

Norbert 'Bert' Harlan Darr

FRISCO, TEXAS - Norbert "Bert" Harlan Darr, 86, victoriously stepped into the arms of his loving Savior, Monday, Oct 7, 2019, after a nine-year battle with Alzheimer's.



Bert was born Nov. 8, 1932, in the small farming community of Mentone (population of 700), a town self-acclaimed as the "Egg Basket of the Midwest." Located just 45 miles away from South Bend, Mentone was built by a community excited by the rumor that the railroad was coming to the territory in 1880.

He was the first born of Elmer Andrew Darr and Zeda Mae Creviston Darr. He was big brother to Monna Lou Darr Smythe, who was two years younger. He and Monna were raised by their paternal grandmother, Edith Darr, after the passing of their mother, Zeda, in 1937, and the passing of their grandfather, Vertie Blanche Darr, in 1938. Shortly thereafter, their father, Elmer, left the area to pursue better work opportunities in California.

As a youth, Bert delivered the local newspaper on his bike, helped with farm work, raised rabbits to earn extra income and could be found tuned to the radio during Notre Dame football games, Chicago Cubs baseball games and Indiana Hoosier basketball games. He developed a love for ping pong and model train sets and enjoyed watching the big trains pass by their sleepy little town. Bert was accomplished at piano and won numerous awards while playing the saxophone in state band competitions. He also earned a nationwide gardening contest award.

Bert earned an undergraduate degree in Greek from Grace College, Winona Lake, and completed his Master of Divinity degree at Grace Seminary. He played on the men's basketball team, worked at the local Chevrolet dealership and faithfully taught a married couples' class at First Baptist Church of Mentone. While attending Grace Seminary, he met the love of his life, Sonya Diane Saufley. He and Sonya were married, June 2, 1957, near Hershey, Pa., where Sonya grew up on a dairy farm, which provided milk to the candy factory.

Bert excelled at everything he tried, whether in business or hobby. He was a true learner with an innovative and statistical mind. He was fascinated by technology and had four separate careers in ministry (pastor of two churches in Chatsworth and Plainfield, Ill.), corporate management, banking, and then, after retirement, coming back to something he always dreamed of as a youth, while watching the trains lumber through Mentone. At age 69, he began a 10-year career operating trains for the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART). Bert enjoyed sports, music, art, carpentry, miniature N-gauge train collections, model building and collecting, photography, cycling, needlepoint and Latch Hook crafts for which he earned ribbons at the state fair of Texas. Bert was self-taught in all his interests.

He is survived by his dear wife of 62 years, Sonya; three sons: Douglas Alva Darr and daughter-in-law, Gloria; Steven Graham Darr; David Alan Darr and daughter-in-law, Karen; six grandchildren: Kristin (Eric) Garrett, Lindsay (Kyle) Hembree, Kara (Stephen) Cary, Shayna Darr, Nathan Darr and Aaron Darr; four great-grandchildren: Jakin Garrett, Adalynn Hembree, Olivia Cary and Willem Cary. He is also survived by two nieces, Candace Smythe and Gaynell Smythe, both still living in the Mentone area.

Memorial to GracePoint Church of Connell, TX 75019.

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