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A WEEK IN A DARK CAVE

Tumbleweed Smith

Jeff Tucker of Brownwood spent twenty years as a fireman, ten years as a fire fighter then ten years as an arson investigator.

"I put in twenty and got out because I saw a lot of firemen as they got older they didn't move as well as they used to. I knew I had a lot of good years left and wanted to do something else. I'm a bit of a serial entrepreneur. As a fireman I was on 24 hours, off 48 so I mowed yards, painted houses, built houses, ran businesses. If there was something I was interested in I went in neck deep."



Tumbleweed Smith

In Brownwood he turned a historic building into a brewery, sold that and is now restoring a twelve-story hotel. Part of his inborn sense of adventure made him audition for a television series called DARKNESS.

"It was an extreme survival series," says Jeff. "The experiment was to put three guys in a dark cave, each in a different area and try to find each other then find a way out. We each had six ounces of water, a blanket and a helmet. No food, no light. So it was a light deprivation experience. But for five and a half days I never got to see anything but dark. I couldn't see my hand in front of my face.

"The cave was just outside Hannibal, Missouri and was twenty-nine square miles or something like that. The three of us had never met. They put us in at different entry points and we would try to find each other. Supposedly there were caches of food down there but we never found them. Two of the guys found some crawdads and earthworms. I found a natural spring and got water.

"We were constantly trying to focus but we could never make out anything. I bumped onto one guy who happened to be a fireman from Louisiana. Then we found the other guy who was a former Green Beret. Then the fight was on to get out.

"What happened was your mind started to play tricks on you. Light deprivation is a very serious thing. Some people who had been on the program before wanted out after twenty-four hours. It was that extreme. I had worked in a dark environment as a fireman so that worked to my advantage. One day in the cave I saw Porky Pig. It was so strange. It was like he was across from me just looking at me.

"At one point one of the guys had fallen. I didn't know how far he fell but I felt he was going away from me. I thought he had fallen off a cliff. We would throw rocks out in front of us and once we threw a rock and never heard it hit bottom. There was a lot of things that would mess up your mind mentally.

"Now the crew that was filming us wore night goggles that allowed them to see in the dark. When one of us got close to the edge of a cliff they would tell us to stop, that we couldn't go that way. But we were fortunate enough to find our way out in five and a half days. It was an emotional moment when we go out. After that I didn't sleep good for about a year."

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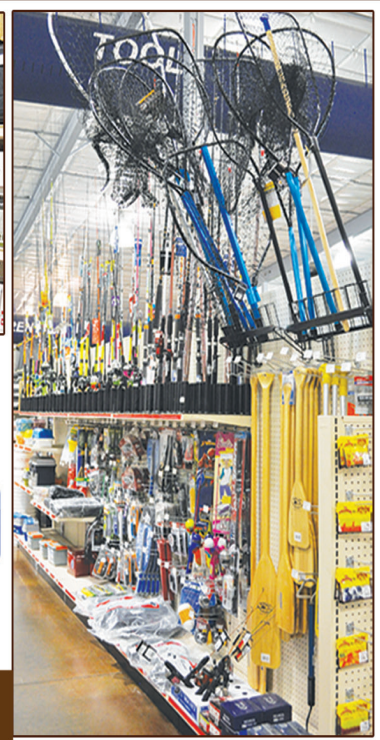
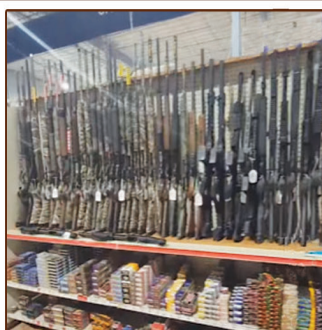
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Obits



WEST OAKS FUNERAL HOME

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Majorie Lee Ward

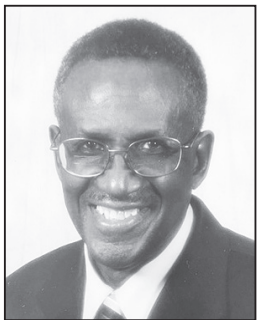
Funeral services for Marjorie Lee Ward of Sulphur Springs, will be held Friday, January 26, 2024 in the First Baptist Church Sanctuary with Pastor Jeff Gravens officiating. The family will welcome friends and loved ones from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Friday morning prior to the service at 11:00. Interment will follow in the Union Cemetery.

Marjorie was born on May 9, 1930 in Sulphur Springs, Texas, the daughter of Cornelia and Ernest McKeever. She entered into Heaven Friday, January 19, 2024 at 4:50 a.m. After graduating from Sulphur Springs High School, she attended a business school in Dallas. Shortly after, she returned to Sulphur Springs and on June 25, 1949, married the love of her life, Kenneth Ray Ward. They shared 74 years of marriage, building a life together of family, hard work and serving the Lord.

