In Memoriam: Leo E. Ayres

Leo E. Ayres of Welch passed away Thursday morning, Oct. 7, 2010, at St. John’s Regional Medical Center in Joplin, Mo., with his family at his side. He was 81 years old.

Leo was born June 6, 1929, in Elgin, Kan., to W.C. “Bill” and Muril (Wilson) Ayres. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Bluejacket and was baptized Apr. 22, 1945, in a creek north of Bluejacket. He was a graduate of Bluejacket High School, Class of 1947, and a graduate of Miami Business College, Class of May 1955.

He proudly served his country with the United States Army during the Korean Conflict. On Aug. 27, 1955, he married Alice Sue Reed in Bluejacket at the home of his parents. The couple just celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary.

Leo worked for B.F. Goodrich in Miami for 37 years, retiring on June 1, 1985. During this time he also worked for Mayfield Commission Company, at the old sale barn in Welch. He worked for Pierce Livestock Commission when they built the new sale barn, south of Welch. He also did order buying of livestock for area farmers and ranchers. From 1986 to present, he was a caretaker of the Jim Wetzel Ranch, north of Welch. Leo had a love for livestock and enjoyed raising Australian Shepherds and Blue Heeler cow dogs. He was a member of the Welch Lions Club, Welch Round Up Club, Oklahoma Cattleman Association, and American Legion Post #40.

He is survived by his loving wife, Sue, of the home; two daughters, Kandy Ayres and Becky and husband Greg Highsmith, all of Bluejacket; grandchildren, Terra and Bryant Vail, Jesse Highsmith and LeAnna Edmiston, Whitney and Seth Collins; three great-grandchildren, Brannan and Malynna Vail and Jayton Collins; three sisters, Elaine and husband Tom Myers of Miami, Linda and husband Ron Coats of Vinita, Carol and husband Henry “Skip” McClain of Vinita; one brother, Doug and wife Jeanie Ayres of Barnsdall; numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins; and a host of friends.
He was preceded in death by his parents and a baby brother.

Services will be held at 10:00 a.m. Sat., Oct. 9, 2010, at the First Baptist Church of Bluejacket. Henry "Skip" McClain will officiate with Greg Highsmith assisting. Serving as pallbearers will be Jesse Highsmith, Bryant Vail, Seth Collins, Derek Coats, Chris Coats, Jeremy McClain, and Ross Ayres. Honorary Pallbearers will be Brannan Vail, Malynna Vail, and Jayton Collins.

Interment to follow at Bluejacket Cemetery, Bluejacket, Okla..

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the First Baptist Church of Bluejacket or Cowboy Junction Christian School of Vinita.

Services under the direction of Jim Thomas, Thomas Funeral Home, Welch, Okla.