



Willie Rolen Lilly

July 20, 1926 - June 24, 2024

Willie Rolen Lilly, 97, of Tyler passed away peacefully at his home on Monday, June 24, 2024. He was born July 20, 1926, in Smith County, at Elberta, south of Tyler.

He married Virginia Sue (Johnson) Lilly on June 27, 1955, and passed 3 days short of their sixty-ninth anniversary. He graduated from Tyler High School, class of 1944. Willie and his twin brother, Wade, grew up working in their father's rose fields, attended Tyler ISD schools, were drafted into the Army in January 1945, and both were stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii. Their older brother, Paul, was stationed at the same base for a portion of their time there. After the Army, he worked for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company and retired after 36 years of service. Willie also owned and operated W.R. Lilly Antenna Service in addition to his full-time position at Southwestern Bell, installing hundreds of television antennas all over east Texas.

Willie was an avid deer hunter and loved his many trips to the Hill Country. Willie was a longtime member and Deacon at Southern Oaks Baptist Church, being their oldest member. During his retirement, Willie enjoyed travelling across the United States with his family and friends from his church. Willie was active all the way to the end of his life and never lost his sense of humor.

He died less than 40 yards from the house in which he was born. A member

of what has been called the Greatest Generation, he fully embodied the American ideals of self-reliance, rugged individualism, and personal responsibility. He never met a problem he couldn't solve with his wits and his will. His family celebrates that he is finally home, enjoying the presence of the Savior he loved.

Willie was preceded in death by his parents Roy and Clara Lilly, an infant brother John Lilly, two sisters Lucy Deen and Mildred Lilly, twin brother Wade Lilly, and older brother Paul Lilly.

He is survived by his wife Virginia; daughter Gail Thigpen and husband Joe; sons Don Lilly and wife Amy, Ted Lilly and wife Cathy; grandchildren Lauren Odom and husband Christopher, Andrew Thigpen, Peyton Lilly, Sarah Lilly and husband Joe Bakker, and Adam Lilly and wife Morgan Hunt, as well as great-grandsons Levi and Mason Odom.

Services for Willie will be on Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. at Stewart Family Funeral Home with Tony Garrett officiating. Burial will follow at Meador Cemetery in Tyler. Visitation is scheduled from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Hospice of East Texas (<https://hospiceofeasttexas.org>), Wounded Warrior Project (<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org>), or Southern Oaks Baptist Church (<https://welovethegospel.com>).

Cemetery Details

Meador Cemetery

10188 CR 2121
Tyler, TX 75707

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 25. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Stewart Family Funeral Home
7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy
Tyler, TX 75703
(903) 581-2008

Service

JUN 26. 2:00 PM (CT)

Stewart Family Funeral Home
7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy
Tyler, TX 75703
(903) 581-2008

Tribute Wall



“ *Stewart Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Willie Rolen Lilly*



Stewart Family Funeral Home - June 25, 2024 at 03:37 PM

TR

“ *We will always remember and love Willie. He loved the hugs and, I will miss him dearly. My heart and prayers goes to Virginia and family. We love you.*

The Beltone family. Tamara

Tamara Roach - July 02, 2024 at 10:42 AM

RW

“ Dear Family & Mr. Thigpen,

I am Rosemary Woods, David Woods's sister. I don't personally know you, although sometimes I feel I do. I hope to meet you one day.

I want to extend my condolences to your wife, you, and the family for the loss of her father. Mr. Lilly lived a long and meaningful life. He left many wonderful memories for his family and friends.

It doesn't matter the person that passes, whether a parent, child, a friend, it is painful and takes time to organize the rushing thoughts we are unprepared to manage. Losing a loved one returns memories to us we may have forgotten. This is truly a blessing to help get through the difficult times.

Please know, my thoughts and prayers are with your family.

*Sincerely,
Rosemary Woods*

Rosemary Woods, sister, to David Woods - June 27, 2024 at 03:05 AM

TF

“ *The Portwood and Winters Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Willie Rolen Lilly.*

The Portwood and Winters Family - June 25, 2024 at 05:45 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Willie Rolen Lilly.*



June 25, 2024 at 05:45 PM



“ *Charlotte, Angie, Mindi, Misti and Amber purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Willie Rolen Lilly.*



Charlotte, Angie, Mindi, Misti and Amber - June 25, 2024 at 05:25 PM



“ *Mason Deen planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Willie Rolen Lilly.*

Mason Deen - June 25, 2024 at 12:59 PM



“ *Mason Deen purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Willie Rolen Lilly.*



Mason Deen - June 25, 2024 at 12:59 PM



“ 104 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



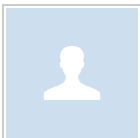
Stewart Family Funeral Home - June 25, 2024 at 11:32 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of *Willie Rolan Lilly*.



June 25, 2024 at 10:29 AM



“ *Serenity Wreath* was purchased for the family of *Willie Rolan Lilly*.



June 25, 2024 at 10:17 AM

BL

“ Bruce and Peggy Leitch purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Willie Rolen Lilly.



Bruce and Peggy Leitch - June 25, 2024 at 09:32 AM

BS

“ Brianna and Justin Sell purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Willie Rolen Lilly.



Brianna and Justin Sell - June 24, 2024 at 10:27 PM

KS

“ Karen Smith planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Willie Rolen Lilly.

Karen Smith - June 24, 2024 at 09:35 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Willie Rolen Lilly.



June 24, 2024 at 09:35 PM

JS

“ Jeff & Jenny Sammons planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Willie Rolen Lilly.

Jeff & Jenny Sammons - June 24, 2024 at 06:02 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Willie Rolen Lilly.*



June 24, 2024 at 06:02 PM