After her daughters were older, Marjorie became the Financial Secretary for two churches: Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, and First Baptist Church of Beaumont. Her greatest adventure came when she and Kenneth bought Sulphur Springs Parts Company, where she was the Office Manager and Financial Secretary of the business.

Serving the Lord in church has been top priority for Marjorie, and she was a member of First Baptist Church in Sulphur Springs. She served on the Union Cemetery Association Board beginning 1985, serving as Trustee, Chairman, Treasurer, and from 1985 to the present, currently as Vice-President emeritus. Throughout her life, she taught Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and sang in the Sanctuary and Silvertone Choirs at First Baptist Church. She loved music, and enjoyed playing the piano and organ.

Survivors include her husband, Kenneth Ray Ward; her three daughters: Margaret Thomas of Montgomery; Jerry Burks Watkins and Charlie of McKinney; and Jackie O'Quinn and Danny of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Grandchildren: Mindy Thomas Fisher and Cody of McKinney; Heather Thomas of San Antonio; Brandon Burks and Amy of New Llano, Louisiana; Bradley Burks of Roswell, New Mexico; Brian O'Quinn and Debbie of Colorado Springs, Colorado; Julia O'Quinn Brady and Tom of Bayville, New Jersey; and nine great-grandchildren. Mrs. Ward was preceded in death by her parents, Cornelia and Ernest McKeever, her son-in-law Wayne Thomas, and her brother and sister-in-law, James Travis McKeever and Janette.



Joe Davies "JD" Franklin

Former Mayor and City Council member, Joe Davies "JD" Franklin, age 86, departed this life on Saturday, January 13, 2024, at his cherished home in Sulphur Springs, TX. Born on April 18, 1937, in Sulphur Springs to Zeb D. Franklin and Robbie Ray Kelly

A graduate of Douglas High School in 1956, JD, known as "Ironman," excelled in football and carried his resilience into all aspects of life. On April 18, 1959, he married the love of his life, Gloria Jean Nash, in Sulphur Springs, TX. Together, they raised four children.

His career journey included roles as a machinist at Crawford Eyewear and Rockwell International, an entrepreneur in the landscape and lawn business, and, in his later years, a dedicated provider of facilities services at Sulphur Springs High School. His commitment to his community extended beyond his professional endeavors.

JD actively served in many integral roles at Morning Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. He served as Chairman of Deacons, Church Treasurer, Sunday School and Baptist Training Union Instructor, and was a member of multiple choirs, including the Male Chorus.

A trailblazer in Sulphur Springs, JD Franklin made history by becoming the first Black Mayor of the city in 1978. His civic engagement extended to membership in the Jaycees and serving as past Master of Masonic Columbia Lodge #81 for several decades. A dedicated Mason for over 60 years, JD was a respected figure in the Masonic community. JD also served faithfully as president of the Mel Haven Cemetery for over 40 years.

Joe Davies "JD" Franklin's legacy echoes through the streets of Sulphur Springs, most notably honored by the street that bears his name. His faith, his contributions to civic life, his unwavering dedication to family, and his lasting impact on the community make him an enduring figure in the hearts of those who knew and loved him. As we mourn his passing, we celebrate a life well-lived and the legacy he leaves behind. JD is survived by his devoted sons, Gary Franklin (Darcell) of Grand Prairie, TX, Sean Franklin (George) of Brownsville, TX, Jarrod Franklin (Dionne) of Houston, TX, and loving daughter, Daphne Franklin Hunter (Kennith) of Murchinson, TX.

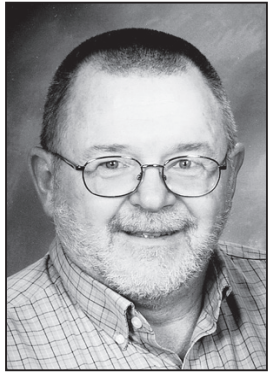
Cherished grandchildren include Brittany Green, Cordell Franklin, Chayce Franklin, Keylan Hunter, Colby Franklin, Erin Haven, and Jarron Franklin. His great-grandchildren, Jalen, Adrianna, Sariah, Lyric, Cordell Jr., Keidan, Zane, Jayce, Axel, and Atlas, carry his legacy forward.

JD is preceded in death by his parents, Zeb Franklin, and Robbie Ray Kelly; beloved wife, Gloria Jean Franklin; son, JD Franklin, Jr.; sister, Bennie Berry; brother, Aubria Franklin; and stepmother, Rose Franklin.

A Funeral Service to celebrate JD's life will be held on Saturday, January 27, 2024, at 11:00 AM at Morning Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Sulphur Springs, TX. Interment will follow at Mel Haven Cemetery in Sulphur Springs, TX. Visitation for friends and family will take place on Friday, January 26, 2024, from 6:00-8:00 PM at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home, Sulphur Springs, TX.

