



Dr. J.B. Graham

April 25, 1936 - May 11, 2026

Dr. Jerry Boyd “J.B.” Graham, 90, of Lawrenceville, Georgia, passed away peacefully on May 11, 2026.

Born on April 25, 1936, in Randlett, Oklahoma, J.B. answered God’s call to ministry during his high school years and faithfully served that calling for the rest of his life.

On August 17, 1957, he married the love of his life, Areta Ruth Warren Graham. Together they built a marriage marked by devotion, sacrifice, steadfast faith, and deep love for faith and family. Areta preceded him in death by just over three years after nearly 66 years of marriage.

Dr. Graham’s ministry journey carried him across the country and touched countless lives. He pastored churches in Texas, Virginia, and Maryland. He made headlines in Virginia for shepherding a struggling rural church through the process of converting an old barn into a sanctuary. His first denominational leadership role was as Director of Missions for the Susquehanna Baptist Association in Maryland. During that time, he earned his Doctor of Ministry degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, reflecting his lifelong devotion to theological education.

He later moved the family to Metro Atlanta when he joined the Home Mission

Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He served there for nearly 30 years in personnel, leadership development, and field training roles. During that time, he authored the Missions Development program and invested deeply in the training and encouragement of ministry leaders across North America.

Following his years at what later became the North American Mission Board, Dr. Graham was called to serve as Executive Director of the Baptist Convention of New York, faithfully leading and mobilizing ministry efforts during the difficult and historic days surrounding the tragedy of September 11, 2001. After returning to Georgia, he continued serving as both interim pastor for area churches and later Associational Missionary for the Apalachee Baptist Association. His final full-time pastorate was at Center Hill Baptist Church in Loganville, Georgia.

Throughout every season of life and ministry, J.B. became known as a man who fixed broken things. Whether it was a struggling church, a fractured relationship, a wounded life, an old car, or a weathered barn, he saw value where others often saw only wear and ruin. He believed deeply in the ministry of reconciliation and lived out the conviction that restoration was always worth the effort.

A brilliant administrator and careful student of human nature, J.B. possessed a rare ability to guide people in conflict toward understanding and resolution. He preferred to move carefully and deliberately rather than rush into decisions, but once committed, he pursued a task with unwavering determination. He was a man of deep integrity who valued honesty, hard work, and faithfulness in both word and action.

Outside the pulpit and ministry offices, J.B. loved woodworking, fishing, and restoring old things. Much of the family's furniture was lovingly handcrafted by

him. He never saw much reason to throw away a screw, bolt, or scrap of wood because he believed nearly everything still had purpose long after the shine had faded. Many nights, he could be found staying awake until dawn repairing a family car simply because someone he loved needed it running again the next morning.

Though disciplined, measured, and occasionally stubborn, J.B. also possessed a deeply creative spirit. He wrote dramatic vignettes, embraced storytelling, and was known to preach sermons in costume whenever a visual illustration might better communicate truth. He could grumble with the best of them when something failed to meet his standards. Family members still laugh remembering the time a disappointing meal at Olive Garden prompted him to tell the staff, "I don't think y'all are ready for prime time."

Perhaps nowhere was his character more evident than during Areta's long battle with sepsis and cognitive decline. Through years of exhaustion, sleepless nights, difficult moments, and even physical hardship, he remained her constant advocate, caretaker, protector, and companion. His devotion never wavered, and he refused to let anyone offer her anything less than the very best care possible.

He is survived by his sons: Dr. J. Alan Graham; David L. Graham and wife Jodi L. Graham; and Jon G. Graham and wife Kerry (Jill) Hames-Graham. He is also survived by his grandchildren: Alysha Lewis and husband James Lewis; Joshua Graham and wife Kaitlyn Graham; Daniel Graham and wife Isabel Graham; and Zachary Graham. His great-grandchildren include Madilyn Graham, Thomas Graham, Theodore Graham, and Athena Graham.

The family will receive friends from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM on Friday, May 15, 2026 at Center Hill Baptist Church in Loganville, Georgia, with the funeral

service to follow at 1:00 PM. Interment for family will take place afterward at Hebron Baptist Church in Dacula, Georgia.

Dr. Graham's life was one of service, craftsmanship, reconciliation, steadfast faith, and enduring love. The ministry of reconciliation was not merely a sermon he preached; it was the shadow his life cast.

Arrangements by Tim Stewart Funeral Home, 670 Tom Brewer Road, Loganville, GA 30052. 770-466-1544. Please sign the online guest registry at www.stewartfh.com.

Cemetery Details

Hebron Baptist Church Cemetery

202 Hebron Church Road
Dacula, GA 30019

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 15. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Center Hill Baptist Church
6372 HWY 20,
Loganville, GA 30052

Funeral Service

MAY 15. 1:00 PM (ET)

Center Hill Baptist Church
6372 HWY 20,
Loganville, GA 30052

Tribute Wall

CM

“ Dear Graham family, my prayers are with you as I remember Dr. J.B. fondly. I met J.B. as the Cicero Baptist Church was starting and I had become a believer several years prior. Dr. Graham and I met and he invited me to become part of the Baptist Convention of NY team. That was almost 25 years ago. I will never forget him taking a chance on me to serve him as his assistant in October 2001. He was a man of wisdom and faithfulness. I will always remember him and Areta fondly. Catherine Meyer

Catherine Meyer - May 15 at 11:51 AM

EW

“ Executive Director Frank Williams planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. J.B. Graham.

Executive Director Frank Williams - May 15 at 11:44 AM

EW

“ Executive Director Frank Williams purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Dr. J.B. Graham.



Executive Director Frank Williams - May 15 at 11:44 AM

GR

“ Dear Graham family, our prayers are with you from Kings Park, NY. J.B. was a steady force wherever he served, no more evident than his time in NY. Thank you J.B. for your kind leadership in my life that guided me through some hard decisions, too. Donna and I face some health challenges these days, and you've helped us from afar to face them squarely and with faith in our Lord Jesus. George and Donna Russ

george T. Russ - May 15 at 10:24 AM

SN

“ Shannon & Amanda Nash lit a candle in memory of Dr. J.B. Graham



Shannon & Amanda Nash - May 14 at 09:17 AM

RT

“ My wife and I purchased their house in Winder a little over 4 years ago. We met Mr and Mrs Graham a couple of times during the process of looking over the house and really appreciated who they were and what they had done over the many years of ministry. We honor lives well lived and we think of them often as we care for the house they loved.

Our prayers are with the family. 🙏

Robert and Rhonda Tomlin

Robert Tomlin - May 13 at 10:22 PM

HP

“ Howard And June Pitman lit a candle in memory of Dr. J.B. Graham



Howard and June Pitman - May 13 at 04:53 PM

SM

“ Shelly and Mac planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. J.B. Graham.

Shelly and Mac - May 13 at 10:23 AM

SM

“ Shelly and Mac purchased the Love's Journey for the family of Dr. J.B. Graham.



Shelly and Mac - May 13 at 10:23 AM