



Milt Lehr

October 27, 1924 - June 12, 2016

Private family memorial services for Dr. Milton Willis Lehr will be at the United Methodist Church with Rev. Dr. Carol Cook Moore officiating. Milt was cremated at his request under the direction of Marshall Funeral Home of Alva.

Dr. Milton Willis Lehr, the fifth of seven children born to Carl and Tena Lehr, was born October 27, 1924, at Okeene, Oklahoma, and passed away June 12, 2016, at Alva, Oklahoma, at the age of 91 years, 7 months, and 16 days.

Milt graduated from Okeene High School with the Class of 1942. At the age of eighteen he ran away from home to Connors Junior College in Warner, Oklahoma, with twenty-eight dollars, a suitcase, and the dream of bettering himself. After a few months, he transferred to Northwestern State College in Alva, Oklahoma.

In 1943, Milt was drafted and served twenty-six months during World War II in the United States Navy as an aviation radioman and as a cadet in the Navy Air Force. After his service, Milt returned to Northwestern State College where he was a varsity basketball player for the Rangers. He completed his undergraduate degree in 1949, with majors in mathematics and history. He received a Master of Education degree in 1952 from Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma. He continued his education at the University of Oklahoma where he received his Doctor of Education degree in 1956. He also completed post-doctoral work at the University of Minnesota.

On August 4, 1947, Milt married Rebecca Jane Tyree. Together they had three children: Melissa, Steven, and Tena.

Milt's life was dedicated to the field of public education, including seven years as a junior and senior high school instructor in Alva Public Schools, several months in the instructor training department in the United States Navy, twenty-eight years as a teacher and administrator of the teacher education program at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, two years as executive director of the first Oklahoma Education Council, and

educational consultant to former Governor David Boren. Milt also helped organize and secure the passage of two constitutional amendments to the Oklahoma Constitution which removed certain discriminatory and racial terms related to African Americans. He also served as consultant to Senator Jim Howell, one of the principal authors of the historical House Bill 1017. He additionally serviced as commissioner of the Oklahoma Wildlife Commission.

In 2000-2001, Milt and Becky restored and furnished a century old one room schoolhouse located in Woods County. The building was moved to the NWOSU campus near the education center where it is used today by teacher education classes, public schools, and a variety of groups and organizations. In 2002, the Lehrs were recognized for the efforts by the Oklahoma Heritage Association, which awarded them the "Distinguished Service Award for Preservation of State and Local History." Milt and Becky also spent several years restoring a railroad section house, as well as a scale house which were moved to the Waynoka Railroad Museum complex in Waynoka, Oklahoma.

Milt's various accomplishments included his service for ten years as a scoutmaster of Boy Scouts of America, Alva Troop 392. He also served as President of the Oklahoma Teacher Education and Professional Standards Commission, President of the Oklahoma Conference of AAUP, and President of the Northwestern Alumni Association. He was twice selected to appear in the Dictionary of International Autobiography and the Who's Who in American Politics Yearbook to name only a few of his accomplishments. He was also inducted into the Oklahoma Educators Hall of Fame in 2003.

Milt's many interests and hobbies included historical preservation, woodworking, bowling, fishing, politics, ranching, travel, gardening, reading, writing, and playing hundreds of ping pong games with his grandchildren.

Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by five siblings, Ralph Lehr, Ernie Lehr, Ray Lehr, Gene Lehr, and Alma Gerkin.

Milt is survived by his wife of sixty-eight years, Rebecca Jane of Alva, three children, Melissa Godfrey and husband, Stephen of Harper, Kansas, Steven Lehr and wife, Sheila, of Alva, and Tena Floeter of Edmond, Oklahoma; one sister, Willadean Hendricks of Okeene, Oklahoma, seven grandsons; nine great grandchildren; other relatives and friends.

A university colleague once jokingly said that he believed Milt would try to move an ant den if he thought it would be an improvement.

May Milt's spirit find as much joy in its journey as he found in life.

Memorial contributions may be made through the funeral home to the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence.

Comments



“ I remember Mr Lehr so well from Jr. High Math in 1950. All those numbers scared me and I had a terrible time with math He was so kind to spend extra time with me to overcome these problems. We were both proud that the next year in high school I made A's in Algebra. Thank you Mr. Lehr.

Toni Monfort Addleston - February 09, 2017 at 10:59 PM



“ Thank you for sharing, Toni. Dad loved working with kids in junior high, because he said they kept him on his toes. I will show your comments to my mom. She has enjoyed hearing stories from people who knew Dad. Kind regards. Tena Lehr Floeter

Tena Lehr Floeter - June 24, 2017 at 11:07 PM



“ I just received word of Dr. Lehr's passing from my friends in Oklahoma.

I worked for Dr. Lehr for two and half years while I earned my degree in elementary education at Northwestern. 1963-1966. I got to know him as a dedicated teacher, tremendous person and a teacher admired by all. I truly made up my mind to become a teacher because of his professionalism. I taught for 20+ years, first in Enid, Oklahoma, and then in Anaheim, California, before family and business needed me more. I continued to volunteer at my kids schools, at church, and at all levels of the 4-H program in California.

