



## James LeRoyce "Jim" Whitley

September 23, 1934 - September 28, 2025

On the evening of September 28, 2025, we lost one of the great ones. A father, grandfather, great-grandfather-to-be, an uncle, and a friend to many, James LeRoyce Whitley, passed away peacefully just five days after celebrating his 91st birthday. Though his journey here on earth has come to an end, his legacy of grit, charm, love, and laughter will live on in the hearts of those who knew him.

Jim was born on September 23, 1934, in Woodville, Oklahoma, to Allie and Myrtle Whitley. From humble beginnings in the countryside, he grew up learning the value of hard work, family, and how to make something out of nothing. He lived most of his life in Denison, Texas before he moved to Bonham Lake, a place he loved as much as he loved fishing in it.

As a young man, he served his country honorably in the United States Air Force from 1956 to 1960, rising to the rank of Airman Second Class. That discipline and structure stayed with him, though he'd be the first to tell you he didn't always agree with how things were run. Jim was never afraid to speak his mind, and that honesty, often blunt but always well-intended, was part of what made him so unforgettable.

After leaving the military, he worked with his brother, Johnnie, flipping and building houses. Jim was the true definition of an ultimate cowboy. He had a lifelong love for Limousin cattle, even bringing them all the way from Canada to the family farm in Colbert, Oklahoma. He also had a special fondness for horses and took great pride in being a rancher, spending countless days on

the land where he truly felt at home. His days were often spent tending to his herd, sharing stories out in the pasture, and keeping an eye out for the next good deal on a cattle trailer—he always seemed to have one for sale. Terri recalls always playing Barbies on the numerous trailers he always had. Beyond his work, it was his sharp wit and quick humor that left a lasting impression on everyone he met. Whether on the ranch or at the sale barn, he could make people laugh with clever remarks, and his presence was as steady and dependable as the land he worked. He then worked on the Katy Railroad and retired before finding his true calling in sales. Eventually, he opened his own car dealership, Denison Auto Sales, and never looked back. He worked harder and longer than most, running the dealership into his late 80s. Even at 88 years old, he was out on the lot, dressed sharp as ever, closing deals, keeping everyone else on their toes, and it took the whole family to convince him to stop driving cars off the lot. If there was a car to be sold, Jim was going to sell it. And somehow, you'd walk away feeling like you got the better end of the deal, even if he knew he did. He had a natural talent for business, an eye for opportunity, and a silver tongue that could convince just about anyone of just about anything. He could convince a rancher he needed one more truck "just in case." Everything Jim touched turned to gold — not just because he had the go-getter touch, but because he put his full self into everything he did. He took pride in his work, his reputation, and the family name he carried.

Of all his many accomplishments, the proudest moment of his entire life came on December 19, 1968, when he and Helen adopted their daughter, Terri. That day was the one he cherished above all others, a moment that completed his family and gave his life its greatest joy and purpose.

Jim's work ethic was only matched by his devotion to his family. He is survived by his daughter, Terri Hennigan, and her husband Keith; his grandchildren, Kyle Klement and his wife Hayley, Kolby Klement, and Whitley Klement; a great-grandson on the way, due in March - who already has big boots to fill; and numerous nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents,

Allie and Myrtle Whitley, his brother, Johnnie Whitley, and his sisters, Margaret Williams and Christine Jones. We know that a joyful reunion is already well underway.

Jim was deeply involved in his family's lives – He gave out advice like candy, especially when it came to running a business, making money, or how to properly back into a parking space. He truly worked every single day of his life for Terri and his grandkids and made sure they were well taken care of. He loved checking in on his daughter and grandkids, and by checking in, we mean calling 10 to 20 times a day. His love was constant, sometimes loud, often funny, and always deeply loyal.

Whether it was riding the tractor or simply fishing on the lake, Jim found peace in being outside, working with his hands, and showing the boys what real effort looked like. He especially loved how Kolby, at a very young age, would always take the keys to his tractor and drive it around, a mischievous joy that never failed to make him laugh. Jim loved fishing, deal-making, and giving everyone around him just the right amount of trouble. He had a wit as dry as Texas dirt and a heart as big as the sky above it. He tried his whole life to convince Terri to be a barrel racer, she didn't, but she carried on his grit and his grind. He was so proud of his grandsons, never missing a chance to cheer them on in football, and he loved every second of watching Kyle ride broncs. He also shared a very special bond with his granddaughter Whitley, who was born on his birthday and named after his last name, a connection that brought him immense joy. He never stopped being proud of Terri and his grandkids. And then, of course, there was chocolate. Jim had a sweet tooth so strong it could probably be classified as a personality trait. He would gladly skip a full meal if it meant getting to dessert faster. If it was chocolate, he wanted it, and if you didn't get your slice first, well... you probably weren't getting one. It wasn't just a treat; it was a daily ritual.

Jim also had a style all his own, a cowboy to the core. He never left the house without his starched jeans, pressed button-down shirt, belt buckle shining, and

his hair perfectly combed. Whether it was a trip to Muenster or a day at the Carlot, he looked like he was headed to a photo shoot for Texas Grit Monthly. His pride in his appearance mirrored the pride he took in how he lived his life — with intention, dignity, and just enough confidence to keep things interesting.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, October 4, 2025 at 2:00 PM at Scott Funeral Home in Muenster, Texas. Jim will be cremated, and a military service honoring his life and service will be held at a later date at Cedarlawn Memorial Park.

We'll never stop missing his quick comebacks, his daily calls, the way he fixed things you didn't even know were broken, and how he always seemed to know when you needed a laugh or a life lesson. He was a man of old-school values — work hard, say what you mean, dress sharp, and always keep a little chocolate nearby. Though the past few years were difficult, we choose to remember the man who raised a daughter with courage, helped raise grandkids with wisdom, and built a life that left a mark on everyone he met. While we mourn his passing, we also celebrate a life well lived — outdoors in the fresh air, on the tractor with the grandboys, at the carlot, the calls to Terri, the laughter, the stories, the leaf blower running full blast at 7 AM in the house, the smell of starched denim, and the sound of his voice saying, "Y'all need anything?." Rest easy, Paw Paw. Heaven just gained one sharp cowboy, and we know you're already out there, scouting property, bossing around the angels, and looking for a chocolate cake.

We love you, Jim. Thank you for giving us everything you had and more. We'll take it from here.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

OCT 4. 2:00 PM (CT)

Scott Funeral Home- Muenster  
310 North Walnut  
Muenster, TX 76252  
(940) 759-2556  
scottfhsj@yahoo.com  
<http://scottfhsj.com/>