



Wilford "Wil" Eli Gardner Jr.

October 7, 1938 - April 30, 2014

Wilford Eli Gardner, Jr. ("Wil") of Siloam Springs, Arkansas passed away on April 30, 2014 at the Circle of Life Hospice, Springdale, Arkansas. Wil was born Friday, October 7, 1938, to Wilford Eli Gardner and Annabelle Jones Gardner in Claremore, Oklahoma. The family moved to Siloam Springs, Arkansas, in January 1956, where Wil married Donna Sutterfield on September 8, 1957. The couple has four children. After marrying, Wil and Donna moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where Wil attended the Oklahoma School of Accounting and Tulsa University. They then moved back to Siloam Springs, where he attended John Brown University, and then to Ft. Worth, Texas, where he graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Wil was a member of the Goingsnake District Heritage Association, the Trail of Tears Association, and the First Family of the Cherokee Nation.

Wil spent most of his adult life as an accountant and minister of the Gospel. He was employed with Simmons Foods in Siloam Springs for thirty-one years: as payroll coordinator for the first twenty-two years, and most recently, as the first corporate chaplain for the past seven years. Wil was instrumental in starting the chaplain program at Simmons and was able to bring on board two other passionate men before his retirement in October 2013. For nearly forty years, Wil was a faithful servant as associate pastor and pastor of many churches in this area, culminating in the past four years as pastor of Falling Springs Church located west of Decatur, Arkansas.

Wil is survived by his wife of 56 years, Donna Gayle Sutterfield Gardner, of the home; three daughters and one son: Lou Anne Gardner of Sour Lake, Texas, Brian Gardner and wife Cheryl of Gardner, Kansas, Robyne Locke and husband Frank of Lexington, Kentucky, and Amy Onnen and husband Steve of Siloam Springs; Nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; Two brothers and two sisters: Jack Gardner and wife Connie of Hulbert, Oklahoma, Thomas Gardner and wife Rosa of Thornton, Colorado, Ahniwake Van Vleet and husband Duane of Littleton, Colorado, and Lynda Telles of Mesa, Arizona; Donna's brothers and sisters: Jo Ann Kincaid of Siloam Springs, Jackie Sutterfield and wife Nancy of Van Buren, Arkansas, Keith Sutterfield and wife Mary Ann of Edmond, Oklahoma, and sister in-law Muriel Sutterfield of Siloam Springs; many nieces and nephews, and numerous other family members and friends.

Visitation will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. on Friday, May 2nd at the First Baptist Church of Siloam Springs. A praise service will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday May 3rd also at the First Baptist Church of Siloam Springs. Following the praise service, a graveside service will be held at Falling Springs Cemetery in Decatur, Arkansas.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Gideons International, P.O. Box 273, Siloam Springs, AR 72761, Circle of Life Hospice, 901 Jones Road, Springdale, AR 72762 or to Wounded Warriors Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, Kansas 66675.

Cemetery Details

Falling Springs Cemetery

Falling Springs Cemetery
Decatur, AR 72722

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 2. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church
2000 Dawn Hill Rd.
Siloam Springs, AR 72761
<http://www.fbcsiloam.com>

Service

MAY 3. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church
2000 Dawn Hill Rd.
Siloam Springs, AR 72761
<http://www.fbcsiloam.com>

Tribute Wall

AA

“ Donna, So very sorry for your loss ! Please accept our deepest sympathy from the Dilbeck family.

Annette (Dilbeck) Andrada - May 10, 2014 at 09:03 PM

LP

“ My deepest condolences to Wil's family!

I have good memories of my teenage years with my cousin Wil!

Leon Poynor

Leon Poynor - May 03, 2014 at 09:11 AM

JB

“ So shocked to learn of Junior's passing. My memory of him was he had a really nice smile and few words. May God give you peace and comfort at this time.

Cousin Joyce Poynor Burrows

Joyce Burrows - May 03, 2014 at 09:05 AM

JS

“*“Mr Wil” was a gentle giant in terms of having a positive influence on folks and he did so in the “quietest” way of anyone that I’ve ever known. I met him five years ago and I used to love to sit in his office and chat with him “about nothing”. More often than not, I’d chat and he’d listen.*

Our loss is heaven's gain. My hope for Mr Wil's family is that they will have peace and comfort in the knowledge that they will meet again with the man they love so dearly. My apologies for missing the service as I am out of town on business.

