



## Jeffery "Jeff" Edwards Bender

February 24, 2016

Jeffery (Jeff) Edward Bender, 68, of Oxford, Mississippi, went home to be with his Lord, Wednesday, February 24, 2016 at his home. A celebration of life service will be held at Coleman Funeral Home in Oxford, MS on Sunday, February 28 at 4:30 pm. Visitation will be held on Sunday, February 28 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the same location. He will be honored at the Corinth Military Cemetery at a later date.

Jeff was born on May 13, 1948 in Hackensack, New Jersey to Rev. Edward Bender and Lucille (Cox) Bender. He graduated from Clearwater High High School in 1967. Jeff enlisted in the Air Force in served in Vietnam in 1969. Jeff married Margaret Joanne Mills in 1970. During his full 20 years in the Air Force he served as a power lineman, Basic Military Training Instructor, and a First Sergeant at Kessler Air Force Base before retiring in 1989 at the rank of Master Sergeant. While married to M. Joanne (Mills) Bender, now Joanne Wilkes, they had two children, Melanie Ann (Bender) Fornal and Chad Edward Bender. Moving to south Texas after retirement from the Air Force, he then taught Air Force JROTC at two Lower Rio Grande Valley High Schools, influencing many young lives during his time there. Jeff remarried to Jean Louise (Hope) Bender in 1995. Upon retiring from teaching, Jeff with his entrepreneurial spirit opened his own business, Bender's Photo Gifts, and they operated this establishment for several years before taking on truck driving. He and Jean team drove for Covenant and Prime trucking companies

and in Jeff form, he earned high honors and a new truck free from lease after exceeding company standards for recruitment. Jeff and Jean had their home base in Inverness, FL during their truck driving years. When health issues ensued and trucking was no longer an option for them, they settled in Oxford, MS, where Jeff took up JROTC instruction again as well as establishing and advertising/video business. He was also involved heavily with video production for their local church ministry and with the Christian Motorcycle Association, and was elected president of the local CMA chapter before his diagnosis of brain cancer in January of 2015. Jeff was a man of integrity, honor, and adventure. He enjoyed FOX news channel, the outdoors, camping, fishing, riding motorcycles, southern gospel music, and good home cooking. He loved his family and his Lord and enjoyed sharing his faith with others.

Jeff is survived by his wife, Jean Bender of Oxford, MS, daughter, Melanie Ann Fornal and her husband John Fornal of Pembroke, GA, his son, Chad Edward Bender and his wife, Lisa Bender of San Benito, TX, step daughter, Kathy Hope from Pinckney, MI, step son, Michael Hope from Houston, TX, ex-wife Joanne Wilkes of Luverne, AL, five grandchildren, Andrew Fornal from Vermont, Chace Fornal from Georgia, Julia Bender from Texas, Lauren Bender from Texas, Amber Bender from Texas, and his sister Karen Gouge with her husband, Greg Gouge of Georgia and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his father Rev. Edward Bender and mother Mrs. Lucille Bender.

online condolences may be left on the Tribute Wall of this website.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB **28**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Coleman Funeral Home of Oxford  
601 Commerce Parkway  
Oxford, MS 38655  
(662) 234-3900  
info@colemanfuneralhome.com  
<https://www.colemanfuneralhome.com/>

## Celebration of Life

FEB **28**. 4:30 PM (CT)

Coleman Funeral Home of Oxford  
601 Commerce Parkway  
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# Tribute Wall

AU

“ I decided to google some of my teachers from high school, and I am sad to come across this obituary, but not without leaving a great memory I have. I graduated with the class of 1999 from Rivera High School in Brownsville, TX. I was in the Air Force JROTC program. MSsgt Bender was an amazing instructor. He was what an educator should be, firm with his students and made learning fun. The thing I remember most and still have somewhere, is an assignment he gave us. We were instructed to cut out of a piece of paper a circle with the capital letters "TUIT" on it. When we had finished, he gave us a life lesson I'll never forget. He said, here is a round TUIT, now don't put off your goals and dreams and get "around to it". Take action and do what you need now, don't leave it until later. I graduated top 5%, and though didn't pursue my goal of joining the military, I have a successful career as a nurse since I was 19 years old. Thank you sir for your service and believing in us.  
A Urquiza

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A Urquiza - January 21, 2017 at 03:06 AM

