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TENNIS IN MASON

Tumbleweed Smith



Mason County has more tennis courts per capita than any county in the state. Residents have played the sport since the 1920s. It was rather primitive back then.

“Draw a line in the dirt, put two sticks up and string barbed wire between them and play with tennis racquets that cost a lot of money,” says Amelia Zesch, Mason’s tennis historian. She says an early concession stand was a man’s pickup.

“He sold Dr. Pepper and goat sandwiches from the bed of his vehicle.”

Generations of players and coaches have been involved in Mason High School’s tennis program.

“We have a hundred and fourteen individual state championships,” says tennis coach Cade Smith. “That’s many more than the next school in the state of Texas. We also have twenty-eight state team championships. We have two courts here at the high school and countless courts around the county that we use quite a bit.”

Amelia says two courts were built on the east side of the courthouse. “A couple of guys built the fence around them out of chicken wire.”

Mason County’s association with tennis has attracted national publicity. “Sport Illustrated did an article on Mason tennis,” says Amelia. “It was eleven pages long and had lots of pictures in the small towns of Art and Peter’s Prairie, both early communities that had tennis courts and players.”

She says other publications had long articles and lots of photos. Tennis on the Range was the title of one article. “One magazine ran a photo of a young girl playing tennis. The caption read ‘Tennis in the country where the hogs are.’ Another one printed stories about these old timers driving around in their pickups with tennis racquets in the gun racks.”

Before there were UIL divisions, Mason played against tennis teams in major cities and won. Mason won over Highland Park High School tournament after tournament. In the 1950s, Mason started its own tennis tournament. Within twenty years it attracted a thousand teams from Texas and near by states. Participants stayed in the school gyms and in residents’ homes. Once, Mason was known as the tennis capital of Texas. Now city residents call it the winningest tennis team in Texas. The Mason Tennis Association has hundreds of members.

“I feel like half the town contributes to the upkeep of these courts in some form or fashion,” says Cade. Some tennis players in Mason started playing tennis when they were barely out of diapers. In 1935 a Mason tennis player hitchhiked to the state tournament and won. He brought his trophy home on the bus.

Miscellaneous

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V	S	S	R	E	S	F	L	A	S	H	G	O	R	D	O	N	N	T	U	R
S	I	C	E	I	E	I	S	N	W	E	S	T	W	O	R	L	D	O	E	F
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🏠 AUCTION DATE and TIME: Thursday, January 16, 2025 @ 9:31am

📍 LOCATION and DIRECTIONS: 353996 East 750 Rd · Cushing, OK 74023

On the east side of Cushing, OK at Jct Hwy 33 & Echee Valley Rd, go S on Echee Valley Rd/S 3640 Rd. 4 miles, auction on right. On corner of 3640 & 760 Rd. - OR - From Stroud, OK at Jct 144 & Hwy 99 take Hwy 99 N 12 miles to E 760 Rd, turn left go 2 miles, auction on right. - OR - On the west side of Drumright, OK at Jct. Hwy 33 & 99, take Hwy 99S 4 miles to E 760 Rd, turn right (west) and go 2 miles, house on right, on Corner of 3640 & 760 Rd.

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LIVE ONSITE & ONLINE BIDDING ON LOTS 501 - 910 STARTS @ 10:31AM FOLLOWED BY AMMO & ACCESSORIES

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Auctioneer's Note: Donald was an avid gun collector! We are selling his 400+ FIREARM COLLECTION (lots are new and in boxes) along with lots of ammo and accessories. Don't overlook the JEEP, CAMPER & STORAGE CONTAINER along with lots of vintage woodworking tools, antiques and collectibles. Lots of barn finds to be uncovered! Follow us on Facebook for updates or visit our website for pictures at www.chuppsauction.com

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Barbara Kay Julian

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the peaceful passing of Barbara Kay Julian, 80, of Sulphur Springs, TX on Sunday, December 29, 2024. Born in Streator, IL to Donald and Kathryn Hepner. She married the love of her life, Robert (Bob) Julian in June of 1964.

Barbara, known as Barb to most, loved to spend time with family and friends and she rarely sat idle. She loved to play bridge and to host various gatherings from dinner parties, to afternoon teas and special events. She was always a little bit "extra" in everything she did and was loved for that.

For 25 years, Barb was a pre-school and kindergarten teacher at Water Oak School as well as a Sunday School teacher at St. Phillips Episcopal Church. Her kind and giving heart for children led her to be an avid voice for children and education for the Boys & Girls Club and CASA. Barb also led the campaign to build the new current Sulphur Springs Library. She was an active member of many clubs and organizations including the Hopkins County Cancer Board, Jr. Waverly, P.E.O., Lena Day Garden



Club and Daughters of the King. Barb will be remembered for her positive energy and exuberance for life.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Gary Hepner. Barb is survived by her husband Bob Julian, their children Suzette (Rob) Jewell, Melissa (Chris) Duncan, Rob (Heather) Julian, 8 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

A special thank you to the caregivers of Carriage House, Choice Hospice and Dr. Laura Kosub. A visitation will be held on Sunday, January 12th, 4-6pm at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home, 876 Wildcat Way, Sulphur Springs, TX. The funeral will be held on Monday, January 13th, 1pm at St. Phillips Episcopal, 1206 College St. with interment following at the City Cemetery and then a reception back at the church.

Norma Patricia Cruise Strawn

Norma Patricia Cruse Strawn followed her beloved, Elwin on. She passed peacefully at her home and was welcomed home to Glory on January 4th, 2025. Born on January 12, 1941, in Wynne, Arkansas to Norman Cruse and Blanche Allene Duke Cruse. She married Clarence Elwin Strawn on February 18, 1960, in Elaine, Arkansas. She was the proud mother of one son, Bradley Elwin Strawn born in May 1964. The family moved to Sulphur Springs, Texas in 1970. She was a homemaker but also worked for Sears in the catalog order center for several years.

A longtime member of Central Baptist Church, Sulphur Springs, Texas, she was a woman of faith and loved listening to gospel music. She was known as Tricia or Pat to family and friends, but her favorite role and names were Mama and Granny. She was preceded in death by her loving husband of 64 years, her parents, and sisters Christine Webb and Brenda Kay Cruse, and niece,

Ginger Wood. She is survived by son Bradley (Brad) Strawn and wife Amie of Emory, Texas. Three grandchildren, Bradley Coleman (Cole) Strawn and wife, Kelsi of Oneonta, Alabama, Sidney Capri Russell and husband, James of Ponder, Texas and Ethan Wyatt Strawn and wife, Amber of Mt. Vernon, Texas, three great grandchildren Karlee Capri, Karter Cole, and Kamryn Ryanne, and niece Christy Webb of Pine Bluff, Arkansas nephew Micheal Milholland of Wynne, Arkansas also survive.

A Celebration of Life service honoring Elwin and Pat Strawn was held at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, January 7th, 2025, at Shook's Chapel in Sulphur Springs, Texas.



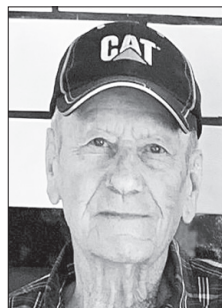
Clarence Elwin Strawn

Clarence Elwin Strawn was born in Phillips County, Arkansas on April 24, 1934, to Clarence Coleman and Gracie Leona Helms Strawn. Raised along the Mississippi Delta as a farmer, he graduated from Elaine High School in Elaine Arkansas and served in the US Army. He married Norma Patricia Cruse on February 18, 1960, in Elaine Arkansas and they had one son, Bradley Elwin born in May 1964. Though the family lived a brief time in Elaine Arkansas and Natchez, Mississippi. Sulphur Springs Texas became their home in 1970. Elwin retired from Texas Utilities Mining Company in the early 1990's but also owned and operated Strawn Construction from 1959 to 2018. He has built many ponds and lakes and cleared land through the years. He was proud of his work and he and Pat in recent years would often take drives to the places he had designed and cultivated. He was a long-time member and served as a deacon at Central Baptist Church in Sulphur Springs where he and Pat made numerous lifelong friends. Elwin was a man of faith who loved the Lord and his family. All who had an opportunity to know this gentle man with his quick wit and wonderful sense of humor quickly grew to love and appreciate him.

Elwin was welcomed into the arms of his Savior and passed peacefully at home, on Thursday, January 2nd, 2025. He is survived by his loving wife, Patricia, son Bradley (Brad) Strawn and wife Amie of Emory, Texas. Three grandchildren and three great grandchildren, to whom he is lovingly known as Pop also survive, grandson, Bradley Coleman (Cole) Strawn and wife Kelsi of Oneonta, Alabama, granddaughter, Sidney Capri Russell and husband James of Ponder, Texas and grandson, Ethan Wyatt Strawn and wife Amber of Mt. Vernon, Texas, great granddaughters Karlee Capri and Kamryn Ryanne and great grandson Kater Cole. He is also survived by one brother, Jerrell (Peachie) Strawn and wife Cynthia of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

He was preceded in death by his parents, one sister, Opal Pickens, brothers Van Strawn, Arliss Strawn, and Justin Strawn, and a special cousin who was considered a brother, James Helms.

A Celebration of Life service honoring Elwin and Pat Strawn was held at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, January 7th, 2025, at Shook's Chapel in Sulphur Springs, Texas.



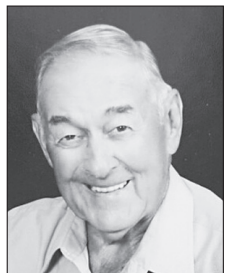
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James "Jim" Wade Gregg

Funeral services for James "Jim" Wade Gregg, age 88, of Sulphur Springs will be conducted at 11:00 a.m., on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at West Oaks Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Jim Goodwin officiating. Visitation will be held at 10:00 a.m., prior to the service. Interment will be at Restlawn Memorial Park with the Masons serving as pallbearers.

Jim passed away on Sunday, January 5, 2025 with his family by his side. Jim was born on May 17, 1936 in Hopkins County, the son of Hugh Mark Gregg and Mary Rebecca Kitts Gregg. He married Peggy Groves on July 22, 1955 in Sulphur Springs. Jim served in the United States Army. He was a member of the Sulphur Springs Masonic Lodge #221 and a member of Arbala Church. In addition to his wife Peggy, he is survived by his children, Diane Breneman and husband Bill and Karen Zitterich and husband Ron, grandchildren, Matthew Zitterich and wife Chelsea, Kyle Zitterich and wife Marisa, Dalton Walthall and Wife Kyla, Holly Booth, Joshua Breneman, Robert Breneman and wife Katie, great-grandchildren, Diane Booth, Kruz Zitterich, Cash Zitterich, Zoe Walthall,, Grace Breneman, Judah Breneman, Scottlyn Breneman, Lukas Breneman, Harlie Reidmier and Camryn Reidmier.

Jim was preceded in death by his parents, brother, Billy Braz Gregg and sister, Josephine Echols.

Memorials may be made to the Masonic Lodge #221. Arrangements are under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home. www.westoaksfuneralhome.com

Virginia Faye Bishop

November 4, 1939 ~ January 6, 2025 (age 85) Visitation for Virginia Faye Bishop will be from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at West Oaks Funeral Home on Sunday, January 12, 2025. She passed away on January 6, 2025 in Sulphur Springs, Texas.



Richard "Rick" Havey Louis Shaver

Richard "Rick" Havey Louis Shaver, 75 years old, passed away on Thursday, January 2, 2025, at Christus Trinity Mother Frances Hospital in Tyler, TX. Rick was born on October 9, 1949, in Mesa, AZ to Marjorie (Cawdrey) Shaver and Emmert Shaver. After his mother's passing, Rick moved to Seattle, WA to live with his Auntie Bess, where he developed a love for the beauty of the Pacific Northwest.

From flying "super connies" in typhoons during his time in the Navy to becoming a programmer for Lockheed-Martin, where he retired after 40 years, Rick's life was full of adventure. As Rick would tell you, the best adventure he embarked on was meeting Deborah Lynn Edwards while both were working at Lockheed-Martin. Rick would purposely correct her punctuation in documents to get her attention. It worked; they fell in love and were married in Silverdale, Washington, on June 26, 1993, also becoming the father to Jordan Shaver-Clark and Josh Shaver. Throughout Rick and Debbie's 31 years of marriage, it was filled with train trips across the country to visit family, and trips to Italy, Scotland, and Israel. Returning home to Washington from their cross-country

road trip, Rick and Debbie felt the call to pack up and move to Sulphur Springs. Rick was active in the community of Sulphur Springs, serving on the board of Northeast Texas Heart of Hope and being active in his church.

The Celebration of Life for Rick will be held on Saturday, January 11, 2025 at Weaver Baptist Church in Saltillo, TX with Bro. Tom Friday officiating. Visitation will be at 11am, the service at noon followed by interment at Weaver Cemetery and a catered lunch for all. Josh Shaver, Jordan Shaver-Clark, Zak Clark, Audie McCall, Josh Raymond and Mike McClendon are serving as pallbearers. As many know, his mother-in-law, Beverly "Earlene" Edwards also passed away on Thursday, January 2, 2025 in North Carolina.

Rick is survived by his wife, Debbie Shaver of Sulphur Springs, Texas; daughter, Jordan Shaver-Clark of Rockwall, Texas; son, Josh Shaver of Stephenville, Texas; grandchildren, Zak, Maverick, and Lou; and two toy yorkies, Maggie and Molly.



Bill Ladd

Memorial service for Bill Ladd, age 80, of Sulphur Springs, Texas will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 11, 2025 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Inurnment will follow at Shooks Chapel with Christian Ladd, Jonathan Ladd, Jaxson Rothfuss, Liam Ladd, Karlye Ladd, and Katelyn Ladd serving as Honorary Pallbearers. Visitation will be held one hour prior from 10:00-11:00 a.m. at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Mr. Ladd passed away at his home on Friday, December 27, 2024.

William Joseph Ladd was born on December 16, 1944 in Poplar Bluff, Missouri to Elmo and Dortha (Halford) Ladd. He married Kellena Kay Hambrick in Pocahontas, Arkansas on August 19, 1967. Bill received his Bachelor's degree from Harding University and went on to earn a Master's degree from The University of Oklahoma. He was a minister for many years and then sold insurance for Primerica.

Bill had an immense love for his family and friends. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather and loved nothing more than spending time with his family. After dedicating his heart to the ministry, he served as pastor for over 30 years throughout Arkansas and Texas. He led with grace, humility, and a deep passion for serving others. Bill truly exemplified the love of Christ in every moment.

Bill is survived by his sons, Stephen Ladd (Dana) of Mt. Vernon, Texas, Blake Ladd of Denton, Texas, and Bryan Ladd (Katharine) of Farmersville, Texas; grandchildren, Christian Ladd (Shelby), Jonathan Ladd (Jamie), Jaxson Rothfuss, Liam Ladd, Karlye Ladd, and Katelyn Ladd; great-grandchildren, Parker Ladd, Jameson Ladd, and Josie Ladd; brother, Alan Ladd (Mary Ellen); and sister, Pat Ladd Morrow.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Elmo and Dortha Ladd; wife, Kellena Kay Ladd; sister, Betty Alice Ladd Hambrick; brother, John Marion Ladd; and brother-in-law, Joe Lynn Morrow.

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