RIP, my friend - Mr Wil.

John Staples - May 02, 2014 at 04:35 PM

DS

“*Rejoicing with Wil on his Heavenly Homecoming. Prayers to the family for God's peace to be with them in the days to come. What a sweet soul was he, who touched many lives. With Love, Daron and Sherri Sharp*

Daron and Sherri Sharp - May 02, 2014 at 03:01 PM

DA

“*Danny And Debbie Allred lit a candle in memory of Wilford “Wil” Eli Gardner Jr.*



Danny and Debbie Allred - May 02, 2014 at 02:41 PM

PG

“ Donna & family, we were so deeply saddened to read of Wil's passing today. Wil always had that wonderful gleaming smile on his face and we will forever remember him like that. He courageously fought a horrible sickness but always appeared so positive. He touched SO many lives and lead SO many to Christ in his lifetime. He served his God well and now is peacefully and comfortably in God's presence. I know this time is very difficult on you and your family and all of you will continue to be in our family's prayers in coming days/months.

*Love in Christ,
Mike and Paula Glenn*

Paula Glenn - May 02, 2014 at 02:18 PM



“ Secret Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Wilford "Wil" Eli Gardner Jr..



May 02, 2014 at 01:38 PM

SR

“ Will.RIP you are going to be missed by family & friends..Love, Art & Sue Rife.(Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

Sue Rife - May 02, 2014 at 11:13 AM

PM

“ To Wil's Family and Friends: On behalf of the staff of the Pastoral Care Department of Washington Regional Medical Center, Fayetteville, we wish to express our sympathy due to the passing of Wil. We were privileged to get to know him, his sweet spirit, warm smile and deep spirituality. We were happy to have him as a part of our ministry prior to his beginning the chaplaincy program at Simmons Foods. May God bless each of you.
Phil Misenheimer

Phil Misenheimer - May 02, 2014 at 11:05 AM

JB

“ I had the pleasure to work with Wil for several years. He was a soft spoken man with great wisdom. I was the hyper fast talker, and naturally I was always finishing his sentences for him. As I sit here with tears in my eyes because of the loss of a great man, I know that there is a celebration going on in heaven. He will be missed greatly.
Judi Bradshaw
SSFP Simmons Foods

Judi Bradshaw - May 02, 2014 at 10:28 AM

CB

“ Donna & Family my thoughts and prayers are with you in this time of sorrow Wil was loved by many and will be missed by many i remember when he started Faith Baptist Church in Sandusky OK. praying for you love you all carol (woods) baker
sandusky

carol (woods) baker - May 02, 2014 at 06:50 AM

DH

“ Donna and family,
So sorry for your loss. We loved Will and you
know how much my Dad loved him. We will
keep you and family in our prayers.
Donley and Connie Harrington



Donley and Connie Harrington - May 01, 2014 at 08:11 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of
Wilford "Wil" Eli Gardner Jr..



May 01, 2014 at 07:09 PM

NB

“ Nancy Burris lit a candle in memory of Wilford
"Wil" Eli Gardner Jr.



Nancy Burris - May 01, 2014 at 06:04 PM

CB

“ Carol (woods) Baker lit a candle in memory of
Wilford "Wil" Eli Gardner Jr.



Carol (woods) Baker - May 01, 2014 at 03:31 PM

BE

“ *BelindaLondaginShetlar lit a candle in memory of Wilford "Wil" Eli Gardner Jr.*



BelindaLondaginShetlar - May 01, 2014 at 02:20 PM

RM

“ *Randall, Tracy and Abby Maxwell purchased the Secret Garden Basket for the family of Wilford "Wil" Eli Gardner Jr..*



Randall, Tracy and Abby Maxwell - May 01, 2014 at 10:14 AM

TE

“ *Donna & Family,
Wil was such a wonderful man. We count it a privilege to have known him all these years. He is enjoying today the riches of heaven, worshipping our Savior and casting his rewards at the feet of Jesus. We love you all. Tim & Denise Etris*

Tim & Denise Etris - May 01, 2014 at 07:43 AM

WF

“ *Pastor Will was one of the most compassionate people I ever knew.He will be missed by all who knew him.He is now in the arms of God and hurts no more.Now we just have to learn how to go on without him,it will be very hard. Wanda Ford*

wanda ford - April 30, 2014 at 06:38 PM