



Leslie Granville Bowden

April 16, 1954 - April 17, 2025

Les Bowden, 71, of Sanford, Florida, went home to be with the Lord on April 17, 2025, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Les was born in Belfast, Maine on April 16, 1954 to Granville and Betty Bowden. Les spent most of his childhood in Maine. He loved playing football and baseball. His Senior year in high school, he and his parents moved to Manaus, Brazil, as missionaries. He attended a boarding school, where he met Deborah Jackson, his future wife. They were married on December 20, 1974 in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

They returned to Brazil as missionaries with two young children in 1979. Together they served the Lord at a missionary boarding school for 30 years. Les and Debbie provided a nurturing home to missionary children whose parents served in remote villages. They loved these children like their own. Les enjoyed taking the kids swimming and fishing in the Amazon River and on hikes in the jungle. He enjoyed reading stories from the Bible to the kids and teaching them songs about Jesus.

In 2008, Les and Debbie moved to Sanford, Florida, due to health issues, where they continued to joyfully serve the Lord at an Assisted Living Facility for retired missionaries, by cooking delicious meals. Les especially enjoyed making people smile with his fancy desserts. They were very involved at

Central Baptist Church where they enjoyed serving in Awana and teaching Sunday School. Les also developed a love of running and ran 9 half marathons, completing his first at the age of 57.

Les was a loving husband to Debbie, a dedicated father to 5 daughters and a very engaged Grandpa to 14 grandkids. Les faithfully prayed daily for each of his kids and grandkids.

Les was confident about where he was going after he died, not based on the good things he had done throughout his life, but based on his belief in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Les is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Debbie; his 5 children: Kim (Justin) of Arlington, TX; Christy (Ted) of Ewing, NE; Katie (Wes) of Cleveland, OH; Carolyn (Ryan) Seneca, SC and Kandi (Joe) Brazil; his brothers Kerri (Diane) and Mark, and sister Karen.

A celebration of life will be held for Les on June 11th in Sanford, FL. Time and location TBD.

Tribute Wall

AH

“Debbie and Family - I have been praying for you. Praying for peace and comfort. May you feel God's presence in a special way as you grieve Les' passing. The loss is tremendous. I know you will see him again. He was always so proud of his girls.

Les was a humble servant who loved the Lord and his girls. He served the Lord with his life. What an impact he had on so many. What a faith legacy he leaves behind. He raised his daughters to follow Jesus. I'm guessing when Les saw Jesus in heaven he heard, "Well done good and faithful servant."

Angie Houk - May 01, 2025 at 09:31 PM



“Debbie and family, I have such fond memories of Les. All those amazing missionary stories that inspired me as a young child to want to grow up to be a missionary. Memorizing verses with him in Jr church, our families getting together out at Uncle Ernie's and Aunt Sharon's house. The following song truly reminds me of Les' life. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

Cris-Annette (Roy) Nicholas

*... I dreamed I went to heaven
... And you were there with me
We walked upon the streets of gold
Beside the crystal sea
We heard the angels singing
Then someone called your name
You turned and saw this young man
And he was smiling as he came
And he said friend you may not know me now
And then he said but wait
You used to teach my Sunday School
When I was only eight
And every week you would say a prayer
Before the class would start
And one day when you said that prayer
I asked Jesus in my heart
Thank you for giving to the Lord*

*... I am a life that was changed
Thank you for giving to the Lord
I am so glad you gave
Then another man stood before you
And said remember the time*

*... A missionary came to your church
And his pictures made you cry
You didn't have much money*

*But you gave it anyway
Jesus took the gift you gave
And that's why I'm here today
Thank you for giving to the Lord
I am a life that was changed*

... Thank you for giving to the Lord

*... I am so glad you gave
One by one they came
Far as the eyes could see
Each life somehow touched
By your generosity
Little things that you had done
Sacrifices made
Unnoticed on the earth*

*... In heaven now proclaimed
And I know that up in heaven
You're not supposed to cry
But I am almost sure
There were tears in your eyes
As Jesus took your hand
And you stood before the Lord
He said, my child look around you*

... For great is your reward

*... Thank you for giving to the Lord
I am a life that was changed
Thank you for giving to the Lord
I am so glad you gave
Thank you for giving to the Lord
I am a life that was changed
Thank you for giving to the Lord
I am so glad you gave
I am so glad you gave...*

Cris-Annette Nicholas - April 30, 2025 at 10:43 PM

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“ *What a true man of God and such an inspiration! I loved hearing stories about family and Brazil, but I most loved getting to know Les and Debbie through Awanas! He will be missed so much but I know he left a real legacy for those he left behind!*

Lauire Lam - April 30, 2025 at 06:18 PM