



Robert Ray Smith

October 31, 1919 - November 22, 2014

Robert Ray Smith passed away at home on Saturday, the 22nd of November, 2014, in the presence and comfort of his daughter and son. He was born on the 31st of October, 1919, near Timpson, Texas, to Pearl Nix Smith and James Homer Smith.

Ray is survived by his daughter, K Smith Leonard, and husband, Marc; son, Robert Ray Smith, Jr., and wife, Anne; and grandchildren, Robert Ray Smith, III, Emlynn Adare Smith, and Andrew Keane Elliot Smith. In addition, he is survived by his sister-in-law, Marceil Smith, and by his nieces and nephews: Ed Cowart and wife, Sheila; Jan Pickle and husband, Gary; Kathy Hall and husband, Lance; John Davis and wife, Kathy; Jim Davis and wife, Sharon; Karen Smith; D'ita Buhler; Rick Buhler and wife, Shari; and numerous grand- and great-grand nieces and nephews. He also leaves behind dear family friends, Lyn Hargis and Kathy Maer. Preceding him in death were his parents; his wife of sixty-three years, Anita Buhler Smith; his sisters, Bess Smith, Marcelle Cowart, and Joy Davis; his brother, Dale Smith; and his nieces, Mary Burke and Suzanne Kramer.

For the first few years of his life, Ray lived in the country outside of Timpson, in a home lit by kerosene lamps and with no modern plumbing. Transportation to church was via a mule-drawn wagon. He then moved to Timpson where he attended the public schools. He graduated from Sam Houston University in

Huntsville and attended graduate school at Harvard Business School and the University of Texas School of Business.

During World War II, Ray attained the rank of Major. He went to Officers' Candidate School and then on to Kunming, China, where he served in the 14th Air Force—The Flying Tigers—under General Claire Chennault. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for his service and continued to serve in the Air Force Reserves until 1958.

It was “love at first sight” when Ray met Anita at Camp Polk near DeRidder, Louisiana, one week before being shipped out. After the War, they married in 1946 and moved to Houston. He began work for the J. M. West family's South Texas Lumber Company. In 1961, he and his partners acquired the company. With the subsequent purchase of Cicero Smith Lumber Company, the spread of lumberyards extended throughout Texas and into New Mexico and Oklahoma. Shortly before the last lumberyard in Pasadena closed in 2010, he received a proclamation from the mayor naming “Ray Smith Day” for his contributions to the economy and society of Pasadena; the Pasadena yard had been his home base for over sixty-three years.

Ray was “Honey” to his wife and daughter, “Daddy” to his son, “Pah” to his grandchildren, and “Uncle Ray” or “Uncle Smitty” to family and friends alike. He loved his weekend trips to The Farm, near Hempstead, relaxing by the hard work of gardening (using only hand implements) and throwing hay to the cattle from the back of his pick-up. He and Anita especially enjoyed watching K with her horses, seeing Rob and his children fishing, and hosting family members and friends among the beautiful bluebonnets in the spring.

Ray was a long-time member of the Appaloosa Committee at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, where he served as ring steward. He served on many boards, including those of the Gulf Coast Appaloosa Horse Club, St.

Luke's United Methodist Church, and Northwest Academy. He was a member of the Lumbermen's Association of Texas, the Greater Houston Lumber Dealers and Building Materials Association, and the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce.

The family would like to thank all the doctors, nurses, and caregivers, Cheryl Baker and April Altis, who gave Ray such loving attention over the last two years. We extend special thanks to Dr. Linda Christians of St. Luke's United Methodist Church, who provided Ray with pastoral care over many years.

From An Old Irish Blessing, let us say, "May God hold you in the palm of His hand."

In addition to the customary remembrances, memorial contributions may be made to causes which were important to him: the K Smith Leonard Communications Scholarship at Stephen F. Austin State University, St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Houston, or to the charity of your choice.

The Smith family will be present to receive friends Friday, November 28, 2014 from 3:00 PM until 5:00 PM at Dettling Funeral Home, 14094 Memorial Dr., Houston, TX 77079. A Memorial Service celebrating Mr. Smith's life will be held Saturday, November 29, 2014 at 1:00 PM at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 3471 Westheimer Rd., Houston, TX 77027. A private family gathering will be held at the graveside at Memorial Oaks Cemetery to lay Ray to rest. Pallbearers serving will include Rick Buhler, Ed Cowart, Jim Davis, John Davis, Andrew Smith, and Robby Smith. Visit www.DettlingFuneral.com to leave online tributes.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **28**. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Dettling Funeral Home
14094 Memorial Drive
Houston, TX 77079
(281) 497-2121
david@dettlingfuneral.com

Memorial Service

NOV **29**. 1:00 PM (CT)

St. Luke's United Methodist Church
3471 Westheimer Road
Houston, TX 77027

Tribute Wall



“ *Robert Ray Smith*

October 08, 2023 at 10:52 AM



“ *Robert Ray Smith*

October 06, 2023 at 01:12 AM



“ *Robert Ray Smith*

October 05, 2023 at 09:45 AM



“ *Robert Ray Smith*

October 05, 2023 at 01:54 AM



“ *I'm so sorry for your family's loss. May the God of all comfort be with you during this difficult time. 2 Cor 1:3,34.*

Tara Webber - December 01, 2014 at 07:17 AM

JG

“ Ray knew my mother, Elizabeth Goerner, and my step-dad, Ray Kenley, from St. Luke's Methodist Church. Ray Kenley worked for Mr. West also. I bought lumber and shingles from South Texas Lumber in the 70's and 80's. Ray was the most sincere and genuine businessman I have ever known. My condolences to his family.

*Jim Goerner
Starett Homes, Inc.*

Jim Goerner - November 27, 2014 at 08:21 AM



“ Summer's Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Robert Ray Smith.



November 26, 2014 at 10:09 AM



“ Rays of Light Spray was purchased for the family of Robert Ray Smith.



November 26, 2014 at 09:22 AM

BW

“ I'll always have wonderful memories of your sweet parents taking me to the farm on weekends. What special people. They were truly my "weekend" parents during childhood ! They blessed so many people :)

Brenda Wahlberg - November 26, 2014 at 09:19 AM

FB

“ *Fayetta Burch lit a candle in memory of Robert Ray Smith*



Fayetta Burch - November 25, 2014 at 02:34 PM

FB

“ *Dearest K , My prayer partners and I wish to send our sincere sympathy to you and your family. Thank God Mr. Smith is now resting in our Lord and Saviour's arms. Stay strong in the lord he will give you rest to make it through the though times ahead. Be Blessed. Love you much in Jesus nameFayetta*

Fayetta Burch - November 25, 2014 at 02:33 PM

SH

“ *3 files added to the album New Album Name*



Shane - November 25, 2014 at 10:52 AM