



## Gary Lee Buttman

October 14, 1946 - December 13, 2021

Gary Lee Buttman, age 75, passed from this life on December 13, 2021 surrounded by his family. He was born in the family home near Ramona, Oklahoma, the youngest of ten children. His parents were Chester Emmack Buttman and Mabel Symonds Buttman. The family farmed so once the children were old enough they had chores to do. He had fond memories of growing up on the farm.

Gary was educated through the Ramona Schools. As a young child he loved his teachers. In high school he was specially influenced and mentored by Bill Fultz who taught business subjects and who encouraged him to go to college even though Gary wasn't sure where the money would come from. He graduated from Ramona High School in 1964 and enrolled in classes at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah. His interest continued to be in business courses and he received his Bachelor's Degree in Business Education in May 1968. He signed a contract to teach at Oklahoma Military Academy (OMA)--now Rogers State University-- and began teaching business subjects in the fall of 1968. Before the end of that semester he received his draft notice but had been told that he probably could be deferred or be exempt due to his teaching position. Unfortunately, that didn't come to pass and in February of 1969 he was on the way to basic training for the U.S. Army. Eventually, he was sent to Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indiana to Finance School and, upon completion, was assigned to Oakland, California where he spent his remaining service to our country as a finance officer while he paid troops that were returning from service in Vietnam.

In December 1970, about two months before Gary was to receive his honorable discharge from the Army, he returned to Oklahoma in order to make arrangements to enroll at Northeastern State to do graduate work. While he was in the Bartlesville area, he met "Miss Young" who was teaching foreign language at Bartlesville's College High School. Their first date was to the Col High-Sooner basketball game. They had another date before he returned to Oakland to finish out his duty for the Army. When he returned home on February 1, 1971 the whirlwind romance between Gary and Mary Helen Young began. On March 20, 1971 they were married in a ceremony at First United Methodist Church in

Vinita. In March 2021 they joyfully celebrated their 50th Anniversary.

Wanting to return to the teaching field, Gary surveyed some teaching jobs available in the business field and chose one that took the newlyweds on a faraway adventure before they put down roots closer to home. He accepted a job teaching in an American School in Durango, Mexico. At the Colegio Americano he would be teaching in a program that trained high school aged girls to become bilingual secretaries. Also in the vicinity of the city of Durango were two movie sets. One of them was actor John Wayne's. Both Gary and Mary Helen worked as “extras” in a movie that was being filmed, as they needed light-haired, fair-skinned people to appear in the background.

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Returning to Oklahoma in 1972, Gary benefitted from the GI Bill as he enrolled in graduate courses at Northeastern State that led to him receiving a Masters Degree in Accounting in May 1973. Gary and Mary Helen lived in married student housing (Redman Village) on the campus where they paid an economical \$39 per month rent—and that included up to \$30 in utilities! The next year the apartments were razed and a parking lot was in their place.

Before receiving his Masters degree Gary had already signed on for a job at Phillips Petroleum Company in Bartlesville. He worked in a few different areas of the company before he landed in Phillips 66 Gas Company where he did oil and gas royalty accounting. He traveled to gas plants around the country to learn about the processes involved in gas production. He went to Washington D.C. as an expert witness for hearings before the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission).

On March 1, 1977 Gary and Mary Helen brought home a precious baby boy, Wesley Craig Buttman, their long-awaited child. Soon, they bought property east of Bartlesville and built a home—a perfect place for a boy to grow up. In 1991, word came that Gary's job would now be in Houston, Texas. The family sold their cherished country home and moved to Katy, Texas and later found out that the gas company that moved them down there would become GPM, a wholly-owned subsidiary. Their hopes of being sent back to Bartlesville were gone. Gary made the decision to ask for one of the voluntary layoff “packages” that were being offered. The family moved back to Bartlesville and resumed life in the community they loved. For 15 years until his retirement, Gary commuted to downtown Tulsa and continued to do the same kind of work he had been doing at Phillips. He worked for Liberty Bank and then did oil and gas royalty accounting for Amoco, British Petroleum, Price Waterhouse Coopers and two other companies through his employer, IBM. He would tell you that he did the same work at the same desk for 5 different companies. He retired on February 29, 2008.

The family joined Disciples Christian Church in 1986 and Gary was active in the church. He served as a deacon and as House and Grounds chairperson as well as president of the congregation. For many years he was involved in Boy Scouts with Wesley and was Scoutmaster of Troop 23. Together they enjoyed many outings and campouts with the troop. They participated in 3 treks at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. In retirement he volunteered at Agape Mission and as an intake person at CONCERN.

Gary passed away peacefully in hospice care after a short illness. He was predeceased by his parents, aunts and uncles, his mother- and father-in-law, Helen and C.J. "Tommy" Thomas and seven of his siblings: Grace Givens, Bill Buttman, Ora Lee Buttman, Ruby Mae Buttman, Maggie Marie Chitwood, Melvon Earl Buttman and Chester Buttman. His siblings still living are Kenneth Ray Buttman of Bartlesville and Mary Jane Koerner of Munjor, Kansas. Survivors also include many nieces and nephews and a sister-and brother-in-law, Dibby and Neil Johnson of Alexandria, VA.

Gary's wife, Mary Helen, and son, Wesley, survive him in the home in Bartlesville. He was a good provider for the family, a loving and loyal husband and an exceptional father. Everyone who knew Gary would tell you that he was dependable, honest, hard-working, loveable, generous and a teaser. He had a quick and unique wit.

A Celebration of Gary's life will be held at 11 AM on Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at Disciples Christian Church, 5800 SE Douglas Lane in Bartlesville. Attendees are requested to wear masks due to the continuing COVID pandemic.

In lieu of floral tributes, the family is encouraging donations to established memorials to: Disciples Christian Church, Cornerstone Hospice (501 East 5th, Bartlesville 74003) and CONCERN (P.O. Box 404, Bartlesville 74003).



# Comments

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“ Gary teased with a twinkle in his eyes. He was great at getting everyone back to the point when meetings got out of hand with a funny gentle reminder. He was a helper and willing to do what was needed.. Steve and I send you our love, Mary Helen and Wes.

**Carol Hildabrand** - January 04 at 06:56 PM



“ Thank you for your kind--but true--words. We surely miss Gary.

**Mary Helen Buttman** - January 15 at 01:29 PM

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“ Sharing Uncle Gary's ABC gum. It was the best!!!

**Sandy Thomas** - December 26, 2021 at 07:12 PM



“ Yes. he was a very special uncle, wasn't he!

**Mary Helen** - December 26, 2021 at 11:42 PM

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“ The Danziger family is sending love and prayers and happy memories.

**Sirry Danziger** - December 23, 2021 at 01:08 PM

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“ Prayers for you during this time.

**Vickie Sigler** - December 22, 2021 at 06:42 PM