



Wyche Murphy, Jr

January 14, 1926 - June 11, 2019

Wyche's Mother was headed to Wichita, KS for a shopping trip and medical visit during the third trimester of her pregnancy. This visit by train was merely a planned check-up with her physician. Little did she know that it would turn out to be a surprise visit when she delivered a premature baby boy on January 14, 1926. He was called "Little Wyche," as he was growing up in Stillwater with his pioneer family surrounding him. He was the baby of the family with three older siblings.

He was born to Wyche Blakely Murphy and Elenora Theodora (Ellen) Carlson Murphy. The three other siblings were Blakely Murphy, Robert M. Murphy and Maureen Murphy Bevis. Wyche left this world to join the rest of his birth family on Tuesday, June 11, 2019. He moved into the loving arms of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ to live in his heavenly home forever. Wyche was 93 at the time of his passing.

He lived his young life on Third Street in Stillwater with the family and went through the Stillwater School System, graduating High School in the Spring of 1943 at the age of 17. Throughout his growing up years, he worked for G&G (Peyton Glass) clothing store on Main Street. Later he worked for \$.10 an hour sweeping out the hangers at the airport besides other odd jobs.

Wyche enrolled in the Oklahoma A&M College in the fall of '43 attaining one semester of college under his belt before joining the US Navy on January 13, 1944, one day before he was 18. He did this to avoid being drafted into the US Army. World War II was raging on both the European and Pacific fronts. He preferred a hammock on a ship instead of the being a foot soldier trudging through mud, sleeping in fox holes and being shot at constantly as a private in the US Army.

Immediately, he was called up and sent to boot camp in San Diego, CA. From there he had training in Chicago, Gulf Port, Mississippi for 3-4 months and then on to Galveston, TX to Radar Aviation Electronics School. He got that assignment because of that one semester in college and a brief stint in ROTC. He w

as then deployed to Sangley Naval Air Station, Philippines where he repaired the radar equipment on naval aircraft. He remained there until May of 1946.

Wyche was discharged in the Norman, OK Separation Center in '46. He spent that summer dismantling military aircraft in Stillwater. In the fall he enrolled once again in the Oklahoma A&M College and pledged Sigma Nu Fraternity. He served as Rush Chairman of the fraternity.

The returning vets were overflowing most colleges and universities across the nation after the war and he was one of them using the G. I. Bill to finish college. During his remaining years at A&M, he majored in Commerce/Management and graduated in May of 1950.

After graduation, he joined his father, Wyche B. Murphy, in the real estate and insurance business which had been operating since 1917. He didn't really make much money during that time and so to gain some extra cash, he joined the Navy Reserves in June of 1950. In that era America was militarily involved in the Korean War. Before he could draw his first paycheck from the Navy Reserves, he was called up and immediately sent to Atsugi, Japan in August of 1950. In Japan, he returned to repairing the radar on Navy sea planes.

Wyche attained the rank of First-Class Petty Officer. He was honorably discharged in 1953. At the time of his discharge he was offered an officer's rank if he would remain in service to the Navy. His only remark was "I want to go home."

He returned to Stillwater to pick up where he left off in business with his father. Wyche took over the Independent Property and Casualty Insurance part of the business. He diligently studied and received the designation of a CPCU in the insurance field after being trained in Philadelphia for the insurance trade. His Insurance Agency was housed in the same building as his father's real estate business on W. 8th Street where it remains today. After his father retired, Wyche bought the business from him. He then named it The Wyche Murphy Agency.

As a businessman, he became active in local service organizations. He was a member and very active in the Jr. Chamber of Commerce and the local Rotary Club. He served as Vice-President and President of the Stillwater Board of Independent Insurance Agents and was Treasurer of that organizations for many years. He was also Treasurer of the First Presbyterian Church for over 10 years.

At the age of 34 he was well established in business and was also one of three known eligible bachelors in Stillwater. It was at this time that he finally met and pursued the love of his life, Mary Elizabeth Fox. They were married in 1961. Along with Mary came two daughters, Holly Marie and Elizabeth Leigh from a previous failed six- year

marriage. Wyche immediately adopted the two girls after they were married. Mary and Wyche then had two more children, John Wyche Murphy and Mary Ellen Murphy. Wyche and Mary enjoyed 58 years of marriage.

Wyche worked on the state level of the insurance industry as well as locally. In 1966, he was asked to serve on the Oklahoma State Board of Directors of Independent Insurance Agents. This he did for ten years from 1966-1976. During his time with that group he became the Vice-President and President of the State Board of Directors of the Independent Insurance Agents. Later in his career he was invited to join a national group of agents called Compar, which met regularly over a twelve-year period. Many wonderful business meetings and trips ensued with this very close-knit group of men and their spouses. This included a couple of international meetings. One such meeting took place in Japan and he was able to get back to Atsugi to see what had transpired during the past 25 years. He found many changes on the naval air base since the Korean War.