Dr. Lehr was just the kind of person who had the effect that what he taught you had meaning and stuck with you, making you feel that you could accomplish whatever you wanted.

I would hope I did him proud. I only regret that I never got to see him in later years.
Bernardine Waldie (Marquez)

One tremendous man.

Bernardine Marquez - July 27, 2016 at 06:02 PM



“ Thank you for the kind words about my dad, Bernardine. I will pass them on to my mom. She will find comfort in them, I know. Tena Lehr Floeter

Tena - September 02, 2016 at 02:40 PM



“ A man of great integrity. He helped me realize I could become anything I wanted to be. I will always remember this great teacher. Ben Travis Retired Superintendent of Schools Arizona

Benny Travis - June 17, 2016 at 05:20 PM



“ Our sympathy and prayers are with the family of Milt Lehr. Virgil and I both had the privilege of having him as a High School and college teacher. I was honored to teach one of his daughters, Tena. Mr. Lehr was a very nice man and will be remembered for his many dedicated years of teaching and for his other many accomplishments. God bless his family.



Virgil and Lavon Wiersig - June 17, 2016 at 05:20 PM



“ In High School Math class, we would get to listen to the World Series on the radio if we were quiet and did the work that was on the blackboard. Such a treat as we worked in the heat with no AC. Thanks Mr. Lehr Janet Earl Sullins

Janet Sullins - June 15, 2016 at 02:19 PM



“ Milt and Becky are two of nicest people we've ever known. Milt will be missed by us and many people in this community. Our sincerest condolences to Becky, Steve and all the family. You are in our thoughts and prayers. Frederick and Wendy Jungman

Frederick and Wendy Jungman - June 14, 2016 at 04:51 PM



“ Milt and Becky are two of the nicest people I ever knew. They always treated me well. I want to offer up my prayers to Becky, Melissa, Steven, and Tena. May you all be comforted with love and kindness from God and Jesus Christ. May your many memories be those of joy. May your many friends also be with you at this time. My thoughts and prayers are with you all. Much affection, Steve Fears

George Steven Fears - June 14, 2016 at 02:02 PM



“ Had so much fun when Milt would deliver hay several years ago. Also loved to have him show me all his birdhouses.

Yvonne Thilsted - June 14, 2016 at 09:31 AM



“ Dr Lehr, "running away to better himself," bettered not only himself, but many others. My first encounter was in Jr Hi math at Horace Mann. He always had a rubber band on his wrist, and started every class by reading some 'corny' joke. The bigger joke, at least to Jr Hi'ers, was that when he reached the punch line, he would snap the rubber band, and that was the signal to laugh. God bless you all at this difficult time, and may memories of happier times comfort you.

Marvin Henry - June 14, 2016 at 07:04 AM



“ Milt served as my Boy Scout Master for several years at a time when I lacked confidence and friends. The one requirement for first class scout that I just couldn't seem to pass was learning Morse code. I was ready to give up and quit Scouting. Milt, as busy as he was with the other boys and life in general, took me aside and encouraged me. I spent several afternoons at his house practicing. We finally got it. I'll never forget his words the day he pinned my first class scout badge on my uniform. He said "life will be full of challenges. You can do anything you set your mind to. Never give up." To say that he greatly impacted my life would be an understatement. He was a friend and light to a young boy who needed both at a critical stage in his development. Rest in Peace.

Jack Rogers - June 14, 2016 at 06:52 AM



“ Dr. Milt Lehr and his wife, Becky, were tireless in the work at restoring the railroad section house and scale house at Waynoka Station. The buildings were decades old and very weathered, and standing on area farms until Milt and Becky restored them. They were such helpers and workers in the projects of the Waynoka Historical Society, and such wonderful friends. He served on the Board of Directors of the Society. It is such a blessing that the Lehrs played key roles in the preservation of our history. May God bless Mrs. Lehr the Lehr family in this time of great loss.

Sandie Olson, President, Waynoka Historical Society

Sandie Olson - June 13, 2016 at 09:18 PM



“ Very sorry to read of Milt's passing. Prayers for your family in these sad times.



Jim Scribner - June 13, 2016 at 09:15 PM



“ Tena, I just saw your dad's obituary and read his impressive obituary. He influenced many in the many years he spent here on earth. When he gets to heaven he can hear God say, " Well done, my good and faithful son." Praying you find joy and comfort in the memories you have gathered with him. Dixie

Dixie Meyer - June 13, 2016 at 08:30 PM



“ Thank you, Dixie. I appreciate the kind words. Tena

Tena - June 14, 2016 at 08:13 PM



“ Dr. Lehr was always an inspiration to be around. He had the uncanny ability to coax the best from you, even if you didn't know what that was at the moment. Rest in peace, my beloved professor!

Ida Evans - June 13, 2016 at 03:23 PM