Obits

Continued



Ronnie Lee Collins

Funeral Service for Ronnie Lee Collins, age 69, of Sulphur Springs, TX were held at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, January 22, 2024, at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home, Sulphur Springs, TX. Dr. David Hardage and Dr. Jeff Gravens officiated. Interment followed at Winterfield Cemetery, Pickton, TX weather permitting. Visitation was held from 6:00-8:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 21, 2024, at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Mr. Collins passed away on Wednesday, January 17, 2024, in Sulphur Springs, TX.

Ronnie Collins was born June 25, 1954, in Detroit, MI to William Howard Collins and Gearldine Moss. After high school, he married the love of his life Susan Edwards on August 10, 1974, at Spence Chapel in Sulphur Springs. They were faithfully married for more than 49 years. He worked at AMPI and Penske for many years. Ronnie was a mechanic, loved working on cars and watching various TV shows. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Sulphur Springs, TX where he enjoyed many years in service to the church in multiple rolls, such as the Media Team, teaching Sunday School, and teaching Teen CBS.

He is survived by his wife, Susan Edwards Collins; children, Lee Collins and wife Trina, Alicia Brumfield and husband Ty; grandchildren, Izzy Brumfield, Vivian Collins, William Collins, and Andrew Collins; brother-in-law, Clay Edwards and wife Tina; sister-in-laws, Elaina McQueen and husband Ed, and Gail Edwards; as well as a niece and several nephews.

Ronnie was preceded in death by his mother, Gearldine Moss; parents-in-law, William and Lovis Edwards, brother-in-law, Jeff Edwards. Flowers can be sent to Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home or donations made in Ronnie's memory to the local chapter of Gideons International, <https://www.gideons.org/donate>

Arrangements were under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. The online register can be signed at www.murrayorwosky.com



Mildred Herrington

Graveside Service for Mildred Herrington, age 83, of Sulphur Springs, TX will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, January 26, 2024 at IOOF Cemetery Quinlan, TX. Visitation will be held from 5:00-7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 25, 2024 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home, Sulphur Springs, TX. Mrs. Herrington passed away on Thursday, January 18, 2024 in Sulphur Springs, TX.

Mildred Herrington was born on April 9, 1940 in Jacksonville, TX to Charlie O. Wooddell and Sadie Alma (Cox) Wooddell. She married Curtis Herrington in 1958. They were the owners of Curtis' Wholesale Bait in Quinlan, TX for many years. Mildred loved playing cards, Bingo and 42 Dominoes. She was also an avid collector of stuffed animals.

She is survived by daughter, Denise Webb; son, Curtis W. Herrington; grandchildren, Amber Lawhorn and husband Richard, Nikki Webb; great-grandchildren, Jordyn Lawhorn, Jesse Herrington; sister, Edna Jones.

Mildred is preceded in death by her parents, Charlie O. and Sadie Wooddell; husband, Curtis Herrington; sister, Deloris Howell; brother, Cecil Wooddell.

Arrangements are under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. The online register can be signed at www.murrayorwosky.com

Gerald Wayne Sanderson

Gerald Wayne Sanderson, age 68, of Mount Vernon, TX was born on April 29, 1955 in Rice, MN to Francis Jay Sanderson and Marian Lucille (Rosett) Sanderson. After high school, Gerald worked in construction as a Roofer. He was married to Arlette Larson Sanderson until her recent passing. Mr. Sanderson passed away on Monday, January 15, 2024 in Mount Vernon, TX.

He is survived by his daughter, Jennifer Edin (Jim); stepdaughter, Angela Chelberg (Jason); grandchildren, Aleah West, Alexander West (Mackenzie), and Lucy Edin; three great-grandsons; sister, Sandy Brisbane (Bob).

He was preceded in death by his parents, Francis Jay and Marian Lucille Sanderson, and brother, Franny Sanderson.

A Family Gathering will be held at a later date.

Grace Cain Blevins

Grace Cain Blevins, 93 of Sulphur Springs passed away Wednesday January 17, 2024. Funeral services were held at 2:00 p.m. Saturday January 20, 2024, at the Delta Funeral Home Chapel. The visitation was one hour prior to the service from 1:00 – 2:00p.m. Shane Carrington officiated, and interment followed at Oaklawn Cemetery.

Grace was born July 25, 1930, in Dallas, Texas to Edgar Lee and Evelyn "Hooten" Killebrew. They have preceded her in death as well as two husbands; Nowlin Cain and Homer Blevins, son; Eddie Cain and a granddaughter; Amanda Lawson.

She is survived by a daughter; LaRue Lawson and husband Alvin of Cooper, TX, 2 sons; Michael Cain and wife Sandy of Emory, TX, Hank Cain and wife Daria of Sulphur Springs, TX, 5 grandchildren; Shannon Cain, Chelsea English, Deanna Griffin, Karla Ragan, Tammy Lawson, and 9 great grandchildren. Grace worked as a Medical Secretary for over 40 years before retirement, she was a member of the South Side Church of Christ in Sulphur Springs. You may pay your respects online at www.deltafuneralhome.com. Services entrusted to Delta Funeral Home to the family or in memory of Grace Cain Blevins.

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