



David Pruett Stanford

October 19, 1935 - November 22, 2024

Dad, aka David Pruett Stanford, passed at sundown on Friday, November 22, 2024, by the front window of the family home in Bartlesville. Maybe Dad wanted one last golden Oklahoma sunset or the perfect, if a little obvious, metaphor for his final curtain call. Equally likely is the fact that the workweek doesn't end until Friday after 5pm, and Dad was never one to cut corners.

Elaine, his wife of fifty-six or fifty-seven (neither of them are sure) years was there. His daughter Tracy and her husband Matt, both of Noble, Oklahoma, were there. His son Darian and Darian's wife Shangar were there as well from Beaverton, Oregon.

The youngest of 17 children, Dad was born on October 19, 1935, in Ozark, Alabama, to Alexander H. Stanford and Ida Judah. His name was taken from the doctor who delivered him (Dr. David Pruett). Perhaps after naming 16 other kids, Grandma and Grandpa ran out of name ideas. Or, after 17 deliveries, Dr. Pruett deserved the recognition.

Grandpa was 66 when Dad was born; Grandma was 50. Child #16, Aunt Myrle, was a full ten years older than Dad; child #1, Aunt Lula, was thirty-two years older. So Dad grew up on an Alabama farm not with his siblings but rather with his nieces and nephews, many of which were older than him.

Dad joined the U.S. Air Force in 1954, less than a decade after it was created. His service allowed him to pay for college, which he did at Troy State College (now Troy University) between 1959-1961 before transferring to Auburn University, where he received a Bachelor's in Electrical Engineering in 1963. His grandkids were shocked to see a lot of "Cs" and even a couple of "Ds" on his grade reports. "Grade inflation" had not yet made its way into the U.S. educational system at Auburn or anywhere in 1963; not everyone gets A's, and A+'s were never given or even contemplated.

Shortly after graduating college, Dad made his way to Cocoa Beach, Florida, and Houston, Texas, working with various companies (Boeing, Chrysler, Singer) that contracted with NASA. His old black briefcase is filled with patches and mementos from multiple Apollo missions. Shortly after Apollo 11 landed on the Moon on July 20, 1969, someone back on Earth took a chainsaw to the simulation moon the astronauts had used at Cape Canaveral. Dad got a piece. We still have it today, along with the Apollo 16 coffee mug with the signature of "David P. Stanford" and multiple other items.

Cocoa Beach was full of historic moments between 1964 and 1974, none more so for Dad than a December day (not sure which actual day) in either 1967 or 1968 (again, see note above) when he and Mom married at what is now the beautiful Cocoa Beach Community Church.

The family—Dad, Mom, Tracy and Darian—moved to Houston briefly before settling in Bartlesville in March 1974. Dad took a job with a branch of Phillips Petroleum for the next decade until he, and too many others, were laid off in the mid 1980's after corporate raids on Phillips. Dad regrouped, worked for a period as a janitor and handyman at the family church—Tuxedo Assembly of God, before ultimately finding a job with FlightSafety International in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Dad commuted from Bartlesville to Broken Arrow in his maroon 1985 Toyota pickup over an hour each way every workday so the

family did not have to relocate.

In 1996, while on a business trip in Savannah, Georgia, Dad had a massive brain stem stroke at the Savannah Airport. Chances of survival beyond thirty days are only 20% to 30%. Thanks to good genes, to Mom and a supportive community, Dad lived almost another thirty years.

Dad was a man of faith. Not a day went by without him sitting in the den reading Scripture from his black leather Bible that, from decades of daily use, barely remains together. He taught Sunday School, sang in the choir and chaperoned at church camps. Church attendance—Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and the occasional nightly revivals that always went unbearably long—was nonnegotiable.

Dad practiced his Christian faith in a manner that is not always seen today. Actions, not words. If a widow at church, an elderly neighbor down Fordham Drive, or any man or woman down on their luck needed help—lawn mowed, car fixed, home repaired, a loving hug or affirming words, a kind smile, Dad was there. Always. Free of charge and without any fanfare.

There was never any judgment. Upon hearing of Dad's passing, a nephew reached out to share that, while visiting Bartlesville in the early 80s, he bought AC/DC's Highway to Hell. "Uncle Dave" gently suggested that Heaven was a preferable destination to Hell and that, if the nephew ever wanted to learn more, Uncle Dave was always there to talk. There was zero condemnation and no threats of hellfire. Rather ironically, the nephew thinks of Uncle Dave to this day when he hears the song. Dad, Highway to Hell is a great song, so you should be honored. I'm sure Heaven has it available if you want to listen.

