

Woodruff, W.B., Jr. | 1925-2018

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W. B. Woodruff Jr.

W. B. Woodruff Jr., 92. of Decatur, died April 27, 2018, in Decatur.

Funeral service was Tuesday, May 1, at The First United Methodist Church of Decatur, followed by burial in Oaklawn Cemetery.

Hawkins Funeral Home in Decatur handled arrangements.

He was born Aug. 27, 1925, on a farm near Seymour to Willard Bennett Sr. and Lera Mae Stryker Woodruff. He married Mary Louise Gettys Nov. 1, 1947, in Decatur.

Due to his father's business of building roads and highways across Texas, W.B. lived in 12 different towns during his school years. He was a Boy Scout who attained the rank of Life Scout. He graduated from Decatur High School in 1942 where he played football, ran track, was editor of the school newspaper, president of the student body and met his future wife.

Upon graduation he began his college career at Texas A&M but was eager to serve his country as soon as he turned 18 in 1943. Following the war, W. B. returned to Texas A&M and took additional classes at Texas Tech. He earned his law degree from The University of Texas.

During WWII, he served with the 612th Pack Artillery Battalion of the Mars Task Force of the U. S. Army in the China-Burma-India Theater where he was an expert marksman and earned a Bronze Star.

W. B. remained in military service with the U. S. Army Reserves, from which he was recalled to active duty in 1950 for service in the Korean Conflict. He served with Company L, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Division, receiving three Purple Hearts.

After service in Korea, he transferred to the Texas National Guard and was assigned to the 49th Armored Division, where he was recalled to active duty in September 1961 during the Berlin Crisis. He then served an extended year active duty with the 1st Armored Division during the Cuban Missile Crisis, leaving active duty for the last time in

September 1963. In all, he spent 35 years in the U. S. Army, Army Reserve and National Guard, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

W.B. began practicing law in Decatur in 1950 with his uncle Grady Woodruff. He served as Assistant County Attorney under W. A. Hughes, then as County Attorney. He later helped to launch the legal careers of John Fostel, Stephen Wren, Mike Simpson, Ross Simpson, Dana Manoushagian, his nephew Melton Cude and his son Mason Woodruff. He retired from the law firm in 1988.

His numerous civic duties included serving on the Decatur School Board, Decatur Cemetery Board, Planning & Zoning Commission, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Wise County Historical Society, Wise County Veterans Group, as Mayor, and as director of The First National Bank. He also served as Commanding Officer of the National Guard Armory, as Chairman of the City of Decatur Veteran's Memorial Steering Committee and was involved in the construction of the Wise County Veterans Park. He chaired the Public Library Finance Committee which raised over \$1,000,000 for the construction of a new library building in the late 1980s. He was honored as the Decatur Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year in 1985, received his Masonic Lodge 50-year pin in 2008, and The City of Decatur proclaimed November 10, 2009 as W B. Woodruff Jr. Day.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Jack Woodruff; sister Doris Woodruff; and great-grandson Drew Glosson.

W.B. is survived by his wife of 70 years; sons Martin and wife, Jana, Mason and wife, Karen and Tim and wife, Joy, all of Decatur; daughters, Nannette Williams and husband, Kevin, of Denton and Nola Cocanougher and husband, Daniel, of Lake Bridgeport; seven grandchildren; six step-grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Wise County Veterans Museum, Wise County Historical Society or The First United Methodist Church of Decatur.