



James "Jim" Eugene Eppler

November 15, 1936 - July 6, 2025

James "Jim" Eugene Eppler, 88, longtime Dewey resident and faithful public servant died July 6, 2025, at his Dewey home with his family by his side. Jim is now resting in his eternal home with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but will be missed on earth by his beloved wife Ruby, precious family and everyone who called him friend.

On November 15, 1936, Jim was born in his grandmother's living room in Chautauqua, Kansas. His parents were Marion E. and Emaline (York) Eppler. He attended school in both Coffeyville, KS and Lenape, OK, and little Jimmie grew up knowing the value of hard work – a trait that he would hone over the next eight decades.

Jim joined the Kansas National Guard while in high school, Jim joined the military in 1954, serving in the US Army for a short time before becoming a mechanic in the Air Force for four years. He deployed overseas to French Morocco, NE Africa. As a child, Jim had been to the Methodist church and got to worship his Heavenly Father even in Morocco.

Back home, Jim had a rural route for Manor bread around the SE Coffeyville area. As family lore goes, Jim first laid eyes on the love of his life Ruby Fern Banzet when he was on his route as she came in from working at her family's dairy farm. They fell deeply in love and were wed May 4, 1962, in Miami, OK.

The young couple made their home in Dewey and went on to enjoy 63 years of marriage together. They raised two precious children Brian and Cindy who became their pride and joy – at least until the grandchildren came along. Jim was a tough guy who enjoyed holding babies.

Throughout his life and multiple public safety careers, Jim always liked to stay busy and provided for his young family. He had a knack for spotting needs and talking to people in need, to find out what made them tick or caused them distress. He also had a talent for troubleshooting automotive problems and happily used YouTube how-to videos even in his '80s.

Initially, he worked at the Royal Crown Cola plant in Coffeyville where he was a jack of all trades, mixing, bottling and selling the soda all over SE Kansas. He also managed a Dewey auto repair shop before joining law enforcement as a Dewey Police patrolman in 1964 to the mid-'70s covering 117 miles of road. He also went back to school at OSU-Okmulgee to get technical certifications in all things automotive. He went on to work in the Washington County Sheriff's Office from the 1970s to 1985. During this time, he was also a volunteer firefighter which became his longest act of public service – 21 plus years including many years as fire chief and several at state-level. He had his hand in keeping us safe for so many years.

His community-mindedness also meant that Jim somehow inexplicably found or rather made time to work as a school bus driver and serve on the Dewey council. He finally stepped down from the city council in 2002 after 11 years as Mayor of the City of Dewey. A favorite story was breaking ground for Marvin's supermarket that he helped bring to Dewey in partnership with the Bartlesville Development Corp.

One fond memory that Jim cherished was when his adult children surprised him at a precious family moment: Cindy, his older daughter and a Navy officer, suddenly appeared on stage just moments before Brian's commissioning and

commissioned her younger brother into the USAF.

In his free time, Jim enjoyed all kinds of fishing while spending time with a few friends and his son Brian. It was a family affair with Ruby helping to clean the fish and freeze it for eating later.

Ruby and Jim both worked tirelessly at their home church, cleaning and doing whatever it takes to make a house of God a home. Jim was skilled at woodworking and all the oak cabinets in the church, especially the kitchen cabinets were made by Jim and stained by Ruby, his partner in marriage, life and work. Jim will be dearly missed by their church family and the many friends he made.

Jim finally retired from the woodworking business around the mid-2010s. But Jim being Jim, continued to do what he could, wherever he could be of service to his God and fellow man. Jim approached Carter Davis not long after his “retirement” and began working at the Davis Family Funeral Home in Dewey. Ruby and Jim rolled their sleeves, to help with everything from carpentry and cleaning to greeting and ministering to bereaved families. He had worked part-time for the Dewey Funeral and Ambulance Service in the years before 1972.

Jim is survived by his wife Ruby of the home; son Brian (and Becky) Eppler of Derby, KS; daughter Cindy (and Randy) Baker; three grandchildren, Sam Baker (and Cayce) Baker, Robert Eppler and Sarah Eppler, with one great grandchild on the way. Jim also leaves behind extended family and many friends including former colleagues. Jim was preceded in death by his parents.

Visitation will be Wednesday, 10-8pm, at Davis Family Funeral Home – Dewey Chapel, 918-534-3030, 113 S. Osage, Dewey, OK.

Funeral Service will be Thursday, 10 a.m. at the First Baptist Church with

Pastor Mark Wright officiating.

Services are under the direction of Jim's friend Carter Davis and Davis Family Funeral Home – Dewey Chapel. Online condolences and remembrances may be shared at www.DavisFamilyFuneralHome.com.

Cemetery Details

Dewey Cemetery

HWY 75 North
Dewey, OK 74029

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL **9**. 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Davis Family Funeral Home - Dewey Chapel
113 S Osage Avenue
Dewey, OK 74029

Funeral Service

JUL **10**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Dewey First Baptist Church
300 E 10th St.
Dewey, OK 74029
<http://www.fbcdewey.org>

Tribute Wall



“ *Davis Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of James "Jim" Eugene Eppler*



Davis Family Funeral Home - July 09, 2025 at 01:48 PM

KD

Sorry to hear of your loss. I've known Jim for over 50 years. A good man and enjoyed being a friend with him.

Ken Duncan - July 15, 2025 at 08:54 AM

BS

Jim and I met when I worked in Bartlesville in an out patient treatment center and later at JPH. He helped me talk a friend of ours from taking his own life. They don't make them like Jim any more. Bill Skye

Billy Skye - July 25, 2025 at 02:28 PM

KW

“ *Ruby so sorry to hear of Jim's passing please know you're in our thoughts and prayers at this time!!!
I still think of my mother telling me she used to babysit Little Jimmy is what she called him.*



Kay & Ron White - July 10, 2025 at 12:59 AM

CL

“ So sorry for your families loss.



connie lawrence - July 09, 2025 at 08:50 AM

KL

“ *Kim Lunsford lit a candle in memory of James "Jim" Eugene Eppler*



Kim Lunsford - July 08, 2025 at 02:23 PM

LK

“ *Linda Kesterson purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of James "Jim" Eugene Eppler.*



Linda Kesterson - July 08, 2025 at 01:36 PM