Dad was always happiest outdoors, whether tinkering in the garage or helping

others with chores. He asked for a leaf blower for his 88th birthday because he thought someone up the street might need some help. Woolaroc was likely his favorite place on Earth and somewhere he had the privilege of spending a lot of time—his close friend Jerry Foust was the Woolaroc caretaker for years. Dad loved those visits.

He loved football, particularly college. The Sooners were of course his team as well as his alma mater, Auburn Tigers/War Eagles/Plainsmen (though he hid the Auburn affinity a bit likely because of how often Auburn disappointed him). He routinely said all of the football expressions that a man of his generation typically says. “If you can’t get a yard on 4th and 1, you don’t deserve to win.” “Run north-south, not east-west.” “That quarterback can’t hit the broad side of a barn.” “If you can touch it, you should catch it.” Dad went to Super Bowls II (Packers-Raiders) and III (Jets-Colts) at the Orange Bowl in Miami—by buying tickets at the gate the day of for around \$12. Imagine that.

The day after Dad died, both Oklahoma and Auburn pulled off remarkable home upsets against heavily favored teams. While Dad would have loved the games and the results, it might be better that he did not see the endings because fans in Oklahoma and in Auburn stormed the fields. Dad would not have approved. “Act like you’ve been there [experienced success] before!” He was not a fan of touchdown celebrations either, except when it was Billy “White Shoes” Johnson of the Houston Oilers. The “White Shoes” celebratory touchdown dance always made him laugh.

Dad’s favorite singer was 50’s country crooner Eddy Arnold. The day before he died, Dad listened to Arnold’s greatest hits (there are many), smiled and even sang along to the best of his ability. His last words were the final line of Arnold’s “You Don’t Know Me,” a beautiful tune that Arnold co-wrote and performed originally. It was re-released by a host of diverse artists over the years: Ray Charles, Elvis, Bette Midler, Willie Nelson, Alison Krauss, Mickey

Gilley, Michael Buble, and others.

As Dad lay weakly in the adjustable hospice bed, next to the front window of the Bartlesville home that he created, he mouthed the last line of Arnold's song—"you don't know me." But we did know him, and that's why our hearts will never be the same.

We love you Dad.

Services will be announced at a future date. Arrangements are under the direction of Carter Davis and the Davis Family Funeral Home and Crematory Walker-Brown Chapel. Online condolences and remembrances may be shared at www.DavisFamilyFuneralHome.com

Tribute Wall

AJ

“ *Austen Julka-Lawrence planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Pruett Stanford.*

Austen Julka-Lawrence - December 03, 2024 at 12:02 AM

AJ

“ *Austen Julka-Lawrence purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of David Pruett Stanford.*



Austen Julka-Lawrence - December 03, 2024 at 12:02 AM

JS

“ *Jeanne Foreman Shepherd lit a candle in memory of David Pruett Stanford*



Jeanne Foreman Shepherd - November 28, 2024 at 05:39 PM

JF

“ This picture has always held a special place in my heart. It was taken on May 1, 1993, at my wedding. My husband is 19 years older than me, and we don't have one picture of him and I posing alone together on our wedding day. It may have been because our wedding cost \$100, and that included pictures. However, we've always pretended that Dave was the stand-in for my husband, and I've kept this in my memory book for over 31 years. Dave was such a great friend to my father, and my mom told us Foust girls on Saturday that she knew dad was waiting to greet Dave in heaven on Friday evening. I'm so sorry to hear that he passed as I didn't even know that he had been ill. Thank you for the memories, sweet Dave. I love you. Jerrie Lynn Foust-Miller



Jerrie Foust-Miller - November 26, 2024 at 10:56 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of David Pruettt Stanford.

November 26, 2024 at 11:26 AM



“ Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet was purchased for the family of David Pruettt Stanford.



November 26, 2024 at 11:26 AM

RF

“ *Richard & Angie French planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Pruett Stanford.*

Richard & Angie French - November 26, 2024 at 09:00 AM

RF

“ *Richard & Angie French purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of David Pruett Stanford.*



Richard & Angie French - November 26, 2024 at 09:00 AM