



William Owen Johnstone

March 17, 1947 - February 25, 2024

William Owen (Bill) Johnstone, age 76, of Oklahoma City and Bartlesville, Oklahoma passed away on February 25, 2024.

Bill was born in Buena Vista, Texas to Mildred Christine Owen and Leo Haskell Johnstone on Saint Patrick's Day in 1947. Bill loved: Family, Friends, Finance, Flyfishing, and Bartlesville!

At the age of thirteen, Bill's parents moved the family to this community in Northeastern Oklahoma. Bill loved Bartlesville and felt connected there; perhaps that's because five generations of Johnstones had called Bartlesville home.

Bill thrived during high school where his leadership skills were developed and lifelong friendships were established.

In 1965, Bill attended the University of Oklahoma. He pledged Beta Theta PI and again created meaningful and lasting relationships. In 1971, Bill graduated with an MBA and continued with the intention to get a doctorate in Finance. He finished all his coursework but decided he would rather go to work than write his doctoral thesis. Bill's interest in government and leadership activities was woven throughout his undergraduate education. He was a Beta pledge trainer and served on the Interfraternity Council, the parliamentarian of

the University of Oklahoma's Constitutional Convention for Student Council, and parliamentarian of the National Association of Student Councils and was inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa, a national leadership fraternity. Bill loved his Beta fraternity brothers and celebrated their friendship with dinners several times a year. There, they would regale stories of their pledge ship and catch up on each other's lives.

Bill's professional life was in banking and finance. He began his career at Fidelity Bank in Oklahoma City and would become President of the Union Bank and Trust Company and the United Oklahoma Bank. In 1985, with banks failing due to the oil slump, Bill and a group of investors bought First City Bank in downtown Oklahoma City. Bill renamed the bank, City Bank, and he remained Chairman of the Board and CEO until he sold the bank to BancFirst in 1995. In 2000 Bill and the CEO of BancFirst, David Rainbolt, started a private equity firm in Oklahoma. Council Oak was born and was the first Merchant Bank in the state. Bill retired from Council Oak in September of 2022 but continued to serve on the board of BancFirst until his death.

Community and Civic involvement in Oklahoma City were something Bill cared deeply about. He joined the Oklahoma City Chapter of YPO (Young Presidents Organization) in 1980 and in 1983 a YPO Forum group. His Forum group originally consisted of ten members, all under the age of forty and all CEOs of their companies. Bill would say many times "My YPO Forum group has been the single most important association of my adult life. The trust, support and advice I found there has been unparalleled." Bills Forum group met once a month for over 30 years and enjoyed a retreat annually.

Over the years Bill continued his involvement in the Civic life of Oklahoma City. He was Vice Chairman and served on the executive committee of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce and was President of the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. He was Chairman of the Oklahoma City Chapter

of YPO and in 1992, Bill received the Dean A. McGee Award for lifetime achievement for the contributions he made to the development of downtown Oklahoma City. In addition, he served on many civic and nonprofit boards throughout his life in Oklahoma City and later in life, in Bartlesville.

In 2004, Bill purchased a ranch in Osage County and strengthened his connection to Bartlesville. He enjoyed taking the grandchildren on three-wheelers around the ranch. His favorite hobby was fly fishing. He used to say, "Trout live in beautiful places". He took many trips with his fishing buddies to both Cody, Wyoming and Patagonia, Argentina -- catching and releasing many fish. Bill was loved and will be missed by his family.

Bill is survived by Ann Johnstone; sister Janie Johnstone of Houston Texas; daughter Megan Haston and husband Greg Haston of Carlsbad, New Mexico; son Paul Johnstone of Chicago, Illinois; stepson Clint Pitzer and wife Jill Pitzer of Oklahoma City; granddaughters Emma Haston and Madeline Haston; step granddaughters Anna Shirley and spouse Elizabeth Shirley, Caroline Pitzer and Sarah Pitzer. In addition, many extended family and friends.

Bill was preceded in death by his mother Mildred Christine Owen and father Leo Haskell Johnstone of Bartlesville, Oklahoma; son William Paul Johnstone of Oklahoma City; stepdaughter Elisha Pitzer of Oklahoma City, and stepson Jason Pitzer of Oklahoma City.

A Celebration of Bill's life will be held in the Chapel at Crossings Community Church, 14600 Portland Ave, Oklahoma City, OK, 73134 at 10:30 a.m. on March 5, 2024. To stream the services live, click the following link: <https://vimeo.com/event/4124432/ae7b9e9202> (<https://vimeo.com/event/4124432/ae7b9e9202>)

Those wishing to honor his memory are encouraged to contribute to Woolaroc Museum and Wildlife Preserve in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR 5. 10:30 AM (CT)

Crossings Community Church
14600 N Portland Ave
Oklahoma City, OK 73134