



Willard Childres, II, 88, of McPherson, KS, peacefully passed away on Thursday, January 2, 2025, surrounded by family at The Cedars, McPherson.

He was born June 29, 1936, in Fort Riley, KS, the son of Willard Childres, I and Elzada Mae (Goad) Childres. Willard graduated from Junction City High School and attended Kansas State University. On June 8, 1958, he was united in marriage to Carolyn Sue Denton in Junction City, KS. This union was blessed with two daughters, Jana and Cindy.

Willard was a retired General Manager for McPherson Concrete Products and subsidiaries. He also served in the Army National Guard.

He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church.

Survivors include his loving wife of 66 years, Carolyn; daughters, Jana LeBlanc (Kyle Dutton) of Lenexa, KS and Cindy Childres of McPherson, KS; a sister, Fran Hug (Alan) of Topeka, KS; one granddaughter, Stephanie LeBlanc of Mission, KS; and many extended family members and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Willard Childres, I; mother & stepfather, Elzada & Paul Dutcher; and siblings, John Childres, Phyllis Hern, and Debra Reutebuch.



Willard Childres II

**Visitation**

Stockham Family Funeral Home  
McPherson, Kansas  
Tuesday, January 14, 2025, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

**Video Tribute Music**

"Still Waters" by Leanna Crawford  
"Just a Closer Walk With Thee"  
by Patsy Cline and Willie Nelson  
"Oceans" by Hillsong United  
"I Can Only Imagine" by MercyMe

**Graveside Service**

McPherson Cemetery  
Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 10:00 AM

**Officiant**

Pastor David Kincaide

**Memorial Donations**

Memorial donations can be made to Kansas Walleye Association in care of Stockham Family Funeral Home, 205 North Chestnut, McPherson, KS 67460.

**Appreciation**

Willard's family wishes to express their sincere gratitude for your prayers and kindness, evidenced in thought and deed, and for your presence at this service.

*Stockham Family Funeral Home*



**In Loving Memory**  
**Willard Childres, II**  
June 29, 1936 - January 2, 2025



## Thoughts from Buddy's sister Fran Hug.....

Willard Childres II became "Buddy" to his siblings long before I can remember. Some people seem to be always larger than life and the thought that they will leave us physically some day just doesn't seem possible – Buddy is one of those people – with a personality and dimples only owned by the guys that get the gals in made for TV Hallmark movies. Three of his nieces and older younger sister gave him the bragging rights to the name "Mr. Wonderful". This delighted him, and he reveled in hearing his special name.

Born at Ft. Filey, Kansas to Elzada, our very young mother of 17 and Willard I, our 28-year-old, career Army father, many of his childhood photos exude a spirit that lets us know that he was definitely cherished. As the first born and eldest one of our family of eventually five siblings, we shared multi-generational ideas, attitudes and philosophies. There were 4 plus years between him and our "Irish" twins, brother John and sister Phyllis, with ten years between him and sister Fran and 20 years between him and youngest sister Debby.

During the Korean war, with our dad missing in action for three years and confirmed killed in action in 1953, Buddy became very much an adult at 14. He became a leader, helper, a provider and a defender of us as a family – mother and his then three siblings. Although we had privileges for using medical services, the PX and the post Commissary, in those days, spouses, most typically wives, and families did not receive any financial allotment from the military. He worked after school and weekends at "Hoyle's IGA" just up the block from our home at 126 East 13th and was paid with the "grocery book". Mother worked at the PX. We kids were well behaved most of the time when Buddy was in charge at those times and nights when mother was working and the couple that lived with us had off time. He always stayed as a fun-loving brother with us. He allowed just enough mischief to go on that our antics

stayed within pretty much most legal bounds.

Fast forwarding through his education, Buddy was a superior student and received many scholarships and honors as he progressed to attend college at K-State where he joined the Delta Upsilon fraternity. As a high school senior, he was selected as a Kansas representative to the National Boy's State Convention in Washington DC and he even met President Eisenhower and Nat King Cole during that trip.

He and Carolyn married young and started their family early having daughters, Jana and Cindy. He worked summers with KDOT. Carolyn attended "Crum's Beauty School" and worked as a "beauty operator" in Manhattan while he attended K-State during the regular college semesters. Chet Anderson hired him to manage McPherson Concrete Products. Other than a short move back to Manhattan to manage a different concrete products company, they returned to continue management of McPherson Concrete Products (MCP) and other subsidiaries of MCP where Jana and Cindy were raised.

They loved McPherson and the many lifelong friendships made there. They and friends were avid participants with the McPherson Country Club "Galas". Buddy and Carolyn loved to dance, especially what was very similar to the old-fashioned jitterbug our mother taught us kids. Over many years, they celebrated births of children and grandchildren, special anniversaries, birthdays and holidays together with family and friends including the birth of their granddaughter, Stephanie.

Buddy loved his families, friends, figures/numbers/math, some golf, cars, fishing and challenges for growing businesses.

Among his many cars (he loved the pursuit of bargaining for his cars), his 1957 red and white Ford convertible and 1967 Marina Blue Camaro convertible (thanx Jana) were his favorites.

## *Loving Honor Memory*

Many days were shared at Council Grove City Lake with family and in-laws. When we weren't fishing, he and Carolyn patiently taught most of the family how to water ski. He enjoyed a few games of pool and a few red beers at the "Bar". The many before dawn breakfasts of beer, chocolate chip cookies and donuts were very special. He and brothers-in-law never knew when to quit fishing or to head for shore and almost swamped his boat during a storm that developed and surprised them at one outing at another lake.

He loved numbers, facts and math. When Buddy wrote speeches or gave talks, his small handwritten notes were always a series of multiple numbers written on very small note sheets.

Buddy could out engineer engineers. His specialty was in concrete product and performance design. He really enjoyed cussing and discussing with engineers at KDOT and metal pipe people, the virtues of all things concrete, especially as compared to "metal" products – pipe, "whistles", culvert boxes and such structures.

Once Buddy "retired", he and Carolyn traveled a bit with close friends to Europe. He said that everyone needed to travel the coasts of Italy, that spending a short one day in Rome was more than plenty, and the coastal towns, views and mountain trails were simply spectacular to behold.

As is with what some call "the circle of life", we grieve and miss the physical presence of Buddy. Buddy is undoubtedly one among us that is larger than life itself. Love to him and all of us who are now grieving while knowing that peace, calm, and all that is good, will come to our hearts having had Buddy in our lives and will be with us "through infinity and beyond".