



Harold Duane Smith



7-14-1936 – 1-9-2026

Harold Duane Smith, known to all who loved him simply as Duane (and to a few lucky ones - Dad or Grandad), passed peacefully into the presence of his Savior on January 9, 2026, at the age of 89.

Duane was born on July 14, 1936, in his rural home near Tecumseh, Oklahoma, to James Aubrey Smith and Lillian Dee Gillis Smith. From an early age, he found purpose in work and responsibility, beginning his career in the grocery business driving the delivery truck at age 14. After graduation, he joined Safeway full-time, first in Shawnee and later in Ardmore, Oklahoma. An entrepreneur at heart, Duane later seized the opportunity to own and operate an ice plant and butchery in Maysville, Oklahoma, before returning to Safeway management in Altus and then Clinton, a role he loved for most of his middle career. His passion for business and initiative continued to shape his career as he opened and operated several Oklahoma-based Quickshop stores. After his time in grocery store management, Duane joined his dad and brother in raising cattle near Tecumseh for over a decade and then spent time in restaurant management before retiring and teaching himself to cook as a nearly full-time pastime! Duane approached his work with integrity, diligence, and genuine enjoyment, taking pride in serving both customers and his community. A pillar in the community, he served in the Jaycees, Kiwanis Club, and Junior Chamber of Commerce in many different roles, including as the Flag chair, the Goat chair, and of course, President.

In any person's life, they can identify as having worn many hats. That is just as true of Duane, and as he drew his last breath, he would have been proudly wearing the hat of faithful son of God, husband to Haley, father to his 5 daughters, beloved to many family members, Uncle to his many nieces and nephews and retired chef of the family. Duane shared 25 beautiful years of marriage with his beloved wife, Haley. Their life together was grounded in faith, marked by devotion, and enriched by deep love for family and service. Duane loved the Lord, and his faith was evident in both his words and his daily walk. His servant's heart was seen in countless acts of kindness, through his church, within his family, and throughout the community.

It wouldn't have escaped anyone that Duane and Haley's love was an unconventional romance. Working against the grain, they created a family and a love that was admirable. Haley was initially drawn to Duane because (in her words) "he was one of the most amazing men she had ever met". She said he had done so many remarkable things in his life. She recalled "He was a mayor of a town for awhile", "he ran the Olympic torch for a few miles along Route 66 on its coast to coast journey", "he built two houses with his own hands", "he lived in a school bus for a period of time when his children were in middle school", "he drove the boat for the kids even though he never learned to swim". Those events all happened before their life together, but Haley believes she got the best years. Together, they traveled the world, climbed mountains (Duane literally climbed a 14'er on his 71st birthday), established homes in Houston, Texas and Breckenridge, Colorado, and ultimately created three miracle daughters of their own. This is possibly the greatest act of love that Duane ever performed on this Earth. He didn't hesitate when Haley at age 37 told him she couldn't help but feel that she was being called to have children. She didn't think it was possible, but she felt he deserved to know her heart. His response would change the course of Smith family history and in his most humble act of sacrificial love, he said "Let's do it". Duane was working two and three jobs in his twenties when he had his first children (Terry, Mike, Sharla, and Janet) and while he strived to be present with them in their big moments and succeeded, he admits that he missed so much of the day to day with them. He was determined not to miss a minute with Beryl, Arden, and Darby, and he didn't. It was not uncommon to see him on the floor playing with them and he secretly found it hilarious when someone stopped him to admire his

"grandchildren". He would puff out his chest and say "through God's abundant Grace and the miracle of science, these beautiful girls are my very own". Duane often looked at his children with delight and awe at the miracle of something they had newly accomplished and loved to see their creativity come to life.

Duane was unfailingly positive and encouraging. When asked how he was doing, his trademark response - always delivered with enthusiasm - was "FANTASTIC!" It became a reflection of his joyful outlook on life and his deep trust in the Lord.

Duane dearly loved his family and was incredibly proud of his children. He found great joy in supporting them in all their endeavors, especially traveling to see marching band performances, sporting events, plays, and any activity where he could cheer them on. Time together mattered deeply to Duane. He loved music, playing games with his family, working puzzles, collecting recipes, and gathering around shared activities that created laughter and lasting memories. Sitting around the table in Colorado playing meld after eating a full course meal prepared by Duane is likely a memory that many people who loved Duane will cherish forever. Eating ice cream (any flavor, any time of day) will surely bring a smile to the faces of those who loved Duane.

Duane also delighted in life's simple pleasures. He loved collecting antiques, browsing garage sales for cookbooks and unique glassware, and carefully watching for grocery coupons so he could stock up and donate food to the local CCSC food pantry. Giving to others came naturally to him and was one of the many ways his faith was lived out.

Duane was preceded in death by his parents, James Aubrey and Lillian Dee Smith; his brothers, James A. Smith Jr. and William Eugene Smith; his sister, Lura Gwendolyn Harlin; his sons, Terry Wayne Smith and Michael Gene Smith; and his granddaughter, Alexandra Lorraine Lord.

He is survived by his loving wife, Haley Malchar Smith; his beloved daughters Beryl Brooke Smith, Arden Ashe Smith, Darby Dell Smith, Sharla Diane Lord, and Janet Kaye Smith; his cherished grandchildren Brandon Keith Munsey (Abigail), Dusty Lynn Dickey, Darren Michael Dickey (Olivia), Jared Duane Lord (Taylor), LaVonte' Scallion, Kyndall Marie Lord (John Clark); and his dear great-grandchildren Jordan Mashelle Aura-Rain (Mack), Dustin Keith Munsey (Dailynn), Geovonni Amar Dickey, Lailah Marie Johnson, Aydrian Gordon Johnson, Joanna Beth Lord, Colby Lee Perman, Jr., Baylon Francis Jared Lord, Lillie Mae Dickey, Rowena Lucille Lord, Deacon Michael Dickey, and Naomi Lorraine Lord.

In a moment of profound meaning, Duane's first great-great-grandchild, Asher Suede Munsey, was born on the day Duane entered eternity, a tender reminder of God's perfect timing and the beautiful continuity of life.

A Celebration of Life service will be held at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Houston on Friday, January 30, at 1pm. In lieu of flowers, the family invites those who wish to honor Duane's life to consider a memorial gift to the Christian Community Service Center (CCSC), with whom St. Luke's partners closely to provide food assistance through a food pantry operated on the grounds of St. Luke's Gethsemane campus - an especially meaningful tribute to Duane's lifelong generosity and heart for serving others.

Duane will be remembered for his steadfast faith, joyful spirit, generous heart, and the way he made others feel encouraged, valued, and loved. While he will be deeply missed, his family and friends rejoice in the assurance that he is now fully healed and living in the presence of the Lord he faithfully followed.

