



Lawrence V. Witt

DEC 7, 1917 - OCT 2, 2013



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Lawrence (Larry) V. Witt, Sr., died Wednesday, October 2, 2013, at the Allen Morgan Nursing Home in Memphis, after an extended decline. Mr. Witt, a well-known Mid-South lumberman for almost 70 years, was 95 years old. Mr. Witt was born, one of five children, on December 7, 1917, to Michael Lawrence and Clara Wainwright Witt in Laurel, Mississippi. He was preceded in death by Frances Webb Witt, his beloved wife of 73 years; two brothers, Michael and Wilford Witt; two sisters, Betty Williamson and Doris Overstreet; one son, David Witt; one daughter, Linda Witt; and two grandsons, Matthew and Daniel Witt. He is survived by two sons and two daughter-in-laws: Larry, Jr. and wife Beth of Haughton, Louisiana, and George Witt and wife, Nancy of Tampa, Florida; five grandchildren, and 12 great grandchildren. His grandchildren include: Larry, III (wife Gladys) of Tampa, Florida, Benjamin of Memphis, John (wife Stacy) of Ogallala, Nebraska, Catherine Shaw (husband Scott) of McKinney, Texas, and Elizabeth Witt of Bossier City, Louisiana. Mr. Witt began his career as a 17 year old office manager assistant for Bruce Lumber Company in Laurel, Mississippi. During his 42 year tenure with this company, he moved through sales and lumber inspecting and raw material procurement (he bought pine lumber for the manufacture of shell boxes during WWII) to management of sawmill and flooring mill operations as a company vice president. His family lived and worked Columbus, Mississippi, for fifteen years (1948-1963), where he quickly became an active community leader, serving as a vestryman for St. Paul's Episcopal Church and as a president of the Rotary Club. When Bruce was purchased by Cook Industries, Witt moved to Memphis (1963), where he continued to work until 1977. He was one of the first of a group of lumberman to inspect and purchase lumber in South America. He was noted for his development of a "Bible" on how to run a saw-mill efficiently. After retiring from Bruce, Mr. Witt was recruited by Robbins Flooring Company to help expand their operations. He was so



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successful in his twenty years with this company that an Arkansas manufacturing plant was named after him: the Witt Plant. Though he retired from Robbins in 1997, he continued to serve on their board and consult until 2002. Recognized by many as the “ultimate lumberman”, he was honored on his Robbins retirement with the presentation of a plaque and a Mercedes Benz. He was also recognized in December, 2009, by the Hardwood Market Report with an article detailing his long and honorable career. Mr. Witt was active until his illness with the area lumbermen’s organization, affectionately known as “the Termites”. He and his wife were long-time members of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion, in Memphis. Graveside Services will be held at Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery on Friday, October 4, at 1:00 pm. The family will receive friends beginning at noon. Services will be conducted by The Rev. Alexander H. Webb, II “Sandy”. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that remembrances be made to the Church Health Center of Memphis, or that a tree be planted in Mr. Witt’s name through the National Wildlife Association or other like organization. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery, 5668 Poplar Ave. Memphis, TN 38119, (901)767-8930, “Behind the Stone Wall”.



Tribute Wall

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Jonathan Turner posted:

I began selling lumber to Mr. Witt in 1990. It was not the easiest sell. He made me work for every order and ship every load we had booked. He set a good standard to do what you say and honor your commitments. I have fond memories of working with Mr. Witt and cherish the times we had together. Please take comfort on the positive influence he had on my life and many others. Jonathan Turner

October 3 at 6:22 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Lawrence by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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