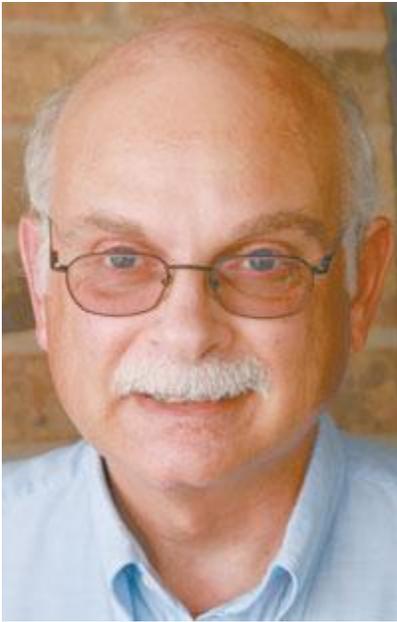


## **Gary Engel (Bailey) | 1957-2014**

*Published Saturday, February 8, 2014*



Gary Engel (Bailey)

Gary Engel, 56, a former reporter for the *Wise County Messenger*, died Monday, Feb. 3, 2014, at his home in Sanger.

Engel was born March 18, 1957, in Chanute, Kan., where he graduated from high school. He attended Oklahoma State University and worked in broadcasting under the name Gary Bailey, which he continued to use after he moved into print journalism.

He came to Wise County in 1987 as news director of KWCS radio station in Bridgeport and also worked briefly for KJZY near Slidell.

He joined the *Messenger* staff July 16, 1989, as a sports writer and left in July 1993 for a job at the *Arlington News*. He later worked for Today Newspapers in DeSoto before returning to the *Messenger* in 1995, where he worked for just over a year covering the police and criminal justice beat.

Bailey's work – including coverage of the trial of former sheriff Leroy Burch – earned numerous awards for the *Messenger*.

His newspaper career also included stints at the *Brenham Banner-Press*, the *Schulenberg Sticker*, the *Hereford Brand* and the *Hood County News* in Granbury, and most recently he worked at the Woodward (Okla.) News.

Former *Messenger* employee Denny Deady said enthusiasm was Bailey's defining characteristic.

"He had tremendous enthusiasm for his work, for the coaches he dealt with during his tenure as sports editor, for his many friends and for life in general," Deady said. "If you were his friend, he cared as deeply about your family as he did about you."

Margaret Vyers, a former reporter for the *Messenger*, said Bailey loved the variety that came with his job.

"I remember Gary's enthusiasm and excitement regardless of whatever tasks he was assigned," she said. "He simply loved the job."

"Like most of us, he loved the diversity of the work – hard news, sports, human interest stories, photography."

She cited the August 1990 crash of a small airplane near Alvord where the occupants survived. Bailey's meticulous notes and reporting told the story of a near-miraculous escape from death.

"Gary never hesitated to embrace any challenge a story commanded to get the best information before the public," she said.

Phyllis Norwood, another friend, said Bailey loved good food, music – especially the band Kansas – and was a huge fan of Texas Rangers baseball and OSU football.

Funeral arrangements are pending with Howard Funeral Home in Sanger.

Engel was preceded in death by his mother, Helen King.