



Obituary

Born: Friday, August 2, 1940

Died: Wednesday, February 20, 2019

Cletus L. Carter, 78, of Forgan, Oklahoma passed away on Wednesday, February 20, 2019 surrounded by the comfort of his family.

Cletus was born August 2, 1940 in Liberal, KS to Arthur L. Carter and Thelma "Nub" Eden. He was a lifelong resident of Beaver County, Oklahoma. He grew up on the family farm and graduated from Forgan High School. He married the love of his life Deborah Beebe on June 1, 1958 in Forgan. They lived and worked together, almost inseparable, for over 60 years.

Service Summary

Memorial Service

2:00 PM Sat Mar 02, 2019

Forgan Methodist Church

Forgan, Oklahoma 73938

Cletus pursued higher education, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree from Panhandle State University, a Master's of Science degree in Natural Science from the University of Oklahoma, and further continued doctoral studies in Chemistry and Biology from the University of Oklahoma. He proudly served in the Army ROTC and competed on the ROTC rifle team.

After college, he followed his aspiration in life to be an educator. He became a high school science teacher at Beaver High School. During his tenure at Beaver High School, he was responsible for the inception of Girls Track & Field Programs in high schools across the State of Oklahoma, and consequently became Beaver's first girls track coach. Additionally, he coached high school basketball and football, and to this day is still known as "Coach Carter" to many in his community. During this time in his life, he also was an active member of the Young Jaycees.

In 1970, Cletus returned to the farm and began helping his father with the family business. Throughout the years, he formed the family businesses of Carter Farms, Carter Enterprises, Triple C Cattle Company, and High Plains Grass Seeds. He served on both the Beaver County and the Northwest Oklahoma Community Development Councils. He was a Member of the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, a Member of the Oklahoma Farmers Union, and he contributed 20 years to Oklahoma State University's test plot program.

Although he returned to farming, he continued his constant involvement in education. He was an avid supporter of Forgan High School, its athletics programs, and served as President of the Forgan School Board. Throughout the years, he established the Oklahoma Rural Entrepreneur

Action Learning program in high schools across the State of Oklahoma. He served as Director of the Oklahoma Panhandle State University Foundation. He also served on the Dean's Advisory Council in Oklahoma State University's Division of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources. As a donor, he was instrumental in developing the Oklahoma State University Research Center.

Cletus was extremely passionate about the rural cooperative movement. Since 1977 until his passing, he served on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, where he rose through the ranks of TCEC, eventually serving as President of the Board and representing TCEC at the State and National levels.

In 1993, he joined the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives serving as Secretary, Vice-President, and was unanimously elected as President in 1999. He served on numerous OAEC committees and in 2011 he served as the very first chairman of OAEC's newly established External Communications Committee. During his time at OAEC, he was elected by the Board as a representative at the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, where he traveled rural America supporting and educating rural electric cooperatives.

In 2000, Cletus joined the board of directors for National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation. He served as a Director, Secretary/Treasurer, Vice President, and in 2006 was elected as President of the Board. He also served as Chairman of the Finance Committee and Chairman of the Corporate Relations Committee.

In 2009, he was appointed by the Obama Administration as the Chairman of the Farm Service Agency Committee for the State of Oklahoma and served two terms under the Presidential Administration.

Cletus dedicated his life to serving rural America and has made a lasting impression on a nationwide community of rural cooperatives, farming and ranching communities, education, and athletics programs. He loved his community and was a compassionate and selfless man who touched the heart of everyone he met. He had a gift for leadership and inspired people everywhere. He was a strong supporter the U.S. Marine Corps, the Oklahoma State University girls basketball program, the Seward County Community College basketball program, as well as the science programs at both schools.

He was a lifelong member of the Forgan United Methodist Church.

He was preceded in death by parents Arthur and Thelma Carter, daughter Deedra Carter and sister Rochelle Carter

Gardner. He is survived by his loving wife Deborah Carter; son Todd Carter & wife Feliza of Liberal, KS; son Troy Carter & wife Jill of Forgan; daughter Tisha Carter of Hermeray, France; sister Iva Dene Carter McCleary, of Salt Lake City, UT; grandchildren Elizabeth Taylor, Cassandra Van Noy, Lindsey Fields, Robert Vargas, Kodie Newsom, Shantel Vargas, and Tanner Carter; his nieces and nephew; six great-grandchildren; and his beloved extended family, Mario & Carmen Jaquez of Forgan and their children Ivan, Alex and Iris.

A memorial service will be March 2, 2019, 2 p.m. at the Forgan United Methodist Church. The family will receive friends directly after the service at the Golden Agers in Forgan. A private family interment will be at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Seward County Community College's Carter Science Foundation or the United Methodist Church of Forgan. Please memo donations "In Memory of Cletus L. Carter."