Veteran - United State Army



James Wyatt Fridge, Jr. was born in Chicago's Cook County hospital on September 26, 1956, to James and Callie Mae Fridge. He was the only son amongst a host of six sisters born to this union. Cassandra Joyce Seay, Janice Lee Avery, Harriette Odean Fridge, Fayella Carole Fridge, Nancy Fridge-Allen (deceased) and Lanell Fridge-Washington.

Affectionally known to family and friends as "Jukie" he was an inquisitive yet quiet child that enjoyed playing alone with Army men, train sets and fast cars on racetracks. He attended John M. Smyth Elementary School on the near Westside and had a few select friends. Upon graduation, he was excited to attend Cregier Vocational High School and later Christian Fenger High where he played trumpet in the band. Naturally gifted with electronics, he attended the DeVry Institute and became an Electronic Technician.

Much like many of the Fridge men, he enrolled in the United States Army and earned the designation of Sargent, but civilian life proved to be complex. James obtained employment as a Technician at the United States Post Office and became a supervisor. At 23, he married eighteen-year-old Lisa Gaines. To this union was born the three "J's" James Jr., Jacqueline and Joshlyn. The fourth "J" Jason came later in his relationship with an enterprising young lady named Charmin. The marriage was dissolved and James struggled to move on with his life. He purchased property and started his own business called "Black Star" where he designed home alarm systems using aircraft materials.

The mothers of his children preceded him in death. In 2022, James fell victim to a massive stroke that required 24-hour care and was admitted to Indiana-based nursing homes further exacerbating his health. He always thought of getting better and playing with Riley his chocolate-colored Retriever. However, realizing that the condition of his body was growing worse, he became quieter and simply wanted to avoid pain and rest. James endured until the end much like his father, with a quiet resolve and the heart of a soldier. We salute both his courage to live and his courage to die. He will be missed.

“THE SHADOW OF DEATH”

From The Road of Life Goes On and On - A Book of Poems, Elegies and Lamentations

Written by: Janice Lee Avery, His Sister

Walk through the valley of the shadow of death
Let not sorrow take thy breath

Nor let fear prick thy heart
Faint not when life departs

For death is ever passing through
A looming mist out of the blue

Covering the earth for all to see
The ending of mortality

A loss we grieve with loving care
Mortal death we all must bear

The earth is where we live and roam
But this world is not our home

Thank the Lord for all He's done
And the time spent beneath the sun

And give Him thanks for setting us free
Free to live eternally

Hallelujah! We're going home
No longer on the earth to roam

Hallelujah! our souls are free
Free to pass into eternity.

Jukie reign from a long line of musically and technologically inclined men. Fridge men, dark-skinned and of average height. Descendants of Ernest Fridge, our grandfather whose Pakistan lineage came with deep waves of hair and rich smooth skin tones. The Fridge men were products of the sanctified church and the U.S. Military. Some became Pastors like our late Uncle Alfred, some Elders like our late Uncle Chester, and some Evangelist like our late Uncle Vernon. Some became soldiers, like our late Uncle Hubert and our late Uncle William and wore their military uniforms with pride. Some focused on looking good and some looked good preaching. But at some point, most got saved.

Jukie, our father's namesake, grew up in a houseful of loud, bossy girls. He was outnumbered six to one and teased for being chubby in his younger years. He was smart, had a head full of hair, wore eyeglasses and had the nicest legs in the family. The girls considered him a nice guy and kept him in the friend zone...until he started exercising his gifts and talents.

MILESTONES FROM BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD

Space to Grow - Moving from ABLA Projects on the near Westside into our first home in Roseland changed the trajectory of his life. The moment we pulled into the driveway, and he laid eyes on that garage with the attached patio he hollered, "Momma can I have the garage!" She quickly answered, "Yes" knowing her only son deserved to have his own space, she gave him the basement too.

Music - Jukie walked around with drumsticks, tapping and beating on everything. One day he sat in our den during the Soul Train hour and began drumming the table along with the featured bands and flipping his sticks. Mom witnessed his talent, bought him a drum set and let him play in the garage to keep down the noise in the house. Playing alone with the door raised drew other musicians, then high school band members and they formed a Garage Band. After that, Friday summer nights, the driveway was full of teenagers and girls that liked the drummer because they always "gave the drummer some" solos at the end of the session. They played so well, our mother invested in his equipment.

Self Defense - Jukie finally had a crew, and Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting. Everything was Round House and Back Kicks up, down and around the block as the girls followed impressed by their Karate Gees.