LM

“ Jean, I am so sorry for your loss. Jeff was a great husband , father, and friend. Jeff loved you and the kids. He was proud of his children as he spoke of them with pride. Jeff was a man of honor that loved his country. I will never forget one time when he and I were discussing election issues; someone else came up, listening to part of our conversation, did not like it when I tease, I did not how I would vote yet. That person, dropping in our friendly teasing, got mad . They told me to stay home and not vote if I did not support their guy. Jeff turn to the person and said; I will tell you one thing " back off this lady , if she does not agree with your vote it is ok. It is her right, I fought to defend her right to vote without anyone telling her what to do or bullying her." Jeff believed in God, the blood of Jesus and our Country. I am proud her was my friend. Lisa Minton

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**lisa minton** - February 28, 2016 at 06:07 AM

BR

“ We offer our prayer and sympathy to his precious wife and other family members. May you feel the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Cherish the memories and keep faith in God ...He loves you sooo much! Pastors Dairold & Bettye Rushing, First Assembly of God, Inverness, FL.

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**Bettye Rushing** - February 27, 2016 at 10:24 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Jeffery "Jeff" Edwards Bender.



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February 27, 2016 at 06:47 PM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Jeffery "Jeff" Edwards Bender.*



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February 27, 2016 at 01:50 PM



“ *Sgt. Bender made a real difference in my grandson's life. Richard III came to live with us and started his sophomore year at Lafayette. Being an Air Force vet, I encouraged him to sign up for Jr. AFROTC. He knew that Sgt. Bender, while strict about the rules, truly cared about the cadets. That made a real difference in his attitude toward school and life in general. I got to know Sgt. Bender at the ROTC football fundraisers. He was a caring person and will be missed. Richard Williams Sr.*

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**Richard Williams** - February 27, 2016 at 01:02 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Jeffery "Jeff" Edwards Bender.*



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February 27, 2016 at 12:37 PM

LM

“ Dear Melanie and Chad,

We were so sorry to hear of the death of your father, Jeff. You and the family are in our prayers.

Bo and Celia

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**Leslie and Celia Mills** - February 27, 2016 at 11:58 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Jeffery "Jeff" Edwards Bender.



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February 27, 2016 at 09:37 AM

BS

“ Jeff was a good person who loves his family more than anything. I'm so sorry he had to suffer so. God bless him and his family .  
Beverly and Charles Smyth

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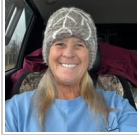
**Beverly Smyth** - February 26, 2016 at 10:19 PM

BS

“ Jeff

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**Beverly Smyth** - February 26, 2016 at 10:15 PM

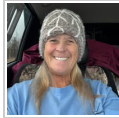


“ Sargent Bender was a great man ,I remember him always telling everyone  
If your early then your On time and  
If your on time your late  
I'm thankful I had the chance to meet him and  
spend time with him he will be missed but never forgotten ,got has  
received another wonderful angle ,intill we meet again  
RIP ,fly high Sargent  
Julia Means



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**Julia Tankersley Means** - February 26, 2016 at 09:05 PM



*And the word got is suppose to be God has received,  
Sorry for the tipo*

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**Julia Tankersley Means** - February 26, 2016 at 09:08 PM

TP

“ *This amazing man lost his battle to cancer yesterday evening. MSgt. Bender, you have touched the lives of so many people. You definitely made an impact in my life when I met you as a freshman in high school. Your lessons on leadership, morale, and motivation truly inspired young people to learn that everyone has the potential to be successful in life. "God don't make junk". Thank you for your service to the Air Force, to your community, and to the young men and women who you taught; you will surely be missed by many. Please keep his wife and family in your thoughts and prayers. Written by my daughter, Courtney Conway 02/25/16. Thank you sir for changing my daughters life and being an inspiration to her. She will make you proud. Sincerely, Tracey Pruitt*



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Tracey Pruitt - February 26, 2016 at 07:58 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Jeffery "Jeff" Edwards Bender.*



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February 26, 2016 at 04:53 PM

LT

“ *Larry & Shona Williams (Victoria, Tx) purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Jeffery "Jeff" Edwards Bender.*



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**Larry & Shona Williams (Victoria, Tx)** - February 26, 2016 at 12:48 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Jeffery "Jeff" Edwards Bender.*



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February 26, 2016 at 10:41 AM

JT

“ *Jane, Pat, Fred, and Ty purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Jeffery "Jeff" Edwards Bender.*



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**Jane, Pat, Fred, and Ty** - February 25, 2016 at 04:01 PM