



James Leon Wilson

October 26, 1923 - September 25, 2022

James Leon Wilson, age 98, of Forrest City, died Sunday, September 25, 2022, at his home in Forrest City.

Rev. Wilson was born October 26, 1923, in Jonesboro, and was the son of Herbert and Pauline Wilkerson Wilson. He attended Jonesboro High School and graduated in 1941. During his high school years, he worked at Butler Shoe Shop. After graduation, he worked in Blytheville, Arkansas, and later went to Connecticut where he worked in the Groton Submarine Base in New London, building submarines.

In early 1943, he was inducted into the army and placed in the 295th Salvage and Repair Unit, using his skills as a shoe repairman. After basic training, and training in the desert of California, his company was shipped overseas to Europe. The repair units were bombed out early in their landing on foreign soil and he was placed in the regular army. This led to his experience of hand to hand battle and later in the Battle of the Bulge.

Returning home from the war, he moved to Blytheville, Arkansas, where he met Mary Jo Hill. She was to become his bride in January of 1949. He joined the Masonic Order in 1954, and enjoyed sixty-eight years as a Mason. He reached the rank of 33 Degree Mason and was active until his death. He served as Worshipful Master in Earle and Forrest City. He enjoyed the Eastern

Star and was Worthy Patron several times in his lifetime.

He was called to preach and he entered the ministry of the United Methodist Church. During his forty-three years as a Pastor, he served in the following churches: Stanford-Warren's Chapel in Tennessee, Yarbrow-Promised Land, Springdale, Fort Smith, Earle, Trumann, Paragould, Marked Tree, Harrison, Newport, and Levy. He retired in 1989, but continued to serve in Wheatley and Salem until he finally retired the second time and moved to Forrest City.

During his years as a Pastor, he received his education. His Bachelor of Arts from Arkansas State College, The Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Divinity from Vanderbilt.

During his time, four children were born to Mary Jo and Leon; Cindy, and husband, Tony, Phareta, James, and Jo Alice, and husband, Greg. In 1993, Mary Jo and Leon moved to Forrest City, where for twenty-nine years they lived happy until Leon's death. In departing this life he leaves his wife, nine grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, two great-great-grandchildren, five nieces, two nephews, and a host of friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, a son, one sister, and three brothers. The celebration of his life will be held at the First United Methodist Church in Forrest City, 10:00 A.M, Wednesday, with burial in Elmwood Cemetery in Blytheville. Visitation will be 5:00 till 7:00 P.M., Tuesday, at Stevens Funeral Home, with Stevens Funeral Home in charge of arrangements. Memorials are to be made to the First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 66, Forrest City, Arkansas, 72336 or a charity of one's choice. You may log on to stevensfuneralhome.net for the online registry.

Cemetery Details

Elmwood Cemetery

Blytheville, AR

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 27. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Stevens Funeral Home
220 North Washington
Forrest City, AR 72335
(870) 633-5400
info@stevensfuneralhome.net
<https://www.stevensfuneralhome.net/>

Funeral Service

SEP 28. 10:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church
620 E. Broadway
Forrest City, AR 72335

Interment

SEP 28.

Elmwood Cemetery
Blytheville, AR

Tribute Wall

TW

“ Many happy rounds of golf with my friend, Leon! I look forward to testing the fairways of heaven with him. Of course, I never could beat him, but he was always a gracious winner. Tom Weir

Thomas E. Weir - September 28, 2022 at 08:42 PM

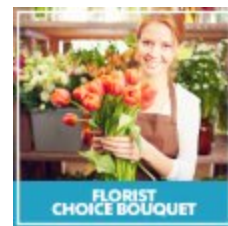
JM

“ Leon was my FRIEND and MENTOR. He took a fledging preacher under his wings in the Forrest City District, offering encouragement and advice for navigating the shoals I was traversing. We were close again while he was at Levy and I was at Clinton and then in NLR. While he was strong in these areas, he never could do much with me in golf. He kept telling me to swing the club like throwing a softball, but try as I might, I could never get it down. I have finally gotten to the place where I can shoot my age, low 80s on 9 holes. I will miss him deeply.
Mary Jo, my thoughts and prayers surround you and the family while we rejoice in Leon's HOMECOMING
Jerry Meeks

Jerry Meeks - September 28, 2022 at 02:46 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of James Leon Wilson.



September 28, 2022 at 09:06 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of James Leon Wilson.*



September 27, 2022 at 11:00 AM



“ *Mrs. Mary I'm so sorry for your loss. Mr Leon was a dear friend to me, I so enjoyed our banking visits. He was one of my favorite customers during my tenure at FNBEA.*

Ruby Colvin Rogers - September 27, 2022 at 10:45 AM



“ *Jay and Gina Herchenhahn purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of James Leon Wilson.*



Jay and Gina Herchenhahn - September 27, 2022 at 10:36 AM

LS

“ My dear Uncle Leon came back into my life about 12 years ago. He had just acquired my phone number from his younger brother, Gerald, with whom I been communicating for a few months for the first time in many years. So Uncle Leon called me out of the blue one day when I was buying pieces of furniture in an antique store, and we caught up as we talked about the strange piece of furniture called a chicken coop. He had never heard of a chicken coop, and neither had a I, and so we laughed over the idea of a piece of furniture called a chicken coop, and we came back into one another's lives again over the chicken coop. And for the next several years we would touch base with one another from time to time. He was my last uncle, my last connection to my father, his older brother, Joe. Just talking with Uncle Leon gave me a sense of belonging. And I will miss him, very much. Thanks to Karen for helping me communicate with him these last couple of years. And, Much Love and Sympathy to Aunt Mary Jo,
Truly, Your niece, Linda Stephens

Linda Stephens - September 27, 2022 at 08:41 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James Leon Wilson.



September 26, 2022 at 04:31 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of James Leon Wilson.



September 26, 2022 at 02:49 PM

KB

“ To just pick one precious memory would be too hard because I have several. I'll share a few.

My name is Kristi Noel, I was named after my Grandfather “Leon” although everyone would think my middle name was because I was born on or close to Christmas my mother had better ideas in April by taking her daddy’s name and spelling it backwards and blessing it with me to carry on and I did just that as my daughter also carries the middle name Noel.

Any time we visited him on Sunday mornings he would make sure everyone knew in the congregation that his family was in attendance however he also made sure to let everyone know that I was his namesake. It didn’t matter what time of the year we were visiting he also made sure we sang the Hymn “Noel”

Grandmother has 4 little wooden blocks that sit on a shelf in their living room. Although it was supposed to read “NOEL” Granddad would have it to read “LEON” when I came to visit. I noticed it one time and changed it to read Noel. This became a game for us, I would come to visit change it to read Noel and when I left he would change it to read back to Leon. Years later he never imagined having to beat 2 at this game as my daughter joined in and would also change the blocks back to read Noel. It’s the small things in life that mean the most and makes memories that will last a lifetime.

I have lots of memories with them as far back as summer times getting to spend week/weeks with them or even taking us on vacation with them.

I will forever be grateful and cherish our times spent together and the memories I have of us.

I love you Granddad and thank you for serving not only your Country but the Lord Jesus Christ,

Your namesake ❤️

Kristi Baikey - September 26, 2022 at 02:29 PM