



## James "Wes" Wesley Thomas Jr.

March 24, 1947 - June 4, 2023

James Wesley "Wes" Thomas Jr.

James Wesley Thomas Jr. - or "Wes" to his friends and soon-to-be friends – lived a good life full of love, family, and fun. The longtime Dewey resident and airman was 76 and in Bartlesville when he passed away on Sunday.

James Wesley was born March 24, 1947, in Hominy, Oklahoma, to James Wesley Sr. and Marie (Vermillion) Thomas. Wes and his brother Kenneth grew up on a ranch where the young boys got to work with livestock. Wes would later share that passion with his own boys, raising pigs and showing livestock with the FFA and 4H youth groups. Wes attended high school in Wynona and graduated with just 17 students in his class.

Wes enlisted in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War, and Sgt. Thomas worked on refueling American planes in Thailand and stateside in California and Florida. After his honorable discharge, Wes returned to NE Oklahoma. Several years passed, and Wes met the love of his life Shirley Ann through mutual friends in 1975. In each other, they found their life partner and their romance evolved into marriage, even after an epic snowball accident. They got married August 14, 1976, and were later blessed with three boys, Matt, Mitch and Mike. Although Shirley doesn't recall a formal marriage proposal, Wes more than made up for it by showering her with gifts of jewelry over the

next 47 years together. Wes enjoyed gift-giving and, like everything else he did, he did it with gusto.

In 1971, Wes began his employment with Reda Pump, worked in shipping and finally retired from there after 38 years of faithful service. He enjoyed the lifelong friends he made, as well as the Reda holiday parties, dances, picnics and reunions where his Reda family got together.

Wes was a social butterfly and kind soul. He never met a stranger and had a gift for talking to random people in stores who he would befriend within minutes and magically discover shared interests. And as much as he liked talking and telling tall tales, people also were drawn to Wes and enjoyed talking to him.

Wes made life interesting and fun. His family has many fond memories of Wes whose many personal hobbies meant it was never a dull moment with him around. Like some other parents, Wes coached Little League baseball and cheered on his own kids. Naturally, Wes went a step or a mile further by turning some of his own home pasture into a baseball diamond, complete with a backstop for the youth teams to practice. But Coach Thomas also went out of his way to never show favoritism to his own sons and believed that everyone needed to earn their spot.

Wes spent a lot of time with his boys, sharing his interests in livestock and horses, driving dune buggies and ATVs, and collecting remote control cars. As his boys became teenaged drivers, Wes fell deeper in love with cars, picking up a '62 Red Impala. Eventually, Wes got himself a 1951 Chevy that he took to local car shows but it was the people that he truly enjoyed seeing and chatting with.

Wes had a genuine love for the open road and he liked to devour atlases

before navigating road trips in those pre-GPS days. Sometimes they would climb in the car and take off, ending up wherever the road and Wes's memory took them. He also enjoyed golf, fishing for trout and, later, fly fishing. He and one of his best friends Ed Henton would make numerous trips to Roaring River.

Not surprisingly, Wes was a longtime member of the Bartlesville Oldies 'n Goodies Car Club, as well as the Green Country Fish Fishing club. Wes and Shirley were both members of the Dewey Lions Club where they and their longtime friends helped fundraise by serving up fresh cut fries and concessions at countless Dewey events like the July 4th picnics at Don Tyler Park. Wes was also a part of the local VFW.

Wherever he went, Wes put smiles on people's faces. A lifelong Sooner sports fan, Wes eventually got season passes to OU football, then later OU softball games, first attending with his sons before they went off to college and later with one of his best friends Billy Canaday. Wes grew up listening to bluegrass but enjoyed all kinds of music, especially classic rock. The first concert Wes and Shirley attended together was Alabama, while his son Matt remembers Richard Marx, and Mike, recalls rocking to ZZ Top and Lynyrd Skynyrd with his dad. Wes enjoyed disco dancing and two-stepping, and Shirley will testify that he rarely passed up an opportunity to dance.

Wes was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather, and a kind friend to all. His cheerful voice and generous spirit will live on forever in our hearts.

Wes is survived by his wife Shirley; three sons, Matt Thomas and Melanie, Mitch Thomas, and Mike Thomas and Vanessa; sister-in-law Elaine Thomas; five grandchildren McKenna Henry and Trenton, Jaylon Pate, Ari Thomas,

Jude Thomas and Luca Thomas; one great granddaughter Mabel Jean Henry; and a host of cousins, nieces, nephews, other family members and countless friends. Wes was preceded in death by his parents and brother Kenneth.

Wes's family will receive friends on Thursday from 6-7 p.m. at the Davis Family Funeral Home – Dewey Chapel, 918-534-3030, 113 S. Osage Ave. (Hwy 75), Dewey, OK 74029. Visitation will be held all-day Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. A graveside service will be held Friday at 10 a.m. at the Dewey Cemetery with Pastor Chuck McCarthy officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Dewey Lions Club, care of Davis Family Funeral Home – Dewey Chapel.

Services are under the direction of Carter Davis and the Davis Family Funeral Home and Crematory – Dewey Chapel. Online condolences and remembrances may be shared at [www.DavisFamilyFuneralHome.com](http://www.DavisFamilyFuneralHome.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Dewey Cemetery

HWY 75 North  
Dewey, OK 74029

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 8. 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Davis Family Funeral Home - Dewey Chapel  
113 S Osage Ave  
Dewey, OK 74029  
(918) 534-3030  
davisfamilyfuneralhome@gmail.com

## Family and Friends Gathering

JUN 8. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Davis Family Funeral Home - Dewey Chapel  
113 S Osage Ave  
Dewey, OK 74029  
(918) 534-3030  
davisfamilyfuneralhome@gmail.com

## Graveside Service

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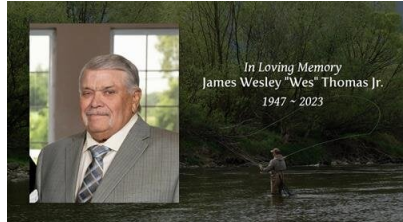
JUN 9. 10:00 AM (CT)

Davis Family Funeral Home - Dewey Chapel  
113 S Osage Ave  
Dewey, OK 74029  
(918) 534-3030  
davisfamilyfuneralhome@gmail.com

# Tribute Wall



“ *Davis Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of James "Wes" Wesley Thomas Jr.*



**Davis Family Funeral Home** - June 07, 2023 at 06:21 PM

VS

“ *I am so sorry to hear of your passing Wes you were one of a kind you loved your family very much and they loved you . We will miss you and all your stories rest in peace my friend . Sending hugs Shirley prayers  
Sincerely  
Vickie Snellgrove*



**Vickie Snellgrove** - June 07, 2023 at 05:14 PM

JJ

*As school mates and Brownie Girl Scouts, Shirley Reese was always kind, caring and every one's friend. Her gentle nature belied her many gifts, skills and aptitudes. Shirley is just so special and there is no doubt the good Lord made certain that Wes would be her help mate. Thank you for sharing their lives with those of us who were called to live far away... we can leave home, but home never leaves us..*

**janet graham johnson** - June 07, 2023 at 09:32 PM

JO

*I met Wes in the 90's through Little League sports and 4H. Wes was always willing to help with anything that was needed. Wes was a good and nice man.*

John Offutt - June 12, 2023 at 06:51 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of James "Wes" Wesley Thomas Jr..*



June 07, 2023 at 01:28 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James "Wes" Wesley Thomas Jr..*



June 07, 2023 at 11:54 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James "Wes" Wesley Thomas Jr..*

June 07, 2023 at 11:54 AM