



Willis E. Smith

April 20, 1920 - May 22, 2017

Willis E. Smith, 97, of Fort Collins passed away at Columbine Commons in Windsor on May 22, 2017.

Willis was born in Fort Collins on April 2, 1920, to Marvin and Hazel(Wyckoff)Smith. Willis grew up on the family farm northwest of Fort Collins and graduated from Cache La Poudre High School, LaPorte CO in 1937. He married Helen (Nicky) Henderson, his high school sweetheart, in Steamboat Springs in 1941.

When World War II broke out he enlisted in the US Army Air Corps and reached the rank of First Lieutenant. After the war, Willis and Nicky returned to the family farm. He worked with his Dad raising both crops and cattle along with a small dairy herd. He also managed to earn his degree in animal husbandry from Colorado A&M now CSU.

In 1964 he turned the full time farming and dairy operation over to his good friend Roger Amey and began his banking career with the Poudre Valley Bank as a field man. The Poudre Valley Bank eventually became Wells Fargo Bank of Fort Collins and Willis retired as senior vice president in charge of agriculture loans.

After Nicky's death in 1977, Willis married Ardath Wiley of Fort Collins. They

enjoyed many years traveling the globe, golfing and being with family and friends. Ardath passed away in 2005.

Willis was active until late in life golfing and traveling. He was a member of The Fort Collins Rotary Club and the Elks. He was a past president of The Poudre Valley Lake and Canal Co. He belonged to the Fort Collins and Eaton Country Clubs.

Survivors include his daughter Sharon Brauch of Fort Collins, son Gerald (Patricia) of Eaton, step-daughter Kathleen (Bob) Taylor of Eaton, grandchildren Jeff (Ann) Brauch of Fort Collins, Jill (Bill) Finnegan of Fort Collins , Jeanne Brauch of Boulder, Steven (Kerstin) Smith of Abu Dhabi, UAE, Stacy (Andy) Neal of Florida, Jason (Genevieve) Smith of California and eleven great-grandchildren.

Preceding Willis's death are his parents, both wives and son-in-law Charles Brauch.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, June 3, 2017, 2:00 pm at Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive St., Fort Collins. Burial services following at Grandview Cemetery.

Memorial contributions can be made to Halcyon Hospice in care of Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive, Ft. Collins, CO 80524. Please visit bohlenderfuneralchapel.com to send the family online condolences.

Cemetery Details

Grandview Cemetery

1900 W. Mountain Ave.
Ft. Collins, CO 80521

Previous Events

Viewing

JUN 2. 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel
121 W. Olive Street
Fort Collins, CO 80524
(970) 482-4244
<https://www.bohlenderfuneralchapel.com/>

Funeral Service

JUN 3. 2:00 PM (MT)

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Tribute Wall

HB

“ In 1993 my parents and I built our home on West Vine Dr. bordering the Smith farms East field, then planted in corn. We would welcome spring with the planting, summer with irrigation and at harvest time we would watch Willis, Roger, Keith and Martha perform a well orchestrated gathering of the crop. One or two driving tractors and a couple trucks taking the harvest from field to farm. We felt blessed to be neighbors of such fine people and bear witness to the seasonal activities of farming. Willis was so much more than a good neighbor, he was a good friend. Rest easy Willis.

Heather Dieter Bartmann - May 31, 2017 at 09:59 PM

AK

“ Alan & Kitty Kinoshita purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Willis E. Smith.



Alan & Kitty Kinoshita - May 29, 2017 at 01:17 PM

RB

“ Shortly after I married Professor Jim Brinks in 1969, Jim went to Willis and borrowed money for a herd of Hereford cattle. Whereas my dream was to live the city life of a professor's wife, his dream was to own land and cattle. Willis made it happen. He was a lifelong friend of ours. May he rest in peace.

Rose L. Brinks - May 28, 2017 at 10:41 PM