



L.V. Watkins Jr

July 8, 1936 - September 2, 2020

Losie Vergil “L.V.” Watkins, Jr., aged 84, departed this life later than expected on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2020, which should surprise no one who knew him. His passing in the early morning was peaceful, attended by Brenda, his wife of 33 years. In his last days, he was surrounded by the love of his family and friends.

L.V. was born at home on a farm just outside DeQueen, AR, on July 8, 1936, very close to his Grandpa Johnson’s homestead. Forced to relocate because of a deepening economic depression, his family made the trek to California during WWII to find work. They lived in Oakland where L.V. attended 2nd grade and his parents worked in the nearby shipyards. At the close of the war, they returned to settle in Bennington, OK, near his paternal grandparents.

L.V. graduated from Bennington High School in 1955. While there he played multiple sports and joined the FFA, under the guidance of his vo-ag teacher Harold Chitwood. Bennington was truly his hometown, and he returned for the Bennington Homecoming and annual high school reunions for most of his life. L.V. attended Oklahoma A&M College (OSU) where he earned a Bachelor’s degree in agronomy in 1959, and a Master’s in agricultural economics in 1965. In between he served 3 years in the U.S. Air Force, after being in R.O.T.C as an undergraduate. He was stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX from 1959 to 1962, when he shifted from active duty to the

reserves, to continue his education. He remained in the reserves until he resigned in 1970, with the rank of Captain. L.V. moved to Oxford, MS to attend law school at Ole Miss during the turbulence of the late 60's, just after the school had been integrated. He graduated with his Juris Doctorate in 1970 and was admitted to the Bar in Mississippi. He would later be admitted to the Bar in Oklahoma in 1977.

L.V.'s entire career was focused on economic development. His family's forced move to California had a profound impact on him. He often said he did not want people to have to leave the small towns and rural areas that they loved just to make a living. He organized the substate planning districts in Oklahoma, then served as the Executive Director of the Eastern Oklahoma Development District. After an unsuccessful run for Congress in 1974 (Let's Vote Watkins!), L.V. began working for himself and established the Verd-Ark-Ca Development Corporation, which helped small businesses all over the state get their start. It was a point of pride with him, and gave him an enormous sense of accomplishment, when he drove through small towns in Eastern Oklahoma and saw all the businesses, libraries, fire stations, water systems, senior centers and other community projects that he had helped to build. He also opened a law practice with his legal partner Jim Goodwin of Tulsa. As an attorney, he served as a legal advisor to Native tribes and local governments on water rights.

Born into a family of gifted talkers, L.V. truly never met a stranger. He would talk to anyone, and he was interested in nearly everything they said. Many times he surprised people by being familiar with the tiny town they were from. He was known for teasing and pranks, especially directed at his siblings. He gave unconventional advice to young people and loved playing devil's advocate in any argument. He was notorious for frequently arriving late. He was color blind, which prevented him from becoming an Air Force pilot, and led to some alarming fashion choices in the mid-70's. He stood 6'2" tall, with

blue eyes, long legs, strong, slender fingers, and a shockingly full head of thick wavy hair. He was a lifelong registered Democrat, even when the Democrats became the minority around him, and remained politically active all his life.

L.V. was the father of a blended and extended family, and he loved them all greatly. It was his dream to buy a small acreage of land and build a house, which he finally did in 1984. He lived there, just north of Muskogee, where the land drops down into the Arkansas River bottoms, for 34 years. He loved to sit out on the back patio at the end of the day and watch for deer or other wildlife, while talking over the events of the day with Brenda. He taught his kids to appreciate the natural beauty of Oklahoma and the wisdom of common folk. He would paraphrase Rudyard Kipling's poem "If -" ("Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch"), believing one should be comfortable whether you were sitting down to dinner with the most powerful or the least fortunate. He wanted his children and grandchildren to define success on their own terms, instead of letting society define it for them.

L.V. was preceded in death by his parents, L.V. Watkins, Sr. and Mary Etta (Johnson) Watkins, his beloved sister Mary Althea Yeats, his granddaughter Allison Patton James, and lifelong friends Donald "Bud" Hathcote, Perry Wheeler, and Bill Milligan.

He is survived by his wife Brenda (Horner) Watkins of Tulsa, and his children: Martha Alston (Rusty) and their daughter Kassondra Gunn (Danny) of San Antonio, TX; Ruth Anne Nelson and her son Matthew, of Fort Smith, AR; his sons Tom Watkins and Ashley Webb, both from Tulsa; Jerry Patton (Amy Jo) of Pryor and sons Jerry Jr. and Jeremy, from Choteau; 2 great grandchildren, Jalen Patton and Kaeden James, and numerous nephews and nieces. L.V. also leaves behind his brother Wes Watkins (Lou), brother-in-law Gene Yeats,

sister-in-law Linda Patton, and many close friends.

