

## Ray Blackwell

ABILENE - Ray Blackwell passed peacefully from this life at the age of 95 on May 2, 2021 at his home in Abilene, TX. On December 7, 1925, Carlton Ray Blackwell was born to Ruby and Elmer E. Blackwell in Chaney, Texas. He was always grateful to be reared in the country. The lessons he learned of hard work, faithfulness to God, and honoring this country remained with him throughout his life. After attending Alameda schools, he was drafted by the army during World War II. He served in the Philippines with the 41st infantry division and in Japan with the 24th infantry division as an honor guard. When he returned home, the GI bill allowed him to attend Ranger Junior College where he played basketball. He finished his degree at Abilene Christian College, graduating in 1952 with a BS in Agriculture. At Abilene Christian, he met his wife of 60 years, Norma Jane Thompson, marrying in August of 1953. They would pass on their faith in Christ to three children, 2 daughters Kim and Twyla, and one son, Stacey. Ray worked all around Texas with the Soil Conservation Service, conveying his knowledge of agriculture and all things green to farmers and friends. He worked in Quanah, Knox City, Vernon, Monahans and Pecos, retiring after 25 years. Ray called Midland home after retirement and it was there, he earned his realtors license from Baylor University. He enjoyed working at Stephenson Realty through the mid 80's.

Ray served as an elder at the 4th & Bois' Darc Church of Christ in Pecos and on the mission committee at Golf Course Road Church in Midland. He made trips to Brazil and Honduras to encourage missionaries who were teaching the Gospel. He worked diligently with those connected with The Continent of Great Cities dedicated to planting churches.

Ray was known for his rumbling bass voice developed by singing Southern Gospel with his family during the depression years. As a teen, he traveled through the region with a quartet, broadcasting on local radio stations. He sang in numerous groups through the years, including the Hillcrest singers.

Ray had a serving heart and cared for his wife during her 12-year battle with cancer. After Jane's death in 2013, he moved to Abilene and enjoyed fellowshiping with the Hillcrest Church and the "McDonald's Coffee Group". Loving basketball, he attended many ACU games while reconnecting with old friends from college days. He enjoyed life and community at University Place.

He was an observant and wise man, exemplifying the verse in First Thessalonians "make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, attend to your own matters, and to work with your hands." During his later years, he enjoyed helping families with their gardens and forming relationships with the compassionate caregivers from Home Instead.

Ray is preceded in death by his parents and two siblings, Maureen Eastland and Herman Blackwell. He is survived by three children and their families; Kim and Steve Conley of Abilene, Twyla and Bob Doty of Eastland and Stacey and Francie Blackwell of O'Fallon, MO, a sister June Ice of Abilene, two brothers, Ed and wife Virginia Blackwell of Panhandle and Virgil and wife Dixie Blackwell of Iowa Park. Ray is also survived by ten grandchildren; Makinzie Heard (Matt), Ashleigh Kelley (Lance), Melinda Miller (Lane), Marci Foree (Michael), Brandon Doty, Bryce Doty (Lindy), Tim Doty (Leah), Trae Doty, Noah Blackwell, and Jill Hughes (Anthony). Ray was blessed with nineteen great grandchildren, several foster great grandchildren, as well as many nieces, nephews, and friends.

Visitation will be at Hillcrest Church of Christ Thursday, May 6th, 5:00-7:00 pm in the chapel. A private family service will be held at Alameda Cemetery in Eastland County. Those wishing to honor his life may do so by their faithfulness to the Lord, their service to mankind, and their devotion to their families.

Online condolences may be submitted at [www.hamilfamilyfuneralhome.com](http://www.hamilfamilyfuneralhome.com).

When asked what verse was the most important to remember, Ray replied without hesitation- John 13:35, "By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you love one another".