



## Wilda Jane (Foushee) Willms

January 6, 1932 - May 7, 2024

Wilda Jane (Foushee) Willms, 92, of Tyler, TX died peacefully on May 7, 2024. She was born January 6, 1932 to Alice (Johnson) and Wren Foushee on the family farm in Bureau Township, IL where she developed a lifelong love of people, land, animals, and adventure. Wilda attended the University of Illinois (Chicago) where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. It was there that she met the love of her life, Dr. Richard ("Dick") Willms. They married in 1956 and celebrated their 68th anniversary in January.

Wilda's interests were diverse and included raising animals of all kinds, collecting silver, gardening, church, home decorating, cooking, entertaining, and travel. She loved life and she loved people. Her greatest love was her family. She established loving homes in San Bernardino, CA and in El Paso, Houston, Jacksonville and Tyler, TX. Wilda worked for a time as a nurse and as a staff development director, but most of her professional life was as the office manager in Dick's surgical practice. Their private and professional lives occasionally merged. Once, when baby goats were born at home, Wilda found that corners of an office could make an effective day-time nursery. Wilda and Dick created many wonderful and memorable experiences for their children, grandchildren, extended family, and friends, often around water sports and fish fries at Lake Jacksonville, TX. For many years she and Dick organized, orchestrated, and hosted a spring campout at the lake for Tyler physicians

and their children to nurture family bonds.

Wilda herself was one-of-a-kind. She may have been tiny in body, but she was larger than life in personality and spirit. Her sense of style was unmatched. Her outfits were almost always complemented with a fashionable hat (which we know is now a halo). Her love of Christmas was unfailing with her asking expectantly, "Isn't it time for stockings?" even well after the children were grown. Her curiosity and commitment to education and life-long learning were infectious. Early on, her sense of adventure was seen in enthusiasm for farm tractor rides to town, and later in eagerness for towing water skiers and taking trips overseas. When later life slowed her down, she just had to get to town for lunch and a quick shopping trip. It's rare someone takes the time to be present for everyone. For anyone who met her, you know that she would truly get to know you and she cared. Words to describe her? Classy, brilliant, beautiful, devoted, affectionate, loveable, compassionate, strong-willed, clever, a memory like no other, quick-witted, curious, generous, and loving.

We've lost an incredibly special person. Even though we are grateful she is at peace, we will miss her always.

Wilda was preceded in death by her son Michael Shane Willms. She is survived by her husband and three children: Richard Scott Willms and wife Susan Watkins; Christopher Denton Willms and wife Ann Willms; and Melissa ("Misty") Jane Willms and husband Mickey Davis; as well as grandchildren Benjamin, Joshua, Molly, Nina, and Olivia.

A funeral service will be held at 10:00 am, May 31st at Christ Episcopal Church, 118 S. Bois d'Arc, Tyler, TX, with a reception at the church to follow. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Christ Episcopal Church, an animal welfare charity, or other charity of your choice. The family extends special thanks to all of those who provided care to Wilda in the final year and

a half of her life.

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

MAY **31**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Christ Episcopal Church  
118 South Bois d' Arc  
Tyler, TX 75702

## Reception to follow Service

MAY **31**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Christ Episcopal Church  
118 South Bois d' Arc  
Tyler, TX 75702

# Tribute Wall

CS

“ I first met Wilda in my position as a surgery scheduler at ETMC. She scheduled all of Dr Willms surgical procedures and, as I came to find out, his office, family, and social events. She always got the business done first, then had a quick minute for the latest funny story. After many years of knowing her only through phone conversations, we finally had occasion to meet for lunch and she was the tiniest little firecracker. Everyone who talks about her memory is spot on. She could remember anything and everything anyone had ever said or done in her presence. Amazing! My sweetest memory was of Wilda showing up at my home one day with a special surprise. I had just had back surgery and was away from work for weeks. She baked and delivered the most delicious lasagna I've ever had. I was completely overwhelmed by that generosity. I loved her stories and admired her love of life and family. She will be missed in Tyler. Carolyn S.

Carolyn Sunde - June 03, 2024 at 10:32 AM

LW

“ Carol and Larry Wiertz will be unable to attend the service but have many happy memories of Dick and Wilda.

Larry Wiertz - May 12, 2024 at 10:11 PM



“ Always great visiting with Wilda & know you will miss her. She often wore charming hats! Carolyn Halbrooks Bain

Carolyn Bain - May 11, 2024 at 03:43 PM