



## Gary Morris Lay

August 17, 1957 - March 3, 2026

Gary Morris Lay, son of Morris Thomas and Eula Mae (Norris) Lay, was born on August 17, 1957, in Rolla, Missouri. He passed away March 3, 2026, in Salem, Missouri, at the age of sixty-eight years.

Gary was united in marriage to Carol Jean Akins on August 30, 1975, in Salem. The two first met on a blind date, and their love grew into a lifelong partnership. Together they were blessed with two sons, Eric and Cody. Gary cherished his family deeply and especially loved spending time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Gary was known for his incredible work ethic and spent many years in the timber industry. He even competed in several timber competitions, earning state titles multiple times and advancing to national competitions in Hersey, Pennsylvania; Kentucky; and Wisconsin. Gary was a true “do-it-yourselfer” kind of man and a talented handyman who could fix or build just about anything. He took great pride in being a centennial farm owner and enjoyed working on tractors and vehicles.

Gary loved the outdoors and found great joy in riding horses. He spent many weekends at horse camps, especially Whispering Pine and Pinecrest Horse Camp, where he served as a leader. He also enjoyed deer hunting, fishing, and quite walks through the woods.

A man of faith, Gary was baptized at Salem First Baptist in his younger years. He later attended New Home Baptist Church with his family.

Gary is survived by his loving wife: Carol Lay of Salem, MO; sons: Eric Lay and wife Emily of Holden, MO and Cody Lay and Amber of Salem, MO; grandchildren: Ella, Ethan, Camron, Brooklynn, Katy, and Dallas; several great-grandchildren; niece: Debbie Griggs of Springdale, AR; other relatives and dear friends.

Preceding him in death were his parents: Morris and Eula (Norris) Lay; and his brother: Herman Lay and wife Ruth.

Gary will be remembered as a jokester who never met a stranger. Though he was often quiet by nature, he came to life at horse camp, where his laughter and stories were always welcome. He was also known for being very safety-minded and for looking out for those around him. He will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by all who knew him.

Funeral Services were held Friday, March 20, 2026, in the Wilson Mortuary Salem Chapel with Pastor Bill Stack officiating. Serving as Pallbearers were Eric Lay, Cody Lay, Kevin Moss, Eddie McElfresh, Tom Woods, and Daniel Reichow. Honorary Pallbearer was Doug Dyer. Burial was in the Cedar Grove Cemetery. The Family was served by Wilson Mortuary.

In lieu of flowers, Memorial Contributions may be made in memory of Gary to the Shepherd's Nook Food Pantry and left with Wilson Mortuary. Memorial Envelopes will be available.

Condolences may be left online at [www.wilsonmortuary.com](http://www.wilsonmortuary.com)



# Cemetery Details

## Cedar Grove Cemetery

Salem, MO

# Previous Events

## Visitation

**MAR 20.** 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Wilson Mortuary - Salem  
1000 West Scenic Rivers Blvd.  
Post Office Box 45  
Salem, MO 65560  
(573) 729-5555  
<https://www.wilsonmortuary.com/>

## Funeral Service

**MAR 20.** 12:00 PM (CT)

Wilson Mortuary - Salem  
1000 West Scenic Rivers Blvd.  
Post Office Box 45  
Salem, MO 65560  
(573) 729-5555  
<https://www.wilsonmortuary.com/>

# Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Wilson Mortuary** - March 20 at 04:42 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Wilson Mortuary** - March 20 at 02:54 PM



“ 76 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



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**Wilson Mortuary** - March 19 at 04:46 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Gary Morris Lay.

March 17 at 01:30 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Gary Morris Lay.



March 17 at 01:30 PM



“ We were very fortunate to work with Carol and meet Gary.

*As a volunteer, he helped feed the hungry. His love and care turned a neglected dog into a thriving and happy pet.*

*He left the world a better place than he found it.*

*We will remember him as a kind and smiling gentleman.*

*Sahra Sedigh Sarvestani and Ali Hurson*

Sahra - March 09 at 04:20 PM