



Prichett Hydal Willard Jr

December 31, 1926 - May 30, 2023

PRICHETT HYDAL “RAY” WILLARD, JR

December 31, 1926, Othelene Erma (née Pemberton) and Prichett Hydal Willard rang in the New Year with the birth of their first child, Prichett Hydal Willard Jr. Prichett’s family in Beaumont, Texas, affectionately called him Brother, Junior, or Hydal Boy, but later in life, he called himself Ray, his mother’s nickname.

Ray’s childhood life in Beaumont included caring for the family’s backyard chickens, goats and exotic plants, fishing and crabbing in the Gulf of Mexico, and, with antipathy, playing the violin. After graduating from high school, he attended his parents’ and grandparents’ alma mater, Wiley College.

Two years into his studies, he went into the Army during World War II and taught rifle marksmanship. At war’s end, he traveled with the Merchant Marines and later settled in Los Angeles during the Great Migration from the South to California. There, he opened a flower shop.

One day, Myra Maurice walked past his flower shop. Mesmerized by her Creole girl magic, he invited her in the shop and asked her on a double-date.

Two years later, in 1952, he sold his flower shop, married Myra, and began his

career as a patent draftsman for the aerospace industry. Over the years, he worked for Douglas, Hughes, and TRW. Also during this time, Myra and Ray welcomed three children: Prichett Hydal III (Pat), Ovide Dominique (Dom), and Sherri Juliana.

A devoted family man, Ray built the homes in which he and Myra raised their children and became enthralled with Japanese gardening. He turned the backyard of their Los Angeles home into an elaborate Japanese Garden with rolling hills, waterfall, koi pond, and island.

In between caring for his garden, he taught his children how to fish, played jazz recordings all weekend on his reel to reel, danced around the house with Myra and Sherri, rooted for his beloved Los Angeles Lakers, Rams and Dodgers, perfected his “signature” Texas barbecue recipes, and sourced okra, crawdads, Texas hot sausage, and other Southern cuisine.

Ray moved his family to Eugene, Oregon, in the 70s, where he built another home and worked for the City of Eugene. He and Myra also started an at-home bonsai nursery. They raised hundreds of bonsai, winning national recognition. He also taught bonsai pruning at events sponsored by the local bonsai club.

After retiring from the City of Eugene, he and Myra wintered in Yuma, Arizona, where he continued to go to jazz clubs and dance the evenings away with Myra.

Ray is survived by his wife, Myra; eldest son, Pat (Susan McInnis); daughter, Sherri (Peter) Willard Argyres; granddaughter and grandson, Dominique and Mikkos Willard Argyres; and youngest sisters, Noralee Alexander and Myrna (Carl) Garlington. He was preceded in death by his youngest son, Dom, and his eldest sister, Rose Marie Evans.

Ray's wishes to have his ashes join those of his son in the ocean at Heceta Head on the Oregon Coast was carried out June 16, 2023.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Pemberton family's historical church Ebenezer United Methodist Church in Marshall, Texas, or historical alma mater Wiley College in Marshall, Texas.

Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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