



## Ben Hayden

March 7, 1951 - August 27, 2021

Ben R. Hayden passed away on August 27, 2021 at age 70. He was born March 7, 1951 in Corsicana, Texas to Ray and Thelma Hayden. He is survived by his wife of 44 years Sheila Rodgers Hayden and by his children Aaron Hayden and Aubree Hayden Karner and her husband David Karner.

Ben grew up playing all over his central Texas neighborhood until his mother called him home to supper; he especially liked riding his scooter and playing baseball. During those years, his dad and uncle owned a miniature golf course and motel court. His dad put him to work at the golf course at age 8, which was hardly work for a kid his age to be around batting cages and golf balls and later a go-cart track. When his dad sold those businesses, he opened Go Go Gas and Ben worked there.

After graduating from Corsicana High School where he was on the golf team, he attended Navarro Junior College on a golf scholarship. He attended University of Houston Optometry School for a year before transferring to East Texas State University and changing his major to history and psychology. It was at ETSU that Ben became active in Baptist Student Union. While on a mission trip to Matamoros, Mexico, he invited Jesus Christ into his heart. Soon after, he felt called to go into Baptist student work, so he attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth for his master's degree in theology. It was there that he met Sheila while he was a BSU director at Hill Junior College in Hillsboro, Texas. They married in 1977.

They headed for Stillwater in 1978 for his fresh-out-of-seminary position as Minister of Outreach and Young Adults at First Baptist Church. Ben was a bit dismayed to end up in Oklahoma, after growing up deep in the heart of Texas and a number of members of his family attending University of Texas.

However, Stillwater and the OSU Cowboys soon won his heart and allegiance, and he never looked back. He even became a fan of OSU wrestling when the only wrestling he had ever heard about was the “Gorgeous George” kind of Saturday Night Wrestling on television.

In 1979 he and Sheila moved to Tulsa for Ben to become BSU Director at University of Tulsa, where he successfully served students and churches. Besides the birth of Aaron in 1980, one of the highlights of his TU years was Ben’s participation in a mission trip to the Philippines.

In 1983 Ben went to work for A. H. Robins as a pharmaceutical representative and detailed such recognizable brands as Dimetapp and Robitussin, among others. Wyeth later bought out Robins, and by the time Ben retired, Pfizer had bought out Wyeth.

In 1985 Aubree was born and completed the family. As they grew, the kids participated in activities from academic team to spelling bees to soccer, etc., and Ben was a devoted fan dad. He was rooting and encouraging and sometimes coaching. For Sheila too, Ben was the ultimate ardent and supportive husband. His word was his bond; if he said he would do something – from a family activity, to “fixing something,” to a phone call, to dealing with any client or customer – he never failed to follow through.

Football was Ben’s favorite season. He would languish every spring until football started. For years, he and Aaron and later David participated in fantasy football, but Ben loved it because it was a way to connect with football when it wasn’t quite football season. He read the magazines that came out in the spring, made charts, and studied stats to prepare for the big fantasy football draft, to which he very much looked forward. However, there was one football team he loved above all others. He was probably the Dallas Cowboys’ biggest fan and bragged that he had never missed watching a game since the

team started with Coach Tom Landry. One time he actually saw Roger Staubach on a plane, which was pretty exciting for him. Even during the Barry Switzer (GO POKES!) coaching stint, Ben remained faithful to his Dallas team.

Soon after retiring, Ben got his real estate license and worked with clients for over 10 years up until shortly before his death. During that time, he helped numerous customers and investors, but most special to him was being able to help both his son and daughter buy houses and to sell his mother-in-law's house within the past two years.

His physical issues the last several years kept him largely immobile, but prayer, his beloved dogs Pete and Sooie, and his family kept him sustained. Ben fiercely loved his family, and his pride in his two children and his son-in-law knew no bounds. He loved old cowboy movies and World War II movies; his wife teased him about how many times he had watched Midway or any John Wayne movie. He was very sentimental and would tear up every time he watched Jimmy Stewart in Shenandoah or John Wayne in The Quiet Man. Ben was a life-long Democrat. He was proud that he voted for Jimmy Carter the first time he ever voted. Jimmy Carter remained a hero for him. Before the 2020 election, he arduously researched statistics and websites, making charts to keep up with the latest information.

