

# Wesley W. Watkins

December 15, 1938 – March 26, 2025

Wesley Wade Watkins, 86, was born on December 15, 1938, to Mary and L.V. Watkins, Sr., in DeQueen, AR, and passed away on March 26, 2025, in Stillwater, OK. He was raised on a small peanut and cattle farm in Bennington, OK. After graduating from high school in 1956, where he received numerous honors, he enrolled at Oklahoma State University, majoring in Agriculture Education. He received his bachelor's degree in 1960 and the master's degree in 1961. He served as president of a number of student organizations, including State FFA, OSU Student Council, and Agriculture Student Council. Before he entered politics, he was a home builder and land developer in central and southeast Oklahoma. He was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate in 1974 where he filled an unexpired two-year term. He was subsequently elected to the U.S. Congress, replacing speaker Carl Albert, and took office in January 1977. He served on several committees including Appropriations, Banking, Science and Technology, Ways and Means, and Budget committees. Wes ran for office as a Democrat, Independent, and Republican, continually winning the majority vote in Oklahoma's Third Congressional District. In 1991, he founded the World Export Services, Inc. and returned to Congress in 1996. In 2003, he left politics to establish the Matthew 25:40 Mission, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization, which was dedicated to community service and economic development. Wes and Elizabeth Lou (Rogers) Watkins were married for 61 years, raising three children. Wes is survived by his wife, Lou; daughter Martha (Watkins) Pittman (Arthur), their children, Bradley Pittman and Dr. Ashley Phillips Pittman and Elizabeth (Beth) Pittman. He is also survived by his son Wade Wesley Watkins and his partner, Gena Ford, and their children, Emma Watkins, Gene Stejskal, and Blaine Stejskal; his son-in-law, Joe A. Vielma, and his daughter Rena Cheyenne (Vielma) Dollarhide (Cody). He was preceded in death by his daughter Sally Vielma, his parents, L.V. and Mary, his brother, L.V. Watkins, Jr. and sister Althea Yeats. Wes leaves behind an inspirational legacy of leadership, integrity, and community service.