



Christopher Thomas Barbee

July 3, 1943 - June 20, 2023

Christopher Thomas Barbee was born July 03, 1943, to James and Evelyn Barbee in Lynwood CA. At just 13 days shy of his 80th birthday, our Lord called him home on June 20, 2023.

In his youth, Chris worked on the family farm with his brothers and sisters as he grew up and went to school in Chelsea OK. After school, he made his way across the country doing odd jobs and trying to figure out what he wanted out of life. He found himself in Lowell MA doing factory work in the early 1960's where he met Jeannie Wesley and started to think about settling down. They married in 1964.

In 1968 Chris moved their growing family to the Chelsea Oklahoma area. Together they had five children in total. It was here that Chris worked various jobs including machinist, dairyman, and oil field roust-about. As his family was growing up, he did his best to keep his children happy and even constructed playground equipment for them. He built a swing set, merry-go-round, slide, monkey bars, teeter-totter, and a climbing tower. He could build almost anything out of wood.

As the kids graduated high school, Chris and Jeannie separated and eventually divorced. With the kids off in the world, Chris continued to be their cheerleader from his home in Chelsea. Eventually, he moved to Nowata and worked for Nowata Printing Co., from which he retired. While in Nowata, he met and married Carol Kritz. They had several happy years together before cancer took her away too soon. It was shortly after that he began the hobby

that put him on the map. Bowling ball art.

Chris started with a few bowling balls Carol had in the rose garden and kept adding more items. Before long, he ended up on Roadside America. People started making the side trip to see his creations. As his displays grew, so did the popularity of the site. Local news channels and newspapers did human interest stories on him. Vans and buses would show up with people taking a day trip to the site. So many people visited. Through his yard art attraction, Chris became known as the Bowling Ball Man. He was proud that people from all over the world would take the time to stop by as they were making their way across America. He felt as if he were making people happy, even if only for the short time they were there. He knew exactly how many bowling balls were on his place, and if any of them were missing. It wasn't unusual for the police or neighbors to return 'found' balls to him if some wayward person stole a few just for kicks. They knew exactly where those bowling balls belonged. As Chris realized the need to move closer to his kids because of declining health, he had to give up the bowling balls. He missed the interaction with visitors greatly. Chris wasn't a perfect man, and he could be a down-right grump. He didn't always show his brothers and sisters that he loved them, but he certainly did and we want them to know that. He loved his family, his wives (although not at the same time), children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and church family.

Chris is survived by his children Darlene, Elaine, Karen, Jim, and daughter-in-law Karen.

Chris is preceded in death by his mother and father, James and Evelyn Barbee; brothers Donald, David, Clarence, Paul, Thomas, James, Lawrence, and Daniel; sisters Clare, Loretta, Lucy Ann; ex-wife Jeannie; wife Carol; daughter Christine; and granddaughter Olivia.

Visitation will be from 2-5 pm at Stumpff Funeral Home in Nowata, OK on Sunday, June 25, 2023. Services will be at 10 am at Stumpff Funeral Home in Nowata, OK on Monday, June 26, 2023 Stumpff Funeral Home 620 E Cherokee Avenue Nowata, OK 74048 (918) 273-1550

Tribute Wall



“ *Christopher Thomas Barbee*

October 23, 2023 at 04:40 AM



“ *Christopher Thomas Barbee*

October 06, 2023 at 03:15 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Christopher Thomas Barbee.*



June 23, 2023 at 03:03 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Christopher Thomas Barbee.

June 23, 2023 at 03:03 PM



“ *Elaine and family: Sorry about your loss; you and your family are in our thoughts. Love, Kirk and Ron*

Kirk Couch - June 23, 2023 at 12:36 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Christopher Thomas Barbee.*



June 22, 2023 at 09:41 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Christopher Thomas Barbee.*



June 22, 2023 at 09:23 PM



“ *Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Christopher Thomas Barbee.*



June 22, 2023 at 10:55 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Christopher Thomas Barbee.*



June 21, 2023 at 09:50 PM