Funeral services will be Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 12:00 noon at Cornerstone Funeral Home in Muskogee. Family visitation will be Monday evening from 5-7 p.m. Burial will be at the Ft. Gibson National Cemetery. Please visit www.cornerstoneofmuskogee.com and share your most outrageous L.V. story with his family and friends. He was passionate about family history, and we will make sure these stories are preserved for posterity!

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 5. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

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

Visitation

SEP 6. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

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

Family to greet friends

SEP 7. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

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

Service

SEP 8. 12:00 PM (CT)

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

Tribute Wall



“ *L.V. Watkins Jr*

October 23, 2023 at 09:38 AM



“ *I just learned of LV's passing. To say I'm saddened to hear this news is an understatement. I had the privilege of meeting LV when I was fresh out of the Army and I went to work for and with him in Tulsa. While I may have drifted up to New England with my career in law decades ago, I never forgot him nor the guidance he gave me as a young lawyer. He was a wonderful person who both my wife and I always considered a friend - even though years have passed since we last spoke or seen each other. The world has truly lost a kind soul and good hearted person. Even though its been several months since his passing, both Wendy and I send our deepest condolences to his family. May you rest in peace my old friend.*

Aerico and Wendy Morre - January 21, 2021 at 02:11 PM



“ *LV was an awesome guy. I had the privilege of serving on LV's 1974 Congressional campaign staff. I lived with him in his home for about 4 months. He was great at doing stump speeches and was so very warm and cordial. I drove a 1973 yellow Volkswagen which we had the slogan "THE LV VOTESWAGEN" painted in black letters on the sides. This was our campaign colors. That little Beetle was in about 10 parades around the district. We played loud music featuring LV's favorite artist "Charlie Pride" non-stop. I didn't care for it in the beginning but by the campaign's end was a Charlie fan. I would like to give my heart-felt condolences to Wes Watkins, Lou and LV's wife and family. He was a great guy that everybody loved. Rest in Peace my dear friend. I will miss you.*

Terry Hubbard - October 12, 2020 at 08:01 AM

SH

“Oklahoma has lost an economic work horse, friend, mentor, family man, a true gentle GIANT and son of Oklahoma. I often would say, "Man, this man's roots run deep."

LV Watkins, a gentleman & suburb communicator. I often attended meeting with him and was simply amazed at the number of people that would seek him out and literally followed him around as if he were a rock star.

LV always put Oklahoma first, he & his brother Wes established SBA lending for small business. He was always looking for an entry point or strategy to establish a new business or expand current ones. He breathed, ate & talked business constantly.

I had the blessing to have worked on several programs & projects with LV, over the past 20 years. I will sorely miss our morning phone conversations. We were each others soundboard, if one of us hit a brick wall we would soon work through the problem together. Folks, let me tell you, sounding boards are few & far between, in todays world. There will be no replacing the void that this big man left.

LV totally understood the problems with our current food & food distribution systems. He worked diligently to address this problem and the one word that LV would wish for is for the nation & the world understand the Power of WATER. Our water knowledge is far behind that of other nations. LV's last works was writing a paper that explained the molecular structure & energy of WATER. He would often say, "The answer is in the WATER."

*Family & friends, as well as I know LV he will want us to celebrate his life & not shed a tear. Our comfort will come in the form of a rain drop. From now on each time it rains it will be LV visiting us and wishing us all good tidings. Good bye 'ol friend I will truly miss you.
Steve Hargis*

Steve Hargis - September 07, 2020 at 11:06 PM



Very well put Steve. He was a giant both in stature and smarts. He knew more about economic development and wrote many regulations, along with my Dad, for the EDA and other federal government agencies. I will miss him dearly. My thoughts and prayers are with Brenda.

Terry Hubbard - October 12, 2020 at 08:05 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of L.V. Watkins Jr.*



September 07, 2020 at 06:54 PM



“ *Remembering the good years and sending sincere sympathy for this time and your loss. Martha Verge*

Martha Verge - September 06, 2020 at 07:17 PM



“ *I remember LV from my childhood. He was my high school bestfriend's dad. He was always kind and soft spoken. Lots of patience, especially with teenage girls. He is greatly loved by many and his legacy lives in so many people and communities.*

kim - September 06, 2020 at 04:25 PM



Thank you, Kim. It means a lot that you remember him in such a positive light. :)