Learning to Fly - The Green Hornet opened a new door. He received his first set of wings when his music teacher gave him a solo performance and he chose to play, "*The Flight of the Bumble Bee.*" against the advice of his band leader due to its complexity. Jukie stood on that stage, raised that trumpet to his lips and began playing. He blew that trumpet with such quick precision, heightening the notes until the instrument squealed as he pushed it to its limits. Everyone stood up and screamed. His band teacher was so pleased he gifted him with a gold mouthpiece, and we were proud to be his sisters.

Gifts & Talents - Electronically inclined, Jukie spent time creating devices and his high school teacher attempted to take credit for his invention. Fortunately, mom reported him to the principal, retrieved the device and was advised to have it patented. He later attended the DeVry Institute and became an Electronic Technician.

The Army - Graduations came with a visit from our own Uncle Sam... Uncle Lee, who steered him and our sister Faye into the service. You're in the Army now!

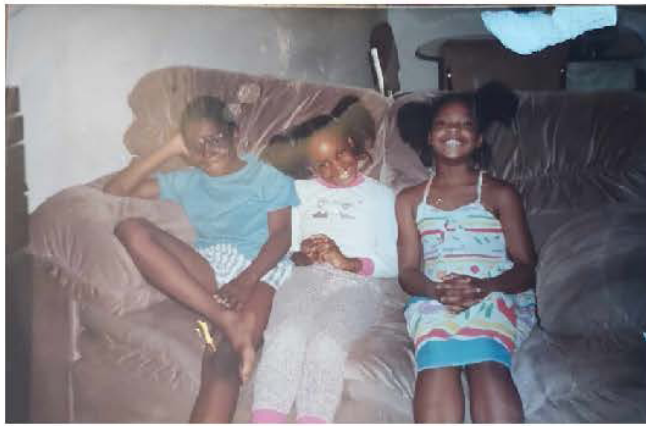
Civilian Life - Coming home was different. While adjusting to civilian life, he used his high-end stereo system to D.J. for basement parties until he was hired at the U.S. Post Office. While working, he started his own business, Black Star, where he designed home alarm systems that rivalled Japanese companies.

Marriage, Family & Difficult Times - Civilian life was riddled with ups, downs and major challenges. As a Christian family, we dare not put our brother in heaven or hell. We can't tell you that he attended church regularly and got saved like some of his uncles. But he never declined prayer and whenever we prayed for him, he said Amen with tears in his eyes.

So we prayed with and for him. Encouraged him to talk to God and tell Him all about his problems. Encouraged him to ask forgiveness for his sins and give his life to the Lord. And when he mentioned "he was messed up and wanted to live" referring to the condition of his body, he was assured that it was a God Decision and if God so choose, He could work a miracle. He was assured that God could raise him from his bed of affliction and give him a wonderful testimony. He was also assured that if God didn't choose to heal his body and extend his life that He could still accept his soul. He was encouraged to keep talking to the Lord even after his last breath knowing that hearing is the last sense to leave the human body.

After celebrating Mother's Day, Sunday night got rough and God spoke. Our beloved and only brother passed away Monday, May 11, 2026, at 0721. Our middle sister, the one between the older and the younger siblings Fayella Carol Fridge a Vietnam Veteran of the U.S. Navy, stood in the gap, went all the way to the end and saluted him home like a soldier. Her last words to him, "Not good-bye but I'll see you later little brother."

We prayed and thanked God for his goodness, mercy and grace and for allowing us the honor of helping our oldest sister, his Guardian to complete her duty to our parents and see after their only son. Joyce you did your job...he's alright now!



Father & Son Back Together Again Rest in Peace

James Sr. WWII, U.S. Army

Korean War U.S. Navy

&

James Jr. Vietnam Veteran, U.S. Army



Thank Your Both For Your Service

JAMES

Wyatt Fridge Jr.

SGT. U.S. ARMY



Saturday, May 16, 2026

Visitation:

2:00pm - 3:00pm

Service:

3:00pm - 4:00pm

Nabors Family Funeral Home

470 W. 172 * Street

Thornton, Illinois 60476

Order of Service

Music Meditation

Scripture

Acknowledgements

Remarks

Poem

Obituary Reading

Eulogy

Arrangements Entrusted to:

Nabors Family Funeral Home

Lillie Nabors, L.F.D.E.

470 W. 172nd St

Thornton, Illinois 60476

Office/Cell: 708-704-5023

*Expect Great Service...
and Receive Greater.*