Just before calling our dear friends the Branches to let them know of his passing, Gail said she had been thinking of Ben in heaven, walking and jumping and playing golf. His faith in God assured him that would be a reality, and he believed that with certainty. So do we.

In an effort to be of help to others and contribute to medical research, Ben donated his body to OSU Medical School.

Friends are invited to a memorial reception on Thursday, September 9, 6-8 pm, at First Christian Church fellowship hall in Broken Arrow, 2602 S. Elm

Place. Visitors are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated, and masks are required. Please join us for hors d'oeuvres , fellowship, and remembrance. Dress is casual.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Meals on Wheels PAWS Program, the Oklahoma Democratic Party, or Habitat for Humanity.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

SEP 9. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

First Christian Church  
2602 S. Elm Place  
Broken Arrow, OK 74012

# Tribute Wall



“ *Ben Hayden*

October 23, 2023 at 01:21 AM



“ *Shelia, went to ETSU with Ben, He did his first wedding , an it was Mike an I . We were all young in 1974. I talked to him in 2099 when mine passed. I am so sorry we from the BSU at ET did not know he had been ill we meet you , an then came to ya’s wedding. We all had some wonderful times .breaks my heart for you an your family. My e mail address is kckim001@swbell.Net, an my phone is 913-226-7055. Still live in Kansas. We all loved him so much.*

**kim maples** - August 18, 2022 at 09:51 PM



“ *I knew Been at Corsicana High and at Southwestern Seminary. Growing up, he was steady and always known as a good guy. I’m sorry for his family, although, I’m happy in their confidence of his salvation.*

*Vaughn W, Wyatt (Marideth Craige’s Uncle)*

**vaughn wyatt** - September 09, 2021 at 09:37 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



**Cindy Nowell** - September 06, 2021 at 09:55 PM

CN

“ Dear Sheila, Aubree, and Aaron,  
My 1st cousin Ben will always be near and dear to my heart: Fun-filled memories growing up in Corsicana, holiday gatherings at Nonie and Granddaddy's and Aunt Thelma and Uncle Ray's, delicious food, playing outside, and Christmases (Ben always passed out the presents from under the tree). One Christmas, when Ben was a teenager of driving age, at the very end of the gifts, a tiny box was hidden up in the branches; it was to Ben, we all sat quietly as he opened it: A car key that started a candy apple red Ford Mustang parked out front! How cool is that? Then, of course, there are fun memories of summer nights at "The Golf Course!" Janice and I always looked up to him and thought he was so cool and such an accomplished miniature golfer. :) His pinball skills were awesome too!

Tom and I are deeply saddened to hear of Ben's untimely passing. Being like-minded politically, Tom so enjoyed their talks about current events and national affairs with Ben's keen intelligence and thoughtful perspective.

Love to you all,

Cindy Nowell,

Tom Fillio

Santa Cruz, CA

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Cindy Nowell - September 06, 2021 at 09:34 PM

CN

“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



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Cindy Nowell - September 06, 2021 at 08:50 PM

KS

“ Kevin Easley Sr purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Ben Hayden.



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Kevin Easley Sr - September 01, 2021 at 10:19 AM

KS

“ Such an outstanding family. We are broken hearted for your loss. Please know we are praying for all of you. Thank you for helping my family.

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Kevin Easley Sr - September 01, 2021 at 10:09 AM



“ 21 files added to the album Memories Album



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Hayhurst Funeral Home - August 31, 2021 at 08:41 PM

NS

Good afternoon Sheila. Ron Lawson just called to tell us that Ben had passed away. I am so sorry. I have such fond memories of you and Ben both at Stillwater and our meeting in Tulsa. I wish you God's best in the days ahead.

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Neal Schooley - September 03, 2021 at 05:18 PM

NS

“ I only knew his wife Sheila, in which I worked with at Broken Arrow Schools. I know Heaven is celebrating his homecoming. I must say that after reading his obit, being a Democrat and an OSU Pokes fan makes my heart happy. RIP Mr. Hayden



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**Nancy D. Self** - August 31, 2021 at 07:40 PM

PC

“ I remember Ben as a Christian, great husband and father. Good friend

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**paul w. collins** - August 29, 2021 at 06:03 PM