



John Bell Mason

April 3, 1928 - March 21, 2017

John Bell Mason, age 88, of Odessa, TX, passed away on March 21, 2017 in Odessa.

John was born April 3, 1928 in Nashville, Tennessee, the fourth of five children of Margaret Nowlin and John Bell Mason, Sr. He has insisted that the next most providential event in his life was his August 31, 1956, marriage to Doris Casey, his loving wife of 60 years, in Corpus Christi, Texas. They and daughters, Cheryl and Molly, moved to Odessa in January of 1964, as Company headquarters relocated from El Paso to Odessa.

John grew up in the Waverly-Belmont area of Nashville, where he carried morning and afternoon paper routes. When the older boys went off to the service in the early war years he added the job of assistant route manager. He graduated from West End High School where he played football, baseball and captained the 1946 state

championship basketball team, being named All-State based on tournament play. After graduation from high school he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and became a legal veteran of WW II (the fighting had ended but the war was not declared officially over until October 1, 1946), entitling him to the benefits of the GI Bill.

Following discharge from the Marines and before enrolling at Vanderbilt University, he joined the Boston Red Sox farm system for his first year of professional baseball as a catcher. After the winter quarter of his freshman year, he commenced the second and last season of pro baseball which proved to be sufficient to "get it out of my system".

With the benefit of the GI Bill and a full schedule of part time jobs during school and summer, John worked in the construction of high-lines in Colorado and Montana, wheat harvesting in Montana, tending coal fired furnaces in university residence apartments, graveyard shift at the fertilizer plant, and saw operator in ironworks. He graduated from Vanderbilt with a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering in March, 1953. Among his school related extracurricular activities at Vanderbilt, he served as president of the student body, editor of the engineering magazine and president of his Sigma Nu fraternity.

Upon graduation from Vanderbilt, he went to work for The Atlantic Refining Company (ARCO) and completed their training program for engineers at various locations in the Gulf Coast area from southwest Louisiana to Corpus Christi. Upon completion of the training, he worked as an Assistant Production Foreman and as a Production Engineer in Duvall County. It was during his Corpus Christi assignment that he and Doris became aware of one another as they rode the Wilson Tower elevator up and down together, she to her Exxon floor and he to the Atlantic area. Also, it was during this period that two of his apartment mate lawyers, one Atlantic, one Exxon, sold him on the rectitude of the legal profession-to which he had given some thought before entering Vanderbilt.

He entered the University of Texas Law School in September, 1955 and graduated in August, 1958 with an LL. B. degree. During the entire period in law school, he worked as a part time engineer in the Oil & Gas Division of the Texas Railroad Commission. He and Doris were married at the end of his first year in law school.

From law school, he went to work for El Paso Natural Gas Company in El Paso as a proration engineer where work was concerned primarily with matters dealing with the oil and gas regulatory agencies in the states in which the company operated. After one and a half years, he transferred to the legal department of El Paso Products Company which was involved in oil and gas exploration and production, oil refining, service station operations, and various petrochemical operations with worldwide activities. This move brought together all his training, experience and education in a way that he could never have planned. He became General Counsel and a Director in 1969, and later Senior Vice President, positions which he held until retirement in 1988. In 1983, he was a principal participant in management's acquisition of the company.

Professional and business associations include memberships in the Ector County Bar Association (President, 1972 & 73), State Bar of Texas American Bar Association, American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical & Petroleum Engineers, a graduate of inaugural Management Development Program for Permian Basin Executives conducted September ('68)-March ('69), by the Graduate School of Business of the University of Texas, and twice Chairman of the Petrochem Group (a group of twenty-ish major petrochemical companies engaged in certain Washington lobbying activities during the 70's).

He highly values the associations and supporting of the activities experienced by serving on the boards of many community non-profit organizations, among which especially memorable to him are the City Council (81-83), and his long time membership on the board of the Salvation Army. The First United Methodist Church has provided an immensely rewarding part of John's life. His Church related activities include Chairman of the Administrative Board, Board of Trustees, a founding member and chairman of Church Foundation, Lay Leader, Teacher of High School, College and Young Adult Sunday School Classes, Trustee of McMurry University, Chairman of Odessa District of United Methodist Church Board Member of the New Mexico Conference Methodist Foundation, Chairman of two major sanctuary renovations ('82 & '97) new organ acquisition and installation ('97), and the Church's legal work, (until recent years).

John is survived by his wife of 60 years, Doris Casey Mason, daughter, Cheryl Mason Bambace and her husband, Robert, and their daughter, Diane, and son, Sean; daughter, Molly Mason McMahon and her husband, Craig, and their son, Ryan, and daughters, Rachel and Hannah Grace. He is also survived by his nieces, Linda Frazer Tenney and Barbara Babb and nephews and nieces, Mark Mason, Melissa Mason Morrison, Melanie Mason Callihan, Martye Mason Smith, Linda Barrett, and Wayne Dugger; brother in law, Robert Babb, sisters in law, Billie Ruth Mason, Joan Dugger and first cousin, Marjorie Gowens Hutchison.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Margaret Nowlin and John Bell Mason, Sr.; his sisters, Mildred Frazer and Dorothy Babb; and his brothers, Richard Nowlin Mason and William Thomas Mason.

A Memorial Service will be at 11:00 am, Saturday, March 25, 2017 at First United Methodist Church. It is suggested that any Memorial contributions be made to First United Methodist Church, the Salvation Army or the charity of your choice in Odessa, TX.

The family would like to thank the Critical Care Unit, Hospice and the caring and compassionate nurses on the 5th floor at Medical Center Hospital.

Arrangements are entrusted to Sunset Memorial Gardens and Funeral Home. To send family condolences please sign his guestbook at www.sunsetodessa.com.

Obituary Provided By:



Sunset Memorial Gardens & Funeral Home

6801 E. Business 20
Odessa, TX 79762

www.sunsetodessa.com