



## Oliver Wendell McCracken

March 15, 1935 - July 30, 2025

Oliver Wendell McCracken, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and a true original, passed away peacefully following a surgical procedure on July 30, 2025, at the age of 90. He was at St. Anthony's Hospital in Downtown OKC, with his wife, Donna, by his side.

Wendell was born on March 15, 1935, in Vici, Oklahoma, to Oliver William McCracken and Leta Fern McCracken. He was the only boy growing up in a family of six sisters. At just 8 years old, he helped move the family home from one location to another, a difficult feat in the 1940's. As a boy, he also helped his father with building projects. He had a vivid imagination and the drive to make things happen; he once trained a cow to ride in a parade and tried to train a goat to pull a cart, though this proved less successful than the cow.

Wendell's father passed away when he was only 17 years old. Wendell completed high school and spent time farming with his neighbors, Elmer and Millie Traver, who became like a second set of parents. After high school, he worked on a wheat harvest and worked as a forest spotter in Idaho before heading to Oklahoma State University with a few of his favorite cousins to study electrical engineering. To pay for college, Wendell partnered with a friend to build a few homes. The homes he built are still part of the Stillwater community today.

It was at OSU that he met Nancy Louise Vinzetta. They eloped and were married at the Pawnee County Courthouse. Later, to honor Nancy's Italian family, they re-enacted their vows in a Catholic Church and held a reception at

Pete's Place, an Italian restaurant that still operates today. After graduating from Oklahoma State University with his Electrical Engineering degree, Wendell and Nancy moved to the Dallas-Fort Worth area. They had three children: Melinda, Scott, and Carol. The family lived most of their childhood years in a house in Richardson, Texas. Wendell's children lovingly remember helping him with his inventions.

Besides his engineering work, Wendell embarked on many other practical projects and inventions to make his life more full. These included building a garage and workshop for all his electrical engineering projects, a fiberglass boat, automated cow feeding machines from discarded van tops, custom duck blinds complete with walkie-talkies, sturdy corral gates and fencing for some crazy Santa Gertrudis cows, and many others. Many of his inventions were spray-painted silver- his trademark.

Wendell's first wife, Nancy passed away from pancreatic cancer in May 1974. A few years later his life took a new turn when he met Donna McGehee Young. They married in October 1976 in Grand Junction, Colorado. Donna and her children, Tina Kaye, David Leonard, and Timothy Scott, joined Wendell, Melinda, Scott, and Carol in Richardson, where they lived in their small home for about 10 months. Wendell and his cousin Keith Hale then bought a 250-acre farm near Pauls Valley, Oklahoma. Later Keith sold his part to Wendell and Donna. Wendell and Donna moved their new, bigger family to Oklahoma in August 1977. In 1978, Donna and Wendell were blessed with a new baby girl, Cristy Lynn. The next day, Wendell began clearing ground for construction on a new home on the farm for his growing family. In 1980, Amy Beth was born, completing the family crew.

All the older kids worked on building the new family home. With Wendell as the instructor the family went through quite a learning curve to learn all the things about farm life- like driving a tractor, piling limbs to burn, harvesting, and cleaning pecans, cutting and splitting firewood to heat the home, and the essentials of cow raising, like always knowing your exit if a cow came after you. Wendell was proud of his family and appreciated that they were

independent thinkers. As Cristy and Amy grew, they joined the work crew. Melinda was off to college and Scott and Carol each married and Cristy and Amy took up the slack. Wendell continued using his abilities as inventor to develop several projects, always labor-saving use in mind, and he continued to take advantage of the help available in his family while helping them learn and grow, even though there were times that they really did not like the learning and growing.

Wendell was good at finding a way to have fun while getting things done! He acquired a few parachutes that proved to be a way to work and have fun at pecan harvest time. The family used the parachutes to gather pecans when shaking pecan trees, and the kids rode on the parachutes when they were moved from tree to tree. There were lots of limb piles that became bonfires, and the family remembers lots of wiener roasts, Wolf Brand chili, ranch style beans, and roasted marshmallows, or even S'mores sometimes!

