



## Harold Joseph Sands Jr.

April 11, 1947 - April 6, 2025

Harold (Hal) Sands, Jr., peacefully passed away on April 7th at 7:15pm at the Claremore Veterans Center.

Hal is now absent from the body and face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hal was a proud veteran, devoted softball coach and faithful witness of Jesus Christ. He leaves behind a legacy of service, mentorship, and unwavering faith that touched the lives of countless athletes, friends and family.

Hal was born on April 11th, 1947, in Muskogee OK to his parents Harold Joseph Sands, Sr. and Gloria Sands Hunt. Hal is survived by his daughter, Whitney Sands Thornton; granddaughter, Mallory Thornton; and sisters, Sandy Sands and Cindy Burnham and husband Tony Burnham; niece, Ryan Ellis and son Connor Ellis and daughter Vivian Ellis; and niece, Leigh Anne Craig and husband Chas Craig and their daughters, Caroline Craig and Norah Craig and son, Everett Craig.

Hal attended Muskogee Public Schools and graduated June 1966. Immediately following graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and was stationed in Libya, Africa where he worked as a Water and Waste Processing Specialist Supervisor and as an Engineer Environmental Support Specialist. Hal also played baseball and football and enjoyed the competitiveness of

sports. While stationed in Africa, Hal contracted a rare disease called Polyarteritis Nodosa that affects veins and arteries. Due to this disease, he was honorably discharged on June 6th, 1972.

As a result of the disease, Hal was not able to work upon discharge. He was an avid fisherman and loved to fish. So, he started his own business repairing fishing rods and reels and tackle. He worked out of the home and for Okie Bug. He also loved bowling and worked in the pro shop drilling bowling balls. He stayed busy with these hobbies and side jobs making many friends along the way. He was known to perfect any sport or skill he worked in by reading books and literature to help teach others.

Hal began teaching his daughter Whitney how to play softball and later formed his own team through the Green Country Softball association, called The Sport About Wildcats. As his love and knowledge grew for the sport, he was asked to be a volunteer coach for Muskogee High Girls Softball Team, The Rougherettes. Hal continued to coach many summers with the Wildcats winning several tournaments and championships and was a volunteer coach for the Muskogee Rougherettes for over 17 years. He was most proud of the work he did with the softball teams and girls he coached. Hal had a special gift for coaching girls and teaching them how to play the game and have confidence in themselves. Hal supported the players he coached on and off the field and he always wanted them to succeed in their lives. He mentored many of his players and they loved him just as much as he loved them.

Hal was inducted into the Softball Hall of Fame in June of 2002 and again in 2006. He also kept the grounds at the MHS field, the Green Country and Hatbox fields. He did his job well, and it was evident in the appearance of the fields.

Hal was diagnosed with Parkinsons in 2004 and began to be treated for the

disease. As the disease progressed, he was not able to coach any longer and later moved to the Claremore Veterans Center for his treatment and care. Through the struggles of the diseases and the adversity, he always kept his faith in God. He witnessed to many of the nurses and staff at the Veterans Center where he was affectionally called "Coach". He also made several friends at the Veterans Center that he enjoyed playing bingo and dominoes with.

Hal read and studied his Bible daily and always had a positive attitude. When asked what the one thing is that he wanted to be known for, he said "that I was a follower of Christ". Hal's favorite Bible Verse was Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. "

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

The Celebration of Life Service will be held at 2pm on Friday, April 11th at First Baptist Church Muskogee, 111 S. 7th Street, Muskogee OK 74401. Interment will follow at Greenhill Cemetery.

# Cemetery Details

## Greenhill Cemetery

1500 N. York Street  
Muskogee, OK 74403

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 10. 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Cornerstone Funeral Home & Crematory  
1830 North York Street  
Muskogee, OK 74403  
(918) 682-1500

## Celebration of Life

APR 11. 2:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church Muskogee  
111 S. 7th Street  
Muskogee, OK 74401

# Tribute Wall

KT

“ My memories of Hal Jr. was sitting on his lap and combing his "buzz cut". I remember his kindness and gentle nature with me as a pesky little girl. But mostly I remember how very proud our Dad was of him. Our contact may not of been frequent but it was always lovingly and genuine. Ready about the full and rich life he had shows how much he will be missed by all.

