

James L. Wade

February 14, 1925 - November 20, 2019

OKLAHOMA CITY

James L. Wade, 94, was born Feb. 14, 1925, and departed to meet his Lord and Savior Nov. 20, 2019. James was born to Malcolm Delos Wade and Lucille (Lucy) (Cenotto) Wade in Talihina, OK. He was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation and was recognized as an Outstanding Native Son by the Choctaw Nation in 1976. James, known as Jim to his family and friends, joined the Army Air Corps in 1943, and served in the active and reserve components of the United States Air Force. He served in World War II, the Berlin Buildup, Korean War and Vietnam War. He retired from the U.S. Air Force Reserve in 1978. A highly decorated military man, he received many honors, including the Order of the Sword, Legion of Merit Cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation with 1 oak leaf cluster, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Gold Palm, Combat Readiness Award among many others. In 2000, he was inducted into the Who's Who of Oklahoma Military Men & Women. Jim joined the Air Force Reserve full time in the late 1960s. He commanded Fighter Groups, Military Airlift Groups and Strategic Air Refueling Wings. In 1976, he attained the rank of brigadier general. After WW II, Jim attended OCU, where he played football, basketball and baseball. He is a Trustee Emeritus to OCU and is in the OCU Athletics Hall of Fame. In 2001, he created the Jim Wade Endowment for Athletics that funds scholarships, needs of the athletics department and the annual Jim Wade Awards Banquet. The facilities for baseball, soccer and basketball bear his name at OCU. He was drafted by the Los Angeles Rams in 1948. He played in the NFL one year for the Rams and New York Bulldogs. After the NFL, he was a high school teacher, coach and principal. Aviation was his love, and after serving as a corporate pilot, he turned to aircraft sales for Beechcraft Distributing and Aero Commander. The many stories of selling airplanes to celebrities and the friendships he developed with them made for great conversations. He was instrumental in the sale of the Jet Commander to the Israeli Government. He worked two years in New York City for Israeli Aircraft Industries, Ltd. Upon leaving his work for Israel, he transitioned to full-time employment with the United States Air Force Reserve. When he

retired from the military, he went to work for the F.A.A. serving in many roles, ending as Chief of the Air Carrier Operations Worldwide Pilot Inspector & Training program. In his career, he also served as a bank president and insurance agency president/owner. More importantly, he was married to his wife, Billie Jean (Strong) Wade, whom he met at OCU, for nearly 61 years. Family was the utmost priority for the General. Nothing was more important than family gatherings to celebrate anything and watching nearly any sporting event. Jim was Billie's primary caregiver in the last years of her life. This commitment to his wife was an incredible example for his family and a sincere expression of his love for Billie. Thankfully, they are reunited in heaven. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Billie Jean Wade; sister, Margaret Wade; and brother, Malcom Delos Wade, Jr. Jim is survived by his three children, Sue Wehba & husband Denny, Barbara Girod & husband Ron, and Jim Wade, II & his wife Martha; six grandchildren, Scott Girod & his wife Heidi, Tony Girod & his wife Kim, Ashley Armstrong, Tyler Wade Armstrong & his wife Brooke, James Wade, III & his girlfriend Kayla Brandt, and Grant Wade; four great-grandchildren, Jackson, Chandler, Jett, and Rock Wade Girod. Additionally, he is survived by his sister, Betty Estep; and many nephews and nieces. The family would like to offer their special thanks to Bethany Holley, Shannon Horn and Jo Flores for the amazing care they gave the General in the last months of his life. Viewing & Visitation will be held Monday, 2-6 p.m. The family will be present 4-6 p.m. to greet friends at Vondel L. Smith Mortuary at South Lakes, 4000 S.W. 119th, OKC, OK 73173. Funeral services to celebrate his life are 10 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2019, at Southpark Baptist Church, 2900 SW 119th. Private family graveside services will follow at the Talihina Cemetery. Memorials may be made to the General James L. Wade Athletic Endowment (okcu.edu/championsclub) or by mail to O.C.U Advancement, 2501 N. Blackwelder, Oklahoma City, OK 73106. Please visit vondelsmithmortuary.com to leave condolences and read more about Jim's life.

FUNERAL HOME

Vondel Smith Mortuary South Lakes
4000 SW 119th St
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma