



Ernest Carroll Jett Jr.

July 10, 1945 - May 11, 2026

Ernest Carroll Jett, Jr. went home to Jesus on May 11, 2026, after a long illness. He passed peacefully at home with his wife and daughter at his side.

Ernie was born on July 10, 1945, in Liberty, Texas to Ernest Carroll Jett, Sr. and Mary Ella Gladden Jett. He was a bright child who was known to bring home an alligator from time to time, or stage a hunger strike for a leather jacket with his younger brother Dave. He was smart and strong-willed but also a devoted follower of Jesus from an early age. He was baptized at First Baptist Church of Winnsboro as a child and lived his life in pursuit of the knowledge of Christ.

By high school, Ernie's family had moved to New Orleans, where he was accepted into and graduated from Benjamin Franklin High School and accidentally integrated a city park with his friends. He was a strong advocate for civil rights, both in New Orleans and later at Baylor University.

At Baylor, Ernie was better known as Bro. Sugar NoZe (Satchel!) and continued his habit of high achievement combined with occasional forays into activism. He was a member of the Alpha Chi Honor Society, but also wrote for *The Rope*, painted the bear pit pink, and may or may not be responsible for the Great Rope Drop of 1966. He graduated cum laude in 1967.

Ernie also fell in love with a beautiful girl, Zella Janene Loftis. They met in August of 1966, and married at Baylor on March 4, 1967. Janene was the love of Ernie's life, and he of hers. They celebrated 59 years of marriage this year, and she survives him.

Ernie's education was supported by Janene for the next several years. They moved to Baton Rouge in 1967 so he could pursue his Masters' degree at Louisiana State University. He got his Master of Arts in both Greek and History there, and returned to Texas to teach History at Dallas Baptist College in 1969. Their daughter Julie was born in Dallas, and Janene continued working while Ernie decided law school might be a good idea (daughters are expensive).

The family moved to Austin, and Ernie did three years of law school in 27 months at the University of Texas, where he was Review Editor of the Texas International Law Journal and a member of Phi Delta Phi. He graduated with his Doctor of Jurisprudence in 1973 and passed the Texas Bar that year. He also shaved his glorious mustache so he could get a job. It worked, and he moved with his family to Houston, where he worked for Cooper Industries and then Tenneco, where he got a taste for international law, mergers, and acquisitions.

In Houston Ernie was ordained as a deacon at First Baptist Church of Bellaire. He and Janene had their son Josh in 1974, and when his third child was on the way he and Janene moved to Missouri, where the family would spend the largest part of his life.

In 1979, Ernie went to work as Assistant General Counsel for Leggett & Platt, Inc. in Carthage. He was accepted into the Missouri Bar Association in 1980, and the Jett family settled in rural Joplin, Missouri, a short drive away. Their son Stephen was born soon after.

Ernie and Janene felt God's calling to help plant charismatic churches in Missouri. By 1983, New Covenant Church (now Full Faith Church) was born in Carthage, Missouri. Ernie was an elder and teacher there for over a decade while he continued his day job as a corporate attorney with a reputation for integrity and expertise. He was also a deacon at Calvary Baptist Church in Joplin, Missouri.

At Leggett, Ernie was elected Vice President and Secretary in 1995 and assumed the General Counsel position in 1997, and retired as Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary in 2010. He traveled extensively and served on numerous Boards of Directors for Leggett & Platt holdings in Switzerland and in China. The list is long, the awards and titles are many, but Ernie's best title was "Papa".

Ernie became a grandfather in 1989 and truly loved all his grandchildren. In 1995, he and Janene adopted their fourth child, Adrianna. Her passing in 2021 was his worst heartbreak, and we know he was delighted to see her when he got home. He was also met by his parents, his stepmother Burnell Hutcherson Jett, and his great-grandson, Logan Tannehill.

Ernie was a talented photographer but loved art of all kinds. He supported artists in China and in Missouri for many years. He and Janene also became involved with Hawaii Baptist Academy as a donor and made multiple trips there with their children and grandchildren, and later in life he supported Mercy Ships, Doctors Without Borders, and many other organizations. At 70, he rode his Harley to Sturgis and back again. He also wrote eight books on the Church, and maintained his blog until his death.

After moving to Tyler in 2019, Ernie and Janene were active at Crosspointe

Church and later at Rose Heights Church, where they were members at the time of his passing.

Ernest Jett is survived by his wife Janene and daughter Julie, both of Tyler, and his sons: John "Josh" Jett of Branson, MO; and Maj. Stephen Von Jett, Ret. (Bridgette) of Frederick, MD, and eight grandchildren: Taryn May (James) of Sanford, FL; Tristan Watts (Mackenzie Schneller) of Chicago, IL; Gwendolyn Tannehill of Ozark, MO; Jacqueline Jett-Ruark (Tyler Ruark) of Granby, MO; and Blake Von Jett, Dylan Von Jett, and Madilyn Von Jett, all of Frederick, MD. He is also survived by his brother David Jett (Gail) of Tyler and his stepsiblings: Sylvia Maddox (Peter) of San Antonio, Sharon Gorham (George) of Edmond, OK; and Jimmy Hutcherson of Waco, as well as eight great-grandchildren and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and many friends.

A small inurnment ceremony will be held at Cathedral in the Pines Cemetery at 10:00 AM on Thursday, May 21, 2026, with Pastor Scott Moore officiating, under the direction of Stewart Family Funeral Home.

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." - Numbers 6:24-26

Previous Events

Family Inurnment

MAY **21**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Cathedral in the Pines Cemetery
7825 South Broadway Avenue
Tyler, TX 75703

Tribute Wall



“ Stewart Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr.



Stewart Family Funeral Home - May 19 at 03:52 PM



“ A grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr..

May 21 at 12:55 AM



“ Bridgette V. purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr..



Bridgette V. - May 20 at 02:18 PM

VF

“ 75 files added to the tribute wall



Von Jett Family - May 20 at 10:25 AM



“ Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr..



May 19 at 10:05 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr..

May 19 at 10:05 PM



“ 181 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



Stewart Family Funeral Home - May 19 at 03:47 PM



“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Julie Jett - May 17 at 03:54 PM

BJ

“ I had the privilege of working closely with Ernie for nearly a quarter of a century at Leggett & Platt. I grew to know him well (our offices were in whispering distance of each other most of the years). Without any doubt, Ernie was a truly outstanding lawyer and counselor. More importantly, he was a truly outstanding man. He was widely respected and well-liked by his many “clients’ at Leggett. Ernie seemed to always be in motion – here, there, and everywhere. That is probably why he was affectionately called and known as “Jettstream.” You left us all too early, partner. Bob Jefferies

Bob Jefferies - May 16 at 02:41 PM

DA

“ Debbie Snodgrass and Karla Alumbaugh purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr..



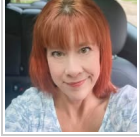
Debbie Snodgrass and Karla Alumbaugh - May 15 at 11:40 AM



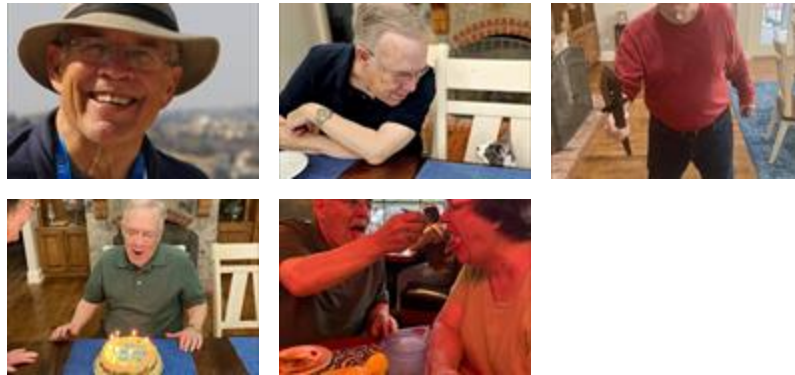
“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Julie Jett - May 15 at 05:55 AM



“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



Julie Jett - May 15 at 05:52 AM

MS

“ Dear Janene, Julie, Josh, Stephen, and Jett family:

On behalf of Martha and myself, and our daughters Liza and Mary, please accept our deepest sympathies and our prayers at this difficult time. It has been an honor and blessing to know Ernie as a friend, boss, colleague, and mentor. While we know from our shared faith in Jesus Christ that Ernie is now waiting for all of us on the other side, our friendship with each of you continues here below, and we hope to see each of you in days ahead and share in person some of the many treasured memories we have of Ernie. May God grant you the peace that only He can give. Much love from the Smith family. – Mark (and Martha) Smith

Mark & Martha Smith - May 14 at 11:31 AM

ML

“ Mark L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr..

Mark L. - May 14 at 11:10 AM

SD

“ Scott and Pam Douglas purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr..



Scott and Pam Douglas - May 13 at 10:28 PM

SD

“ Scott and Pam Douglas planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr..

Scott and Pam Douglas - May 13 at 10:28 PM

DJ

“ David J. purchased the Sentiments of Serenity S pray for the family of Ernest Carroll Jett Jr..



David J. - May 13 at 06:03 PM