

Roger Lee Porter



Roger Lee Porter, age 76, of Stillwater, Oklahoma passed away January 16th, 2024 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma following a brief battle with cancer. Funeral services have been entrusted to the care of Dighton-Marler Funeral Home of Stillwater.

Roger Lee Porter's greatest joy and source of personal pride was his love for family and a devotion to his friends as a steadfast system of support. He never knew a stranger. When Lee met someone new, it would take no time at all to make this new acquaintance feel like his longtime, familiar friend. Lee's open heart and capacity to be a persistently kind, safe place for all, regardless of a person's age, appearance, background, or beliefs was admired by family and friends. Lee found stoic purpose by practicing a humble Christian faith for his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, through his bond with comrades in military service and with friends of all ages.

Known by family as Roger or fondly by his nickname "Horseweeds" from his youth throughout the "hills and hollers" of West Virginia. Known as Lee during his military service and to friends, family and loved ones in Kansas and Oklahoma. Roger Lee's most valued role may have been Papaw, a title he has worn with immense pride since 1999.

Roger was born September 1st, 1947 in Branchland, West Virginia to Lee Vernon and Kathleen (Burger) Porter. He was the first child of four, growing up surrounded by the rigors of farm life. Lee first discovered the value of honest hard work, generosity, with a healthy dose of common sense. He applied these lessons to a work ethic that fully prepared him for the profession he chose. Roger's earliest life experiences prepared him to parent in a manner that would guide his sons toward the pursuit of honest work, and to value all that is earned.

Roger was a 1965 Graduate of Guyan Valley High School in Branchland, Lincoln County, West Virginia. Upon graduation, Roger volunteered for service during the Vietnam War as a weapons specialist staff sergeant in the United States Air Force. Serving on multiple bases in Thailand during the war before rotating to Wichita, Kansas to complete his service. Lee always felt pride for his country, for his years of military service. A bond with fellow service members that endured throughout his lifetime and transcended generations of soldiers and wars. Lee found noble purpose later in life as a friend and counselor for veterans, volunteering his time to support patients overcoming PTSD or simply lending his support actively involved as a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Organization and American Legion. While Lee's stories about his service became more humorous or more graphically serious as his sons got older, no one would doubt Lee's solemn devotion to serving the nation and the values and spirit of patriotism and freedom.

Following Lee's honorable discharge from military service to Wichita Kansas, he began a career in retail sales and management for Sears Catalog while briefly enrolling in business courses at Wichita State University. Lee's talent and strength was his genuine love for people, a quick wit, natural charm and mountains of intelligence. Lee would say that he never sold a single appliance, instead he made thousands of friends and helped them out when needed. Lee's business career saw him quickly promoted from sales clerk to department manager, then store manager in Arkansas City, Kansas. Ultimately attaining a District Manager position for Southern Kansas and Northern Oklahoma. When the Sears Catalog's "Wishbook" was discontinued in the mid 1990's, while his two sons were still finishing high school, Lee and thousands of his Sears colleagues were laid off. Rather than uproot his family in a transfer, Lee and his closest colleagues took a brave leap of faith by collaborating to open Hometown Brand Center, an appliance buying group. The company mission was to facilitate relationships with large retail suppliers to negotiate cheaper costs for diverse, small town, "mom and pop" member stores. Enabling these small businesses to compete with the national market power of Walmart, Lowe's, Best Buy, and yes, Sears. Lee and his partners focused on the humanity of genuine relationship-building with partners and member stores to create a competitive field in which any business, no matter the size and strength could stand up to the buying power of a worldwide retail empire.

In Arkansas City, Kansas, Lee was extensively involved in community civic organizations serving as endowment association president for Cowley College, a leader in the chamber of commerce, a devoted deacon and committee member at Central Christian Church, Arkalalah visiting Queen's committee chair. All while maintaining a storefront first for Sears and later with his partner for Porter's Hometown Brand Center, his family's appliance store connected to the larger buying group founded with his team.

Lee was a proud father. Relishing time with his adult sons as often as possible. Imparting wisdom and practical lessons learned from his own upbringing. Although sons Tim and Eric couldn't compete with his devotion to the role of Papaw. Lee would drop everything to take care of his three grandchildren. Spare no expense and somehow forget the word "no." This behavior became a warmly humorous surprise to his sons who knew their Dad could ride a pair of discount jeans and every car he ever owned right into the ground. Careful with every last dime. Apparently showering children with lavish and unnecessary gifts skips a generation. He provided for every inch of his son's needs as they grew up, but his boys knew to reserve expensive requests for birthdays and Christmas. For grandchildren Taylor, Tagen and Tatyn on the other hand, a random Saturday phone call or visit became a national holiday. Lee loved his daughter in-law Lachelle like she was his own. The two developed a special bond and fondness for each other. Often making plans and organizing events without Tim's help, who typically, in disorganized fashion might mess plans up.

Lee finished a long career of retail sales management with the Hometown Brand Center team not long after company headquarters relocated to Stillwater, Oklahoma. Lee enthusiastically embraced life in this university town. He enjoyed Oklahoma State football as a season ticket holder for many years. In true testament to his personality,

becoming friends with entire coaching staffs of multiple college sports teams. Lee was on a first-name basis with professors, university leaders, students and those citizens who were a lifeblood of the community, responsible for providing services and entertainment for the entire town. Lee valued them all, and was a proud friend. Lee was a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, and Elks Lodge. Finding and making friends wherever he went, frequenting all the iconic local hangouts in this little college town. Lee enjoyed music, the occasional glass of wine and could not turn down a conversation and a laugh with any friend, of any age and background. The outpouring of support and sadness from Lee's friends expressed mutual feelings about his approachable personality and welcoming nature that his family has known about him. A true testament to the generosity of character and jovial charm that Lee possessed.

Roger Lee Porter is survived by his son Tim and daughter-in-law Lachelle Porter, grandchildren Taylor, Tagen and Tatyn; sister Connie (Lewis) Priode; brother Johnny (Kathy) Porter; sister Pam Porter; nephew Jason (Conni) Porter, niece Crystal Porter, nephews Seth Priode (Amy) and John (Jen) Priode; an aunt Janith (Odell) Lawson; nieces Amie Wingfield and Haley Riebel, in addition to many great-nephews and great-nieces, and numerous other friends that became family.

Lee was preceded in death by his son Eric James Porter, and parents Lee Vernon and Kathleen Constance (Burger) Porter.