



Judge Joe Clinton Taylor

March 28, 1942 - June 14, 2023

JOE CLINTON TAYLOR -

“The cows were always happy to see me,” was something Joe Taylor often said, and really we were all always happy to see him.

Joe Clinton Taylor left us for the next world early in the morning on June 14th, surrounded by his loving family.

Born March 28th, 1942 in Durant, OK to Luther Clinton Taylor and Virena Parker Taylor, Joe attended Cobb Public School (then Bokchito) where his dad was the superintendent before moving into the Durant school system.

At age 13 he met Margaret Byers who would become the love of his life, and later he fought forest fires in Oregon to save money for her engagement ring, until he could marry her at age 21. On June 8th, 2023 they celebrated an incredible 60 years of marriage, having hamburgers and champagne for their meal.

Joe graduated from Durant High School, then attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University before transferring to Oklahoma State University, where he earned a degree in Political Science. In 1968 he graduated The

University of Oklahoma College of Law and became Bryan County's first Special District Judge in 1969 at age 26. He served as Associate District- and District Judge for years and in 1993 became an Appellate Judge, eventually retiring in 2005 after sitting on the Oklahoma Court of Civic Appeals. Beyond his service to the State of Oklahoma he served as a Choctaw Tribal Court Supreme Court Justice from 1979 to 1983 and also served the Seminole Nation and Sac and Fox Nation as a Justice of their supreme courts until May 2023.

Joe truly loved the law and though generally humble, prided himself in his ability to be objective, impartial, and fair. No matter who you were, you were treated the same when you walked into his courtroom. He rarely needed to use his gavel, and his love of the law was never swayed, even when he received death threats from "unhappy customers."

Joe was a proud member of the United States Army Reserve. An active member, he started as a Private E-2 until 1967, then moved into the Army Reserves as a member of the JAG Corps, finally retiring as a Lt. Colonel in 1995 after 30 years of service.

With his beloved wife Margaret he fathered the joys of his life, daughters Marna, Leah, and Jocelyn, who would alternately call him "Da" (daw) or simply "Daddy." He and Margaret created a home filled with music, passing on this love to his daughters who created a band called Daughters of Justice, the name paying homage to both his and his wife's careers in law. Joe played the bongos and sang bass as he and Margaret entertained many people throughout the years with many songs, a favorite being their rendition of "Smokey Joe's Café."

Though most of us know and respect him as a judge, the most important things Joe was, in his own handwriting in his personal bible, were as follows

and in order: Christian, Husband, Father, Son, Rancher, Army Reserve Lt. Colonel, Judge.

Even though he was a well-read intellectual, Joe often spoke in a “down home” fashion, with colorful axioms and idioms. One of his favorites was: “If ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’ were candy and nuts, we’d all have a merry Christmas.” Another was “They can get glad in the same pants they got mad in.” And he’d say them with his slightly-slanted smile and a twinkle in his kind eyes.

A long-time fan of OU football, this Boomer Sooner had season tickets since the 1960’s. Such a fan, he even owned a piece of the last wooden goalpost used in the OU/Texas game.

He loved making music, listening to Margaret play the piano, hearing his girls sing, laughing with friends and family, his cows, Chautauqua, NY where he spent 40 summers, the law, mentoring young lawyers, a good hamburger (Geo’s Drive-In preferred), and a good bowl of chili.

Bible passages Joe often turned to for inspiration and perseverance were Proverbs 8:17, 8:20, and Micah 6:8.

Joe is survived by his wife Margaret, daughters Marna (Brad Pemberton), Leah, and Jocelyn Taylor, all of Nashville, older brother Terry (Renee) Taylor of Delaware, and many cousins, nieces, and nephews. His roots run deep in Bryan County.

On Tuesday, June 14th, flags at the Bryan County Courthouse were flown at half-mast in honor of Judge Taylor.

The family would like to express their deep gratitude to the Team at Vanderbilt

University Medical Center who over last three years gave Joe incredible care and attention that went above and beyond.

