



James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN)

September 30, 1974 - August 4, 2025

James Ramon Ponder was born on September 30, 1974, in Lexington, Kentucky, to Martha (Ponder) Daniel. From a young age, James carried a bold vision for his life. Determined, focused, and purposeful, he was known for doing things on his terms. Even as a child, he was determined to pick out his outfits and let his mom know how to properly fold up his blankie. James made it clear that he came to make an impression. He was a proud Louisville Male High School graduate, Class of 1992. His academic journey continued at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, with a minor in French, followed by a Master of Business Administration from Bellarmine University. James became fluent in French through a high school exchange program and further developed his skills during study abroad experiences in France—global experiences that shaped his perspective on life.

Always building community wherever he went, fellowship brought joy to his life. At EKU, he served as a Resident Advisor, leader of the Black Student Union, and member of the Gospel Ensemble. He also embraced the ideals of achievement, leadership, and service and became a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. A lifelong sports enthusiast, James grew up playing softball, tennis, basketball, and football. He remained a loyal fan of the University of Louisville Cardinals and the Dallas Cowboys—teams that matched his competitive spirit and drive for excellence. Professionally, James spent over two decades in the financial services industry. He served in branch

managerial roles at National City Bank, Chase Bank, and BB&T, as well as a financial advisor for Northwestern Mutual and New York Life. Armed with a series of technical licenses and certifications, James brought knowledge, strategy, and expertise to every client he served. He took pride in helping individuals and families build financial security and generational wealth. His entrepreneurial spirit and passion for cultivating a thriving culture of African American young professionals in Louisville were evident from an early age. From selling candy at school and running a neighborhood lemonade stand with his cousin Maurice Ponder, to later curating the First Friday Louisville experience and leading within the Louisville Urban League Young Professionals and other professional organizations. His passion for financial empowerment extended well beyond his office. He was a dedicated community educator, offering financial literacy workshops and resources through the Louisville Urban League, YMCA, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., among others. His mission was clear: to uplift and equip his community with the financial knowledge and tools to thrive. A man of unwavering faith, James was a lifelong member of Westwood Presbyterian Church. He served as an Elder and supported church activities, anchoring his life in service, faith, and discipleship. His presence in the sanctuary and the community reflected his deep belief in God's purpose for his life. After living a life marked by faith, leadership, and integrity, James received his heavenly reward on August 4, 2025. Though no longer with us on this side of glory, we rejoice in knowing he is at peace and reunited with his beloved grandfather, Raymond Ponder, and loving aunt, Jacqueline Renee Ponder. He is survived by his devoted mother, Martha Daniel; his supportive sister, Flora Elizabeth Phillip (Lyle); his cherished grandmother, Flora Ponder; and a host of close family, fraternity brothers, and lifelong friends. Family and friends are invited to celebrate James' life and legacy on Tuesday, August 12, 2025 at Westwood Presbyterian Church, 4432 Greenwood Avenue. Visitation will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., followed by funeral services at 12:00 p.m. Interment will occur at Evergreen Funeral Home & Cemetery, 4263 Preston Hwy,

Louisville, KY.

In honor of James' dedication to financial empowerment and the Black community, donations can be made in his name to the Louisville Urban League. : <https://host.nxt.blackbaud.com/donor-form/?svcid=renxt&formId=8d981a95-d195-447a-a317-9e5bf4f85527&envid=p-OzkeO6QK802B1QZ5cdAA&zone=usa>

Visitation: 10am-12pm Tuesday, August 12, 2025 at Westwood Presbyterian Church, 4432 Greenwood Ave., funeral service at 12pm, burial to follow at Evergreen Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Evergreen Cemetery

4623 Preston Hwy.
Louisville, KY 40213

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 12. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Westwood Presbyterian Church
4432 Greenwood Ave
Louisville, KY 40211

Service

AUG 12. 12:00 PM (ET)

Westwood Presbyterian Church
4432 Greenwood Ave
Louisville, KY 40211

Tribute Wall

LW

“ Lee, Janel, Luke and Emily Willingham purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN).



Lee, Janel, Luke and Emily Willingham - August 15, 2025 at 04:56 PM

LW

“ Lee, Janel, Luke and Emily Willingham planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN).

Lee, Janel, Luke and Emily Willingham - August 15, 2025 at 04:56 PM

SM

“ Martha, I am sorry that I am not physically able to be with you, Elizabeth, your mother, other family and friends for Ramon's Celebration of Life, but I am there in spirit at the hour of his service. I pray that God grants all of you peace and strength during this time of reflection and sorrow as you celebrate the life of Ramon, who made a difference in the lives of many. My heart is with you.

Solomon Morgan - August 12, 2025 at 12:57 PM

MI

“ Had the pleasure of working with James for the last 5 years at New York life, exceptional guy. will be missed!!

Micah - August 11, 2025 at 07:42 PM

DP

“ DP planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN).

DP - August 11, 2025 at 07:38 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN).



August 10, 2025 at 11:14 PM

JG

“ My Prayers are with you sis Daniels & Family
God 🙏 Bro Gibson



James I. Gibson - August 09, 2025 at 06:00 PM

CT

“ I am so very sorry for your loss! I worked with James at New York Life. He was such a pleasure and lit up the office when he came in. His smile infectious! We had our Madea greeting of Hellrrrr lol Flora Elizabeth Phillip he told me about how you and he would have movie nights and watch Madea. somehow we got on the subject of Madea one day. anyway he is truly missed and i am so very sorry for everyone's loss.

Cherie Townsend - August 08, 2025 at 04:46 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN).*



August 08, 2025 at 10:10 AM



“ *Kevin & William Jones - San Jose, CA & GA purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN).*



Kevin & William Jones - San Jose, CA & GA - August 08, 2025 at 12:22 AM



“ *Kevin & William Jones - San Jose, CA & GA planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN).*

Kevin & William Jones - San Jose, CA & GA - August 08, 2025 at 12:22 AM



“ *I'm sending condolence to the family. He was truly an exceptional spirit and shall be missed. I'll keep you'll in my prayer's, during His Heavenly Transition! 🙏❤️🙏🙏 Janice E. Bishop Carter; Facebook Friend*



Janice Carter - August 07, 2025 at 11:38 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN).



August 07, 2025 at 05:32 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Ramon Ponder (DOWNTOWN).

August 07, 2025 at 05:32 PM



“ *I am so sorry to hear about this loss. Ponder was truly a good dude. He will be missed.*

Jacques Page

Jacques Page - August 06, 2025 at 09:26 PM