



James Wood

1937-2020

By [Messenger Staff](#) / Published on April 25, 2020

Decatur business and civic leader James F. Wood, 82, went to be with our Lord Wednesday, April 22, 2020, at a Denton hospital.

James was born Nov. 4, 1937, to Frank and Lela (Welch) Wood in Bridgeport. He was united in marriage to Shirley Dale Stanley Nov. 7, 1959. He was a graduate of Decatur High School and a member of Victory Family Church.

James joined the military after high school, and after his discharge worked at Bell Helicopter in Hurst until a friend convinced him he belonged in the car business. James sold Fords early in his career and was the manager of the Bridgeport branch of Cocanougher Ford Sales.

He and Shirley operated Tanwood Motor Sales in Decatur for a decade until the Buick, Oldsmobile, Pontiac and GMC dealership became available and General Motors came calling on Decatur's most successful used car dealer to take over the dealership and James Wood Motors became a reality.

James Wood Motors became the nation's largest GMC truck dealer in 1989, selling more than 3,000 new trucks. James Wood was the largest GMC dealer in Texas for a

decade.

In 1983 James and Shirley built the current dealership facility and in 1989 the Decatur Chevrolet dealership closed and James Wood Motors became Wise County's full-line General Motors dealer.

For a short time, James also owned Decatur's Chrysler, Dodge Plymouth dealership, but it was sold in 1987.

James was named Decatur's Citizen of the Year in 1989 for his many contributions to the community. He was also elected to the GM Presidents Dealer Advisory Council in 1987 and because of his dedication to the Fort Worth Stock Show he was elected to the Stock Show Board of Directors.

He was instrumental in the founding of the Champions and Blue Ribbon Club for the Wise County Youth Fair and served on the board of Wise Health System for a decade.

In 1990, General Motors asked James to consider buying a Buick/GMC dealership in Denton. The next year a Pontiac franchise was added to the Denton dealership.

In 1994, James and Shirley had the opportunity to buy the North Texas AutoPlex in Denton and added Chevrolet, Cadillac, Oldsmobile, Jeep, Eagle and Mazda to the dealership family and the James Wood AutoPark was created. The Jeep, Eagle and Mazda franchises were later sold.

Today, the Wood family owns two large General Motors dealerships in Decatur and Denton and a Hyundai dealership in Decatur. In addition, James created the Neighborhood Autos used car dealership with multiple locations in North Texas. James loved traveling, cutting horses and raising cattle and most of all spending time with his family.

He was preceded in death by his son, Josh Wood.

Those left to cherish his memory are his wife of 60 years, Shirley Wood of Decatur; son Raymond Wood and wife, Pam, of Decatur; daughter Janetta Wood of Decatur; his grandchildren, Alex, Hannah, Nicki, Natalie and Franklin; 10 great-grandchildren; nieces, nephews, extended family and a host of friends.

To honor his memory, and to celebrate his amazing spirit of giving, send memorials to Wise Health Foundation, wisehealthfoundation.com/donate.

Hawkins Funeral Home Decatur

940-627-5959 hawkinsfuneralhome.com