

Samuel Arthur Wilbourn Jr.

December 31, 1940 - February 17, 2021

Samuel Arthur Wilbourn, Jr., 80, of Memphis, TN, passed away on Wednesday, February 17, 2021.

Sam was born on December 31, 1940, to Samuel and Ruth Wilbourn in Grenada, Mississippi. He spent the first part of his life in Grenada and moved to Memphis in the mid 1990s where he spent the remainder of his life.

Sam loved to work and dreamed big dreams. During his life he held several occupations, including a concrete and lumber salesman, building contractor, community developer, restaurant owner and chef, as well as Produce Manager and Co-Manager at Kroger, where he worked for 19 years.

As a contractor and developer, he constructed neighborhoods, office buildings, and post offices. At one of his properties just outside of Grenada, he created a neighborhood and one of the streets was named after him: "Wilbourn Road."

Sam was a conservative man who loved Jesus, his family, and his country. He was a people person—he loved serving and loving on others. Sam had an infectious smile that said "You are loved". If anyone asked how he was doing, his answer would always be "Excellent". Everywhere he went people were drawn to him and his happy outlook on life. His love of life was contagious.

He met his wife Gwen at Kroger, when he offered to help her pick out squash. Sam was a devoted husband to Gwen. Together they enjoyed ballroom dancing, gardening, cooking, and spending time with family and friends. Together they created a large backyard garden with a wood swing for their enjoyment. Sam also enjoyed helping Gwen with her Kindergarten class at Shady Grove Elementary.

Sam was a member of Bellevue Baptist Church and the Promise Life Group, where he was involved in the Bellevue Baptist ministry: Bellevue Loves Memphis Workdays, which

involved members sharing the love of Christ through partnering with schools, ministries, first responders, and communities in Memphis. He also assisted his daughter, Bethany, and her ministry with Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

Sam loved all kinds of food and he enjoyed cooking special foods for his family and friends. He was co-owner and chef of the Lunch Bunch in Grenada. He developed the best hush puppy and coleslaw recipes anyone had ever tasted. People came from near and far just for the catfish box meal and the best sweet tea in the south. In Memphis, he cooked for his friends in the Life Group and when he could not cook any longer, the ladies in the Life Group kept him well supplied with great food.

Sam delighted in all types of music. His favorite songs were about loving and worshiping Jesus which were performed by the Bellevue Baptist Choir, Daniel Crews, and many other artists. His favorite artist was his daughter, Olivia Malone. He listened to her sing all her life and he was so proud of her when she became a professional vocalist.

Sam is survived by his wife, Mary Gwen Guthrie Wilbourn, of the home; his two daughters, Bethany Wright and Olivia Malone, both of Olathe, KS; his younger brothers Paul Hill Wilbourn, and his wife Gloria, and David Wilbourn, both of Grenada, MS; five grandchildren, and one great grandchild. Sam is preceded in death by his sister, Lois Brassfield.

Sam's family visitation will begin at 4:30 p.m. and the 5 p.m. visitation, open to the public, will be followed by the funeral service at 6 p.m. Friday, February 26, 2021, at Memorial Park Funeral Home & Cemetery, Riverside Chapel, 5668 Poplar Ave, Memphis, TN 38119, (901) 562-0620, <https://www.memorialparkfuneralandcemetery.com>

Sam will be buried on Saturday, February 27, 2021 at 9:00am in the Sunny Slope area of Memorial Park Cemetery.

The family would like to suggest three ways to honor Sam. While flowers are welcome, the family asks that you consider sending a donation to the Sam Wilbourn Memorial Fund c/o Memorial Park Funeral Home & Cemetery or send a donation to Bellevue Baptist Church, 2000 Appling Rd, Cordova, TN 38016.

To view his service online. Please click the link below to view.

<http://webcast.funeralvue.com/events/viewer/48772>

To view the tribute slideshow, please click the link below:

<https://www.tributeslides.com/tributes/show/M7M3Y4XGKY9PKF66>

Cemetery

Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery

5668 Poplar Avenue
Memphis, TN, 38119

Events

FEB **Visitation** 05:00PM - 06:00PM

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Memorial Park Funeral Home
5668 Poplar Ave, Memphis, TN, US,
38119

FEB **Funeral Service** 06:00PM

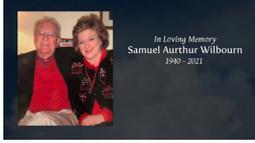
26

Memorial Park Funeral Home
5668 Poplar Ave, Memphis, TN, US,
38119

Comments



“ An external video has been added.



Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery - February 26, 2021 at 06:02 PM



“ A webcast video has been added.



Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery - February 23, 2021 at 01:12 PM



“ I remember Sam as being one of the most upbeat men I knew. The guy could do anything from operating heavy equipment, owning and operating a restaurant, selling real estate and building homes/businesses! Always had a smile on his face and (it appeared to me) never met a stranger. As we go through life there is always that one person that had a positive and uplifting spirit. Sam was that person for me.

Chet Melton - February 26, 2021 at 04:19 PM



“ Sam was a wonderful person.always so upbeat,friendly, and always smiling. He was a friend of my dad.(Grenada area.)We visited many times,while he was in the Real Estate business in Memphis.He was truly an inspiration to everyone he met. When my dad passed away, he had a restaurant in Grenada, he came to see us,brought lots of food and prayed with us.Sam exemplified a true christian. He will be forever remembered and missed, Love and prayers, Margaret Latham Corder,Holcomb,Ms.

Margaret Corder - February 24, 2021 at 09:23 PM



“ Mr. Sam, I will always remember your smile and laugh. You trusted me to assist you and I would always say I got you Mr. Sam and you would smile. We prayed our last prayer together on Feb 6. and you said Amen Mr. Sam I salute you a job well done. God's good and faithful servant. Rest in God's arms. Lashica



Lashica Hicks - February 22, 2021 at 08:29 PM



“ I remember the times I was with ya'll at a mealtime and the ease with which Sam offered the blessing....even as time passed, prayer was a privilege to Sam and we all looked forward to it. Rest in peace in God's Holy presence.

Patsy Dougherty - February 22, 2021 at 08:03 PM



“ What a beautiful tribute to one of God's children who never met a stranger and who always greeted you with a smile. Sam was not bashful about his devotion to Gwen, and loved to share about how they met. He will be missed.

Janet Hood - February 22, 2021 at 06:09 PM



“ Sweet Sam, how you will be missed. Your smile was infectious and you always had a smile. No matter what was going on in your life you never lost that sweet disposition and your gratefulness for each day. Gwen is so correct when she says you always said you were Excellent! That will always be something I remember about you. Rest in God's Hands. Love, Peggy and Dewitt Crawford

Peggy and Dewitt Crawford - February 24, 2021 at 10:46 PM