Ruth Anne - September 10, 2020 at 12:14 PM

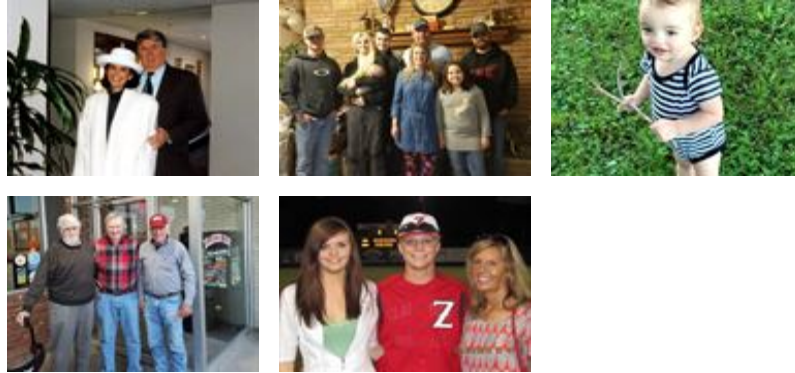


That description is typical, LV was very patient and very soft spoken. What a great guy he was. I shall miss him.

Terry Hubbard - October 12, 2020 at 08:08 AM



“ 118 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Cornerstone Funeral Home and Crematory - September 05, 2020 at 12:05 PM

GY

“ *How do you choose from the repository of outrageous stories of my Uncle LV? Certainly, my favorite involves the renovation of his mom's house in Ardmore. Everybody was there together (including us kids) and stripped off the sheetrock of the interior walls down to the bare studs. After a long day, we piled in cars and went to one of the great-aunt's houses for dinner. Evidentially, LV snuck away before us. When we got back to grandma's house and walked in the front door, there was Uncle LV--sitting bare-butt on the toilet out in the open! We all howled with laughter! Since he wasn't quite ready to get up, Uncle Wes and my dad hung bedsheets from the ceiling around him to give him adequate time to think. Through it all, Uncle LV just sat there, laughing, joking, and making it even more fun. That was my Uncle LV-- good natured, fun to be around, and full of life! Much love to Brenda and each of you precious cousins!*

Gary Yeats - September 05, 2020 at 08:46 AM

KS

“ LV was my best friend since 5th grade..that would be approximately 73 years! He was loved by so many and will be terribly missed.. Brenda and family you have our deepest sympathy at this most difficult time ..



Listen for angels hovering near..whispering the words you are longing to hear..life is not over, love is not gone..now and forever the spirit lives on..

With love..Keith and Cheri Smith

Keith Smith - September 04, 2020 at 10:56 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of L.V. Watkins Jr.



September 04, 2020 at 05:14 PM

PW

“ L.V. and I were in the same class in high school. He came to a lot of the Alumni meetings. I took a picture of him the last one he attended. Not able to attend his services. My sympathy to his family and friends.

Peggy Williams - September 04, 2020 at 01:07 PM

BS

“ LV - my friend, mentor, leader in Oklahoma. enjoyed the time with him in Verdarka, EODD and silver hair Rep. Brenda my prayers are with you as i know what a great loss a partner is. Bill Smith

bill smith - September 04, 2020 at 09:41 AM

GG

Brenda, we are praying for peace and comfort for you and your family. L.V. was a classmate and he was definitely a leader in our class. He was in the band and he was band president. He was the high school leadership favorite two years in a row. Our class has always been close and he almost always came back for the yearly homecomings. It was always good to see the two of you and you both helped brighten the day. I'm very proud of L.V. for all the successes he had after leaving Bennington. He continued those traits of friendliness and helpfulness and lots of work and it took him far.

We will be thinking of you in the coming days and we'll be missing L.V. It's a sad time for everyone who knew him.

Gaylia Green - September 07, 2020 at 10:04 PM



ditto

Terry Hubbard - October 12, 2020 at 08:12 AM

BP

Regrettably, Lynda and I were not able to attend LV's funeral. Just found his obituary to enable me to share a few thoughts herein about my long time friend and colleague. I became an instant fan in the early 1970's when I moved from North Dakota to Wilburton, OK He was a superb thinker who was always ahead of his time in developing new ideas for furthering the growth and prosperity of Oklahoma. I will never forget his visiting me in Tulsa just after I joined the Staff of the Tulsa Port of Catoosa. As a recent divorcee, he intuitively knew I would appreciate hearing from friends. A simple, but incredibly wonderful warm and caring gesture. I was and am proud to call him "My Friend". May his soul rest in peace as he enjoys his ever lasting life with our Lord. Our prayers continue to be with Brenda who will always be with her beloved LV in spirit and love until they are once again joined together in heaven.

Bob and Lynda Portiss

Bob and Lynda Portiss - December 10, 2020 at 12:56 PM