



James Earl Jones

January 17, 1931 - September 9, 2024

Pawling, New York

James Earl Jones died at his home in Pawling, New York, on September 9, 2024. He was ninety-three. Born in Arkabutla, Mississippi, on January 17, 1931, and raised largely by grandparents in rural Michigan after his parents' marriage broke, he grew into a voice the country would recognize in the dark of a theater and on the news.

A severe childhood stutter kept him nearly silent through long stretches of school. He has said a teacher pushed him toward poetry and recitation, and that the work of speaking aloud, line by line, rebuilt the instrument. The University of Michigan, the Army, and then New York stages followed. He took Shakespeare and O'Neill seriously, won Tonys, and treated Broadway not as a stop on the way to Hollywood but as a craft that could stand alone.

Film and television found him anyway. He played kings and fathers, generals and neighbors, and lent a bass that needed no costume to Darth Vader and to Mufasa - roles that introduced him to children who would later learn he had also been a classical actor of uncommon patience. CNN's early identity rode on that same voice. Awards piled up: Emmy, Grammy, Oscar (honorary), Tony - the rare EGOT shape, earned without hurry.

Offstage he kept a farmer's sense of privacy in Dutchess County. He married twice, raised a son, and returned to the boards into late age, including a late Broadway *King Lear*. Colleagues remembered the courtesy as much as the thunder. The stutter never fully left; he managed it, and turned the management into music.

This memorial records a public life lived in American English at full volume and, somehow, without waste. The

voice is gone. The recordings remain.

Services

Died at home in Pawling, New York, on September 9, 2024. A private funeral was held. He was ninety-three.

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