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**Kelly Sands Townsley** - August 09, 2025 at 02:17 PM

TS

“ I'm not sure why I got on FB & looked for Hal. And I found this, his obituary. Hal is my half-brother. Same father. This picture reminds me of when he can & visit us in Normal Illinois on leave. I would help him shine his Army boots (spit shire) I was 8 yrs younger than him. I wished now that we all could have stayed in touch. God rest his soul. To all his family & friends I pass on my condolences. Tanya Sands

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**Tanya Sands** - May 03, 2025 at 09:52 AM

LU

“ Rest in Peace Coach. I was his favorite housekeeper at the VA I'd sit and visit with him when I had time. I really enjoyed our visits. He was a great man.

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**Lulu** - April 17, 2025 at 10:01 PM

PB

“ *Peggy Lemons Boothe lit a candle in memory of Harold Sands*



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**Peggy Lemons Boothe** - April 15, 2025 at 11:33 PM

JB

“ *Joe&Jeanie beavers lit a candle in memory of Harold Sands*



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**Joe&Jeanie beavers** - April 12, 2025 at 08:32 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Harold Joseph Sands Jr..*



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April 11, 2025 at 08:36 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Harold Joseph Sands Jr..*

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April 11, 2025 at 08:36 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Harold Joseph Sands Jr..*



April 11, 2025 at 01:14 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Harold Joseph Sands Jr..

April 11, 2025 at 01:14 AM



“ 🙏 *RIP HJ Sands, Sandman, Jabow, Brother, Teacher and Friend. You shared with me life with Jesus Christ and displayed what it is to love your neighbor to all. Heaven is freedom from your earthly body, you will be remembered by all and live on in all our hearts. Steve Szabina*



**Steve Szabina** - April 10, 2025 at 02:50 PM



“ *Natalie Batt lit a candle in memory of Harold Sands*



**Natalie Batt** - April 10, 2025 at 12:04 PM

VF

“ Vanessa Bowles & Family purchased the Pretty P lease for the family of Harold Joseph Sands Jr..



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**Vanessa Bowles & Family** - April 10, 2025 at 09:10 AM

MC

“ Coach, friend, Lizard Lips! You were one of a kind! I am so thankful for your dedication and love to me. I am so thankful for everything you taught me not only in softball but in life lessons as well. I will see you soon! Love Mennie Colbert Cantwell

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**MENNIE CANTWELL** - April 10, 2025 at 07:38 AM



“ Monica Mabry lit a candle in memory of Harold Sands



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**Monica Mabry** - April 09, 2025 at 11:17 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Harold Joseph Sands Jr..



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April 09, 2025 at 05:54 PM

PB

“ Paige, Jess, Morgan, Kait, Brook, & Bai purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Harold Joseph Sands Jr..



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**Paige, Jess, Morgan, Kait, Brook, & Bai** - April 09, 2025 at 02:58 PM

MI

“ Hands down , the best man I’ve ever known.. a privilege to call him friend . I know he’s in heaven now catching big bass.. RIP buddy

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**Mike** - April 09, 2025 at 12:19 PM

MD

“ Mad Dawg planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harold Joseph Sands Jr..

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**Mad Dawg** - April 09, 2025 at 07:48 AM

MD

“ Mad Dawg purchased the Simply Elegant Spathi phyllum for the family of Harold Joseph Sands Jr..



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**Mad Dawg** - April 09, 2025 at 07:48 AM

ET

“ One of the best man I ever knew & a great neighbor.  
God speed to you sir.  
My love & prayers are w/you Whitney...

*Eddie Tamplin*

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**Eddie Tamplin** - April 09, 2025 at 01:32 AM

SL

“ Hal, where do I start. You were way more than just an amazing coach, you were a mentor and a friend. You listened and cared. Hal made it possible for me to play travel ball when it just wasn't possible for my family make that happen. i think he roped lots of families in to help but he organize. He taught me so much during those years. I was fortunate enough as an adult to live one block away from him for a few years and so we would visit quite often then too. Many tournaments, bus rides and spades games have passed between us. You are so very loved and you touched so many lives. You definitely were one of a kind. This world won't be the same without you. I know you are rejoicing and healed and I will see you again. So until then Hal. Love you like a rock!

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**samantha luscombe** - April 08, 2025 at 06:33 PM

MV

*Hal Sands was a great man , I had the privilege of working with him for two summers in 1995&1996 at Green Country Girls Softball Assn.*

*He took many lunch breaks at the beacon and at the bowling alley ..... lol he was liked by everyone.*

*Until we meet again!  
Love Ya Hal !!!!*

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**mike villines** - May 15, 2025 at 08:49 AM