



Riley Byran Needham

October 15, 1936 - December 26, 2019

Riley Byran Needham, 83, of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, died December 26, 2019. Riley was born on October 15, 1936 to parents George Dewey Needham and Dott “Reasoner” Needham in Grove, Oklahoma.

Riley received his Bachelor’s Degree at the University of Oklahoma and went on to receive his PhD in Petroleum Engineering. He went to work for Phillips Petroleum in 1965 and during Riley’s career he received 36 patents. He was a member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers for over 50 years. Riley was one of the only three individuals to receive the Phillips Fellow Emeritus title in the history of the company. Riley would have served 50 years on January 25, 2020. He led the team for Phillips Petroleum that worked on the Ekofisk subsidence in the 1980’s. The solution was to jack up the rigs and was an unprecedented feat of engineering.

During Riley’s leave of absence in the 1990’s he won a lawsuit on behalf of neighboring landowners in Delaware County against poultry plant owners that polluted the ground water.

In Riley’s free time he loved to spend time with his family, gardening, and mentoring others. He also loved farming and raising cattle.

He was preceded in death by his parents, George and Dott Needham, and his 6 siblings, Don Needham, Geneva Coale, Georgie Langston, Bob Needham, Reva Carey, and Dewey Needham.

Riley is survived by 5 daughters, Karla Chapman, Kathy Needham, Stacy Needham, Jessica Needham, and Victoria Needham, 2 grandsons, Ian Boyd

and Asher Needham, and 2 brothers, Noel and Charles Needham.

Visitation will be held Saturday, December 28, 2019 4-8 P.M. and Sunday,

December 29, 2019 9 A.M.-8 P.M. Memorial Services will be Monday,

December 30, 2019 at 1:00 P.M. at City Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

In lieu of flowers send contributions to The Journey Home.

Cemetery Details

Memorial Park Cemetery

4200 Nowata Rd
Bartlesville, OK 74006

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **28**. 1:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Stumpff Funeral Home & Crematory
1600 SE Washington Blvd.
Bartlesville, OK 74006
(918) 333-4300
info@stumpff.org
<https://www.stumpff.org>

Visitation

DEC **29**. 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Stumpff Funeral Home & Crematory
1600 SE Washington Blvd.
Bartlesville, OK 74006
(918) 333-4300
info@stumpff.org
<https://www.stumpff.org>

Funeral Service

DEC 30. 1:00 PM (CT)

City Church
4222 Rice Creek Rd
Bartlesville, OK 74006

Tribute Wall



“ *Riley Byran Needham*

October 23, 2023 at 04:40 AM



“ *Riley Byran Needham*

October 06, 2023 at 03:15 PM



“ *Although it has now been some time since Riley's death, I am posting this anyway in the hopes that it might be seen one or more of his family.*

I was hired by Riley into Phillips Research Center in 1981 and stayed there until a downturn in the industry in 1986 induced me to leave for another position much nearer to the families of my wife and myself.

Riley was widely recognized as an exceptional industrial engineer, an outstanding manager, and a very decent man. When we parted I felt that it was with mutual respect, and I was pleased when he invited me back years later to give a presentation there on the production of coal bed methane.

Although I had some years of experience before being hired by Riley, I have long felt that my career in research really began with my years at the Research Center.

Riley was one of the very best!

Duane Smith - June 04, 2022 at 02:57 AM

SN

Thank you. I check this periodically and I am always glad to hear about my dad.

Stacy Needham - August 11, 2024 at 08:25 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Flowers



Stumpff Funeral Home & Crematory - January 03, 2020 at 09:57 AM

TC

“ *Hands down, one of the smartest dudes I ever knew. Seems like just yesterday we were having lunch at Mexicali in downtown Tulsa. Great loss for Bartlesville and the Conoco-Phillips community, and for the petroleum engineering profession.*

Tim Coburn

Tim Coburn - December 31, 2019 at 10:50 AM

AM

“ *Riley and family were our neighbors for many years! Very nice gentleman and always enjoyed baling his hay, nice fields! He will definitely be missed in the neighborhood. We always liked seeing his old dodge coming down the road! May he Rest in Peace and blessings for his family!!*

Al and Michelle Martin - December 30, 2019 at 11:38 AM

AM

Al and Michelle Martin

Al and Michelle Martin - December 30, 2019 at 11:40 AM

SB

May you rest in peace Uncle Riley sorry we lost touch many years ago after Mom and Dad's divorce

Sharon Bradford - February 06, 2020 at 09:22 AM

GD

“ I'm so sorry for your loss. I've known Riley over 30yrs. I've never worked for anyone that was as sharp as he! Riley was a joy to work for!! I've got so many fond memories of Riley.....such a smart man, a wonderful mentor and a great person.

Regards

George Dixon

George Dixon - December 30, 2019 at 10:09 AM

DZ

“ So very sorry for the family for their loss so quickly it seems. I have known Riley since 1976 when I joined Phillips R&D. Riley was always one of the very smartest and most logical engineers and managers that I knew during my 35 years at COP. He was well known in the industry thru SPE and other professional associations. He was the kind of person that made a big difference in the lives of others and in the world. He will be missed by so many. Good luck to all of the family. Hang Tough! z

David R Zornes - December 29, 2019 at 05:08 PM

BO

“ Bill and Judy O'Brien purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Riley Byran Needham.



Bill and Judy O'Brien - December 28, 2019 at 04:02 PM

BO

“ Although I only knew Riley for a few short years, he was an exceptional engineer, and a wonderful mentor and friend. I learned so much from him. So many of us relied on him — he readily offered thoughtful guidance, wisdom and knowledge to anyone who asked. He was a giant among us and I will miss him very much.

- Bill O'Brien

Bill O'Brien - December 28, 2019 at 03:53 PM



“ Riley was one of my best friends throughout my professional life. He was a mentor and a colleague that I could always count on for thoughtful discussion and comments on any idea. He was one of the best and most encouraging and thoughtful managers I ever had. He will be missed by all his many friends and his family most of all.
Charles Thomas

Charles Thomas - December 28, 2019 at 03:13 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Flowers



Stumpff Funeral Home & Crematory - December 28, 2019 at 12:37 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Riley Byran Needham.*



December 28, 2019 at 04:01 AM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Riley Byran Needham.*



December 27, 2019 at 09:06 PM



“ *Riley was my first and best friend after moving to Oklahoma in 2012. The kindest person in the world. He loved his work and his family unlike anyone ive ever had the pleasure to meet. Such a beautiful and caring person, very proud to have called him my friend.*



Melissa Sykes - December 27, 2019 at 04:32 PM