For a few years he did some teaching at OSU in the business school in the sixties. There was apparently a lack of insurance instructors and he was invited to teach a class a year on the intricacies of the insurance business.

During the late seventies or early eighties, Wyche and several of his business friends were concerned about the growth of downtown Stillwater with many empty spaces along Main street. After many meetings over coffee and other beverages, they decided to help in stimulating business in the downtown area. The group decided to buy the empty space of what was once a large Penny's store. This germ of an idea became a reality. The group bought the large empty space and built a mall. It is currently known as Kinzington Kourt.

In the eighties, Oklahoma was interested in revitalizing the small towns in the state. It was called the Main Street program. At the insistence of this group of innovative business men, downtown merchants and other business owners Stillwater joined with many small towns across the state and became a part of the Main Street program. This was all the beginning of what we have now in our vibrant downtown area.

In 1994, Wyche sold The Wyche Murphy Agency to his son, John Murphy. It then became The Murphy Agency. Even though he had sold the business, he continued to come to the office and work until around 2008 when he actually retired that year from the insurance field. After the official retirement he still trotted to the office daily up until 2009.

His last adventure into the business world was to form an LLC with three other partners in residential and commercial land development. The land that was developed was called the Old Murphy Farm. That dream became a reality. The four of them enjoyed this venture and were quite proud of it.

Wyche also became a charter member (Ambassador) of the Oklahoma State University Botanic Arboretum in 1993. He served toiling in their gardens until his health prohibited his work there in 2012. He loved the OSU gardens and the friendships that he developed within that group. Wyche was also a card-carrying Cherokee and was very proud of his Native American heritage.

OSU sports were always in the forefront of his mind and the hours that he spent watching the Cowboys play were sheer enjoyment to him, regardless of the kind of ball it might be.

He especially loved being with family and totally enjoyed his grandchildren and watching them grow up. Travel was always important to Wyche and Mary—often with the family, which meant so much to them. They saw many nations around the world and loved every minute of it. Colorado was a special place to him, and the family never missed a yearly retreat there since 1969. 2019 would have made the 50th year to visit the beautiful and inspiring Rocky Mountains.

This year has ended a life well spent and loved by those who knew him so well. He was basically a quiet man who kept a low profile, but when he made a friend it was a friend for life. He rarely criticized anyone. He loved his family and so appreciated it when they would return to visit. He loved his God and even though his passion for the Lord was quieter than most, it was a very real thing to him in a very simple way. Wyche was a true believer. He loved his country and was an avowed patriot. He also loved Stillwater and put much of himself into it. He never wanted to live anywhere else. He followed in the footsteps of his father, Wyche, and his brother Senator Robert M. Murphy by his care and concern for the growth and development of Stillwater. His life was ended by an extended illness, which he never complained much about, but just kept on keeping on. His passing at 93 has left a big hole in the hearts of those who loved him so dearly.

He was truly one of the members of THE GREATEST GENERATION.

Those who are surviving Wyche are his wife, Mary. Children: Holly Marie Murphy Morgan and partner Dr. Eric Broadway, Elizabeth Leigh (Lele) Murphy Lindsey and husband, Steven Ray Lindsey, John Wyche Murphy and wife, Pamela Allen Murphy, and Mary Ellen Murphy Melichar. Grandchildren: Jessica Jo Murphy, Nicole Elizabeth Murphy, Jackson Wyche Murphy, Matthew Istvan Murphy-Melichar, Kristian Wyche

Murphy-Melichar, Catherine Murphy-Melichar. Nephews: Judge Robert M. Murphy, Jr. and wife, Christine Murphy, Terrance E. Murphy, Raymond H. Fox III (Chip) and wife Elizabeth Leigh Fox, Steven James Fox and wife Kathy Fox. Nieces: Shirley Murphy Chesnut and husband Charles Chesnut, Helen Mary Murphy Schiller and husband Dr. Thomas Schiller, Jo Ellen Bevis Marshall and Karen Fox Bertrand and husband Patrick Bertrand. There are many cousins, second cousins, nieces and nephews surviving, as well.

In lieu of flowers, if you choose to send a remembrance, please send to the OSU Foundation designated for the OSU Botanic Gardens in memory of Wyche Murphy, Jr. at 400 South Monroe, Stillwater, OK 74074 or to the Salvation Army at 1101 S. Lowry, Stillwater, OK 74074.

A visitation will be held on Sunday, June 16, 2019 from 1:00 pm – 8:00 pm. The family will be present from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at Dighton-Marler Funeral Home, 5106 N. Washington, Stillwater, OK 74075

Services will be held Monday, June 17, 2019. The family interment will be at 11:00 AM at Fairlawn Cemetery with a Celebration of Life taking place at the Dighton-Marler Funeral Home Chapel at 2:00 pm with Chaplain Jeff Weldon officiating.

Condolences can be sent to the family via an online guestbook at www.dightonmarler.com.