



Leslie Miller

September 27, 1936 - January 5, 2022

Leslie Warren (Tinker) Miller was born in Bernice, Oklahoma on Sunday September 27, 1936, to Calvin Tams and Hazel Gertrude (Lingo) Miller. He passed from this life on Wednesday, January 5, 2022, in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma at the age of 85.

Les was one of three children and grew up in Northeastern Oklahoma. He attended several schools in Oklahoma. Cleora, Afton, Commerce and Miami, with one lone year spent in Berkeley, California. Les loved Northeastern Oklahoma and his Cherokee heritage. He graduated from Miami High School in 1954. He was a three-sport star in high school and all state in Basketball. He received a football scholarship to Oklahoma A&M. After one year he signed to play baseball in the New York Yankees organization. After a year he returned to college football at Pittsburg State Teachers College, where injuries ended his football career after one season. While at school pursuing his degree in Foreign Languages and Education, he had the opportunity to help the football team as a student assistant. During that time, the Gorillas won the 1957 NAIA National Championship. That was the prelude to his coaching career.

Les's coaching career started in 1958. In his first job at Afton High School, he coached all six sports (4 boys and 2 girls).

- Les then moved to Tulsa McClain High School as an assistant football coach, head baseball and swimming coach.
- Tulsa Memorial was next, where he was the head football coach and

coached swimming.

- After a brief two- year break from coaching in private business, he returned to high school football in Joplin, Missouri.
- Next, he was hired as an assistant coach at Brigham Young University.
- He left BYU for the NFL, joining the Miami Dolphins as a college scout. With the Miami Dolphins he received two super bowl rings in his first two seasons there as a scout. After three years, he moved to the Kansas City Chiefs as Player Personnel Director and stayed there 13 years, the longest he was at any school or team.

After the Kansas City Chiefs, he worked in the front offices of the San Diego Chargers, St. Louis Rams and Cleveland Browns, with four years in between helping the World Football League get started in Europe.

After retirement he continued to stay active in professional football. He scouted NFL Training Camps for players for the Toronto Argonauts. His time with the NFL Combine was special. He was heavily involved from the inception of the Combine until 2019.

As his family knows, it wasn't football that kept him working, it was all the people in football. There are so many that made his life the way he wanted it. We thank you all for your love and friendship with him and his family. There are too many to mention, but there are a few who deserve a special mention for their influence on his life. First and most prominent is John Lingo. John was his high school coach, mentor and surrogate father figure after Les's father died when he was young. Les always said he was the finest man he ever knew. He learned formative life lessons from John and the importance of treating everyone fairly and equally.

Carnie Smith, the Legendary Pittsburg State Coach. He taught Les the coaching 'ropes' and inspired him to become a football coach. Tommy Hudspeth, former Tulsa University Assistant Coach, Assistant Coach with the Calgary Stampeders,

Head Coach BYU, Head Coach UTEP, Head Coach Detroit Lions, Head Coach Toronto Argonauts. He was a lifelong friend who grew up with Les in the same hometown. A few years older, Tommy showed Les how a small-town kid can do bigger things. Tommy, as the head coach, hired Les at BYU. Bobby Beathard, who hired him to his first NFL job with the Miami Dolphins. Les learned the NFL on the job with one of the best. And finally, we would be remiss if we did not mention the NFL Scouts who worked so long with him in Kansas City. He loved each of them as a brother. Each were very special, including Tommy O'Boyle, Bobby Gill, JD Helm and Otis Taylor (who should be in the NFL Hall of Fame).

On a personal level, his life changed for the best in 1953 when Bonnie Joyce skated up to his car at EC's Drive-in in Miami, Oklahoma. They married on May 27, 1955, and enjoyed their family, friends and travels for 66 years. It is impossible to describe the impact he had on his family and friends. He loved them all, with hundreds who will be missing their annual birthday calls from him. He also loved country music, traveling and food. In his honor, have a big plate of spaghetti and meatballs with a side of Italian Sausage. Or listen to his all-time favorite song, Porter Waggoners "Skid Row Joe." He never met a stranger he wouldn't talk to or a bowl of vanilla ice cream with peanut butter he wouldn't eat! He is now seeing his old friends and likely making new ones. Our family treasures all his friends and thanks you for the many years of friendship you gave him. We were so lucky to travel through life with him and experience moments we could only dream of.

