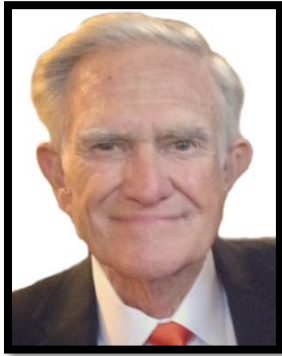


Robert Lee Westerman



Robert Lee Westerman was born November 20, 1938 near Mountain Park, Oklahoma, the son of Arthur Freeman and Mary Magdalene Westerman. He passed away Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at the age of 81. A memorial service to celebrate his wonderful life will begin at 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at the Stillwater First United Methodist Church. Interment will be held later at the Mountain Park Cemetery in southwest Oklahoma. Arrangements are under the direction of Strode Funeral Home and Cremation.

Robert attended Snyder Public Schools and graduated in 1956. During his tenure there he served as class president three years and president of his local FFA chapter. He met the love of his life, Sharon Yvonne Mires, while cruising Main Street which was a favorite past time. He went on to attend Cameron Junior College in Lawton. Upon completion, he enrolled in Oklahoma State University in 1958 and later married his beautiful wife on May 9, 1959. Later their marriage was blessed with two wonderful children, Robert Brent and Nicole Yvonne.

He enrolled in Oklahoma State University in 1958 and received a B.S. in Agriculture Education in 1961 and a M.S. in Agronomy (Soils) in 1963. In addition, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army after completing flight school and his B.S. degree. He served three years in the military as a helicopter pilot and platoon leader. After completing his military tour, he enrolled in the University of Illinois and received his Ph.D. degree in Soil Science (Soil Fertility and Chemistry) in 1969.

Robert accepted an Assistant Professor position in the Department of Agricultural Chemistry and Soils at the University of Arizona in 1969 and served seven years conducting research and teaching. In 1976, he joined Oklahoma State University as an Associate Professor and Team Leader of the Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition research group. He was later appointed to Regents Professor which is the highest academic rank that can be achieved. He supervised research training for more than 40 graduate students, both domestic and international, and taught graduate level courses in Soil-Plant Relations. During his tenure as a Research Professor he was instrumental in securing sustained funding for the Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition Program by working with state clientele, agricultural leadership groups and the state legislature. Among his many honors were selection as Fellow in the Soil Science Society of America, Fellow in the American Society of Agronomy, the Agronomic Achievement Award in Soils sponsored by the American Society of Agronomy, Editor of the Soil Science Society of America Monograph - Soil Testing and Plant Analyses and publication of more than 110 articles consisting of scientific journals, chapters in books, bulletins, research reports and popular articles.

In 1991, his role shifted to administration when he became Department Head of Agronomy (later Plant and Soil Sciences) where he served in that capacity for 10 years.

From 2001 to 2013 he served in numerous leadership roles within the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources that included Assistant and Interim Associate Director of the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, and Assistant Vice President for Agricultural Programs where he provided counsel to assist in analyzing, formulating, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and revising Division activities and functions. Robert thoroughly enjoyed being an educator and thrived on helping students and faculty challenge themselves to reach their full potential. He was always generous with his time and counsel and never hesitated to reach out and help others.

He loved his wife, children and grandchildren dearly and spent many wonderful days with them celebrating holidays, birthdays and other special events.

He enjoyed elk hunting with his friends and fly fishing with his family in Colorado, salmon fishing in Alaska with his grandsons, golf trips with his wife and family throughout the U.S., working outside on special projects, attending dance activities of granddaughters, and attending school functions, sporting events and other activities of his children and grandchildren and traveling internationally.

After seven years at the University of Arizona and 38 years of service for Oklahoma State University, he retired in 2013. In 2015, he was named the Distinguished Alumnus of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University. Oklahoma State University was extra special to him.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Freeman Junior Westerman, and his loving son, Dr. R. Brent Westerman.

Survivors include his loyal wife Sharon Y. Westerman of Stillwater; beautiful daughter Nicole Y. Taylor of Edmond; four lovely grandchildren-Jocelyn and husband Jacob Giertz and Zachary of Oklahoma City and Jennings and Gabriele Taylor of Edmond; supporting brother-in-law and wife, Gary E. and Jan Mires of Mobile; and many wonderful friends. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to the OSU Foundation and designated to the Dr. Robert L. Westerman Scholarship that will go to support graduate student work in soil science.