If you would like to honor Judge Joe Taylor, please consider donating to one of these organizations:

The Oklahoma Bar Association Foundation: okbarassociation.org

The Pride of Oklahoma Marching Band: giving.oufoundation.org

Dry Bones Denver: drybonesdenver.org

A Celebration of his life will be held on Friday, June 23, 2023, at 11:00 AM at The Chapel at The Bell Tower in Durant. , with burial to follow at Highland Cemetery of Durant. He will lay in state for people to pay their respects on Thursday, June 22, 2023, from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Services are under the direction of Brown's Funeral Service of Durant. Online condolences can be made at www.brownsfuneralservice.com

<https://www.tributeslides.com/tributes/show/YPZJS9XWS8L4PYL4>

Cemetery Details

Highland Cemetery

1620 Cemetery Rd
Durant, OK

Previous Events

Viewing hours

JUN 22. 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Brown's Funeral Service - Durant
4900 West US Hwy 70
Durant, OK 74701
(580) 920-0393
info@brownsfuneralservice.com
<https://www.brownsfuneralservice.com/>

Celebration of Life

JUN 23. 11:00 AM (CT)

The Chapel at Bell Tower
218 N 3rd
Durant , OK 74701
<https://www.belltowerdurant.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Brown's Durant Funeral Service created a Tribute Video in memory of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor*



Brown's Durant Funeral Service - June 22, 2023 at 11:14 AM

DM

What beautiful memories ! Love to you each . Dennis Motes

Dennis motes - June 29, 2023 at 03:44 PM



James McClour

christine and I have such wonderful memories of you and your family. You are missed.

James McClour - July 07, 2024 at 02:28 PM

MW

“ *The Memorial Trees planted by Max and Sharon Wynn, Joe and Kelly Wynn and Kandi and Eric Gongora we hope will be an ongoing tribute to Joe.*

Max and Sharon Wynn - June 26, 2023 at 09:21 PM

SW

“ *Sharon W. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*

Sharon W. - June 26, 2023 at 09:11 PM

JT

“ I use to live next door on some land Judge Joe owned back in the 80s. It had a few good fishing ponds on. One day he caught me fishing...asked who I was amd I told him, he asked if I was doing any good and I said caught a few and he asked if I left trash or bothered his cows and I said no sir just fishing....told me I had all the permission I wanted to fish his ponds and sit and watched me fish for a few and then left with smile on his face. My mom knew him well as a judge, she was a counselor and had to deal with many clients in court settings back in the day. Very good man and glad had pleasure of meeting him...even as a kid!!

JT - June 23, 2023 at 08:36 PM

HB

“ Henry and Iris Brigman purchased the Garden Accent Stone - "If love could have saved you" for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.



Henry and Iris Brigman - June 22, 2023 at 12:44 PM

HB

“ Henry and Iris Brigman planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.

Henry and Iris Brigman - June 22, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*



June 22, 2023 at 12:14 PM



“ *Patricia H. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*

Patricia H. - June 22, 2023 at 11:19 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*



June 21, 2023 at 11:35 PM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*



June 21, 2023 at 12:28 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*



June 20, 2023 at 07:14 PM



“ *Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*



June 20, 2023 at 06:16 PM



“ *Mr. & Mrs. Taylor had many accomplishments, the greatest being their three daughters. I went to school with Leah and Jocelyn at Abilene Christian University. Every time they came to Abilene to visit and in pictures over the years, you can see how proud of their daughters they were. I know his family will have a void for years to come, but they will be together again when their time on this earth comes to an end. Much love and prayers to you all at this time.*

Michael Wheeler - June 20, 2023 at 04:35 PM



“ *The Wintle and Ortega Family purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*



The Wintle and Ortega Family - June 20, 2023 at 04:21 PM



“ *Care and Compassion Spray was purchased for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*



June 20, 2023 at 04:16 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.

June 20, 2023 at 04:16 PM



“ *Margaret: What a wonderful man. He was fair not only on the bench but in life. A pillar of decency and dignity. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to know he and you both. Thank you for your love of my grandparents and parents. We are out of the country or would be at the funeral. I am there in spirit. Much love to you. Cary McDougal*

Cary McDougal - June 20, 2023 at 03:39 PM



“ *We love you, Holly and Mike Fuller purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.*



We love you, Holly and Mike Fuller - June 20, 2023 at 02:14 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.



June 20, 2023 at 01:59 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.

June 20, 2023 at 01:59 PM



“ Everyones's comment are dignified. My isn't. I knew Joe as a friend not so much as a Judge. My and Joe's thing was for me to kiss him on his bald head as a greeting and leave red lips. If he was standing, he would bow down so I could greet him properly. Margaret tolerated us.

Cheryl Jackson - June 20, 2023 at 11:39 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.



June 20, 2023 at 11:26 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.

June 20, 2023 at 11:26 AM



“ Thinking of all of you during this time. This is a man our whole family loved and will always remember.

The Mowles Family



Regina Mowles Nankivil - June 19, 2023 at 09:59 AM



“ Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Judge Joe Clinton Taylor.



June 19, 2023 at 09:07 AM

NM

“ My sincere condolences to Margaret the girls. I am very sadden to lose my long time friend and fellow DHS Lion. Joe loved to recall his senior year on the DHS Lion football team and the fun he and I had on both defense and offense controlling the left line (ha).

Joe was truly a great guy and wore the white hat !! He was so proud of Durant and all graduates of DHS.

May his daughters cherish the wonderful memories of their Dad. Joe's family and my Grandparents relationship goes back to the days in Cobb, OK.

I will close with Mark's words:

"Job well done good and faithful servant"

Noel - DHS 1961

Noel McBee - June 18, 2023 at 07:36 PM

MM

“ My heart felt condolences to Margaret and Judge Joe’s wonderful daughters and extended family. He was a most important Mentor to me. His legacy as a fair, impartial jurist and beloved colleague at every level of the legal community is now established forever. Most importantly, Judge Taylor was a man of faith and family and now rests in the eternal peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Given his service to his city, state, county, nation, and tribe he no doubt has heard the words well done good and faithful servant, receive now the blessing set aside for you.

Mark Morrison - June 18, 2023 at 07:17 PM

TS

Joe Taylor was, of course, known for his career as a judge. But he was also a proud member of the US Armed Services. He served with my dad, Earl Buddy Kilpatrick, in the Army Reserve for many years. Thank you for your long and varied service, Joe Taylor. Prayers for his family as they go through these difficult times.

Toni Stiefer - June 19, 2023 at 09:42 PM

DP

Saying goodbye to a friend from long ago is really hard. It is bittersweet to say goodbye in this dimension but hello in the next dimension of the Kingdom. Such a fond memories with the Taylor family, when our children were all little, our two families would go caroling in the back of an old pickup truck. Joselyn was usually sick and had to ride in the cab. Even then the voices of these babies were profound with Margaret and Joe leading. The Phelps' sang with a joyful heart, but no talent. It didn't matter. And then of course, Margaret and Joe performing "Smoking Joe" at every Christmas bar party we held at our house after Toys for Tots distribution by the Bar Auxiliary. Saying good bye is hard. Love you, Taylor women.

Dot Phelps - June 20, 2023 at 12:38 PM

TB

This man signed my adoption papers in 1972. I would go on to grow up with his amazing daughters... My mom told me he was so kind when they went before him for my final adoption hearing. Saying he could see that I was where I belonged. Whether I saw him at his home, a school event, or at the court house when Melanie Hearron and I would go see her parents, he would have a smile and a joke. Heaven gained a ,, "a good one"... A true and faithful servant and example for all.

Tammy Bunn - June 20, 2023 at 03:24 PM