Wendell was a lifelong learner and avid reader of history, science, and non-fiction adventure. His ability to recall information and apply what he learned was remarkable. He was always interested in flying and built his first airplane before he has his pilot's license. He enjoyed flying from the airstrip that he built on his farm and loved being a part of the pilot community in Pauls Valley and De Norte, Colorado. He built a hanger and apartment in Del Norte and enjoyed spending summers with his close friends at the airport. He became the airport "Ask Wendell" resource and enjoyed helping others with their building projects. He was also a great wood craftsman and made special wood furniture pieces for his kids and grandkids and others. He also loved music. It gave him great joy to get together with his music friends in Pauls Valley and spend a few hours playing and singing old songs. He taught himself to play guitar, and also made-up little songs to sing to the kids and grandkids.

Some words that describe Wendell are resourceful, inventor, and lifelong learner. He was not afraid to try new things. He did lots of things without being

taught what to do. He had a great imagination and had lots of career experiences. He bought businesses, started a consulting business and patented technology in multiple industries, including telecom, oil industry, and farming. He often quoted the KISS principle about keeping it simple, and that seemed to serve him well.

Wendell attended various churches throughout his life, including Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, and others, and became a follower of Christ as an adult, but his real faith preference was to spend time in the outdoors with nature and farming. His relationship with God was personal. He did not need more.

Wendell's favorite scripture was Mark 12:30-31: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Wendell was preceded in death by his parents, Oliver McCracken and Leta Cunningham McCracken Smith; his first wife, Nancy Louise McCracken; his son, Timothy Scott Young; his son-in-law, Rick Moberly; and his sisters, Joyce, Jeannie, Lori, and Dorine.

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Donna McCracken of Pauls Valley, Oklahoma; and his sisters, Betty Gardner and Ann Fenton.

He also leaves behind seven of his eight children and their spouses:

- Melinda Lauffenburger and her husband Dean of Edmond, Oklahoma
- Scott McCracken and his wife Paula of Maysville, Oklahoma
- Carol Moberly of Newkirk, Oklahoma
- Tina Young Treat and her husband Tom of Warr Acres, Oklahoma
- David Young and his wife Jill of Tulsa, Oklahoma
- Cristy Cash and her husband Matt of El Cerrito, California
- Amy Bazan and her husband Juan of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

He left behind 20 grandchildren:

- Joy Lauffenburger

- Sarah Lauffenburger and her husband Trey
- Kelli Miller and her husband Aaron
- Christopher McCracken and his wife Sammie
- Jon Cole McCracken and his wife Randi
- Trey Moberly and his wife Karolyn
- Brad Moberly Stephanie
- Kyle Moberly and his wife Amanda
- Jacie Byers and her husband Bailey
- Gabe Treat and his wife Zoe'
- Ben Treat
- Emilie Young
- Zachary Young
- Eli Young and his wife Jenna
- Zoe Young
- Jaeden Young
- Jackson Cash
- Corrine Bazan
- Isabella Bazan
- Oli Bazan

He was also a great-grandfather to 14 great-grandchildren:

- Liam, Logan and Luke Miller
- Hayes and Brecken McCracken
- Ripley McCracken
- Kale, Haven, Presley, Ki, and Collins Moberly
- Parker and Evan Moberly
- Oaken Young.

Wendell was also survived by many nieces and nephews, who were very important in his life.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

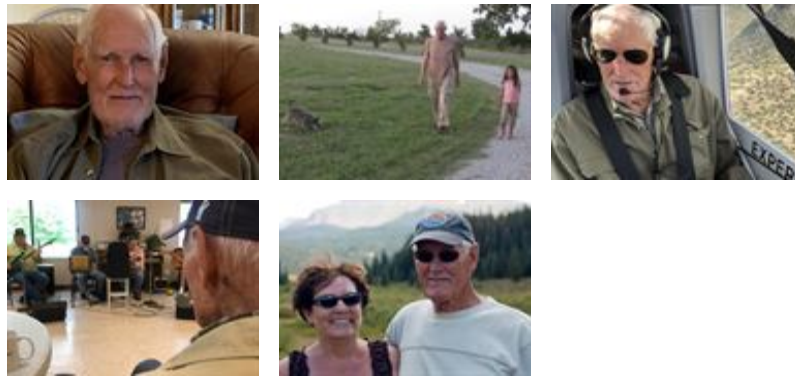
AUG **18**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Wooster Funeral Home and Cremation Services (Pauls Valley)  
1601 South Chickasaw  
Pauls Valley, OK

# Tribute Wall



“ 30 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Wooster Funeral Home & Cremation Services - August 15, 2025 at 03:08 PM



“ Tina McCarty Hume lit a candle in memory of Oliver McCracken



Tina McCarty Hume - August 12, 2025 at 03:15 PM