For such a humble and down to earth person, no one in the family could figure out how he became such a smack talker in the family fantasy football league. Not even the grandkids were immune.

Left to cherish is memory are wife Joyce of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma,
Son Randy Mike Miller (Deb Ketz) of Cameron, Oklahoma

Daughter, Debra Miller (Kelvin Gales) of Kansas City, Kansas

Son, Martin Miller (Kerinda) of Boise, Idaho

Son, Matthew Miller of Kansas City, Kansas

7 Grandchildren: Casey Williams, Leslie Tracy (Seth), Adesa Miller, Mia Miller, Maggie Miller, Gannon Miller, and Dani Miller.

And 3 Great Grandchildren: Faith Williams, Marlo Williams, and Miller Tracy.

He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Joe Miller and sister Doretha Lily.

At this time no services will be held. A celebration of his life will be held at a later date.

The family welcomes donations to Tulsa Memorial High School Endowment, where he spent many years on the Board, as an expression of sympathy instead of flowers

Tribute Wall



“ *Leslie Miller*

October 23, 2023 at 01:21 AM



“ *It is our honor and privilege to serve the Miller family and to provide this permanent tribute website in memory of Leslie.*



Hayhurst Funeral Home - January 05, 2022 at 05:53 PM



He was a great friend to me and I always looked forward to working with him at the National Scouting Combine! That was always the highlight of my year! He was indeed a great teacher and loved football! I will always remember the evening he shared the story of how when he was in high school due to some family issues the Mantle family took him in and he stayed with them a bit. I was sitting there when it dawned on me that Les grew up in Oklahoma - Mickey Mantle grew up in Oklahoma - so I asked and he said as casual as can be - Yeah but Mickey wasn't around too much but he would see him now and again! And the stories he would share regarding Harry Buffington and other scouts and how the Combine got it's start! He will truly ne missed and I will love him forever - Football is missing a truly great advocate for the GAME! Rest in peace my friend - until we meet again!

Dennis Lynch - January 07, 2022 at 02:58 PM

PT

A dear, close friend for many, many years. After my husband's death in 2015, Les, Joyce and I continued with our "Friday Date Night", going out to dinner at a different restaurant every Friday night. Lots of good memories all through our lives, from mid-fifties almost till mid-November, 2021 when he had his tragic heart attack. I know he's in a better place with so many old friends and family and he isn't suffering. I'll see you in Heaven dear Les "Tinker" Miller.

Pat True - January 10, 2022 at 05:00 PM

YK

I can remember the first time I met Les - he was a year ahead of me in school and had this killer grin but charm that "brought you to your knees!" Every girl in school (Miami High) had a crush on him - but it was plain to see that Bonne Joyce stole his heart. When he and Joyce were in KC, he got tickets for a bunch of us derelicts - Kent and Yvonne, Homer and Judy, Phil and Liz and Bob and Dede. We got to go to his office after the game and the players had to go by us and Liz and Dede loved their tight pants!!! Les was always doing something good for us and he never forgot where he came from. We shared good times with Joyce and him when they lived in St. Louis for awhile - Kent and I lived there 30 years. He's up there with some old high school buddies planning our next reunion. Love you - it was an honor to have you as my friend even though you continued to call me "Kiddle Puss" which wasn't always music to my ears. God Bless You - RIP.

Yvonne Ketcher - January 10, 2022 at 09:16 PM

LO

This is by far the most amazing obituary ever written! I feel like I know him; yet, have never met him. I can attest to the fact that you as his daughter and granddaughter are amazingly kind and dear friends that we enjoy time with. In reading this passage, I feel his presence in Debbie, Leslie, and Miller. Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you walk through this extremely difficult time. XOXO Lori Lane

Lori - January 11, 2022 at 09:51 AM

LA

Les, was one of the nicest people I've ever met, a true gentleman. Rest In Peace, sweet man.

linda andreatta - January 11, 2022 at 12:11 PM

CP

I met Les over 50 years ago, through my best friend, his sister Dee. Les was a kind and gentle man who loved family above all, once a friend you became family.

I am extremely grateful to be part of that extended family and will always cherish the time I was fortunate to spend with Les, Joyce and Dee.

Joyce I look forward to a visit when we are able.

I grieve with with you and hold you close to my heart.

All my love, Chris

chris pearce - January 13, 2022 at 05:22 PM