



## Ralph Fenton Dodson

August 16, 1920 - January 3, 2016

Ralph Fenton Dodson, 95, died January 3, 2016, at Mercy Health Ardmore. A lifelong resident of Sulphur, he was born August 16, 1920, and attended Sulphur schools.

Typical of the Greatest Generation, Ralph's life was shaped by the Great Depression and World War II. From those times, and the influence of his parents, Ralph learned resilience, a strong work ethic and how to pull himself up by his bootstraps. Ralph was a self-made man and embraced the value of an honest day's work, a person's handshake and creating opportunities for others.

During the War, Ralph served his country as a sailor, and was stationed in New York, Seattle and San Francisco. No doubt, he found himself a fortunate man when he met Nova Jean Farris in San Francisco at the Spaghetti Kitchen where she was a waitress. At first sight, Nova thought Ralph was a "cute but short" sailor as he strolled into the restaurant. Ultimately his stature did not work against him and the two were married June 19, 1945. Ralph and Nova moved back to Oklahoma and Ralph's hometown after the War. Married for 70 years, together they had five children, four girls and one boy.

A respected and successful businessman, Ralph started out building concrete blocks. One block led to another and over time, Ralph founded his own construction business. There were several iterations of the business with the last being RFD Construction. Ralph and his associates built more than 30 buildings in Sulphur from nursing homes to banks to churches, schools and

the original Wal-Mart. It was his outstanding reputation that earned the respect of Sam Walton who came to Sulphur and hired Ralph to build the first Wal-Mart in town. For quite some time, Ralph built most of the Wal-Marts in Oklahoma and north-central Texas.

Ralph was a tireless volunteer and served on numerous civic boards, most notably the Sulphur Public Schools school board, the Sulphur City Council and the hospital board. In addition to his family and his business, church was a priority in his life. For years he served as the song leader at the Vinita Avenue Church of Christ and First Free Will Baptist Church.

Ralph is preceded in death by his parents, Nila Northcutt and Tom Dodson, and his two sisters, Ruth Martel Carter and Mary Francis Goforth.

Ralph is survived by his beloved wife Nova, Daughters & spouses: Sharon Kay Dodson of Sulphur, Brenda Sue Dodson and Joe Landrum of Ada, Regina Gail Dodson and Joe Wells of Sulphur, Penny Lynn Dodson and Clyde Runyan of Mill Creek. Son: Thomas Ralph Dodson of Sulphur Ralph's family was blessed to have 10 grandchildren, Tre'Landrum and his wife Ruth, Tanner Landrum and his wife Leslie; Coby Wells and his wife Bobbie Jo, Somer and Taylor Wells; Glenna Haines and Johnny Howe, Tom Dodson and Maddison Dodson Gagliardi and her husband Nick; Casey Runyan and his wife Tamara, & Chance (Bear) Runyan and his wife: Lory . Rich in great grandchildren, Ralph and Nova had 14 of them. They are, Finley Landrum and Beck Landrum; Gatlin and Cobi Jo Wells, Damron Ramsey, Jordan Mims and Channing Coleman; Ralston, Rasey and Reagan Runyan; and Paisley, Jett, Scout and Sutton Runyan.

Ralph was a generous person and provided opportunities for many others. He loved his community, he took pride in the accomplishments of his business and delighted in providing for his family. He left behind a loving and close family and many long-standing friendships.

Services are Thursday, January 7 at 2:00 p.m. at the Free Will Baptist Church. with Rev. Dick Terry officiating, assisted by Rev. Willard McCartney, Jr. Interment will follow at Oaklawn Cemetery under the direction of DeArman

Funeral Home.

Pallbearers will be Grandsons: Casey Runyan, Coby Wells, Tre Landrum, Bear Runyan, Tanner Landrum, and Tommy Dodson.

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the First Free Will Baptist Church foyer fund.

Online condolences may be sent to [www.dearmanfuneralhome.com](http://www.dearmanfuneralhome.com)

# Tribute Wall



“ *Ralph Fenton Dodson*

October 05, 2023 at 07:47 PM



“ *Uncle Ralph's legacy lives on today in the beautiful family he raised and their loving spirit. We send our love and our prayers to Aunt Nova and the entire Dodson clan. God Bless, Mike and Sue Stankovic and family.*

**Susan Stankovic** - January 07, 2016 at 12:00 PM



“ *Ralph Dodson is a name my family has always known, my dad worked for Ralph for 30 plus years, and there were times they probably wanted to choke each other, but in the end they always had each others back. Ralph and Nova have always been there for our family, my mom and dad loved and cared for the Dodson family, and I will never forget all that they have done for our family. I just found out about Ralph's passing today, the day of his funeral, so I will not be able to attend. To the Dodson family, you are in my thoughts and prayers, and we all know that there will be a day once again that we will see Ralph and Charlie fixing something up in heaven, God bless,*

*Sincerely Eddie Rucker*

**eddie rucker** - January 07, 2016 at 09:17 AM

JA

“ *I remember Ralph from Sulphur High School when he was on the Sulphur High School Wrestling Team.*


*Ralph always treated me friendly and kindly---I remember Ralph as one of the GOOD GUYS of Sulphur.*

*Saddens me to learn of his passing!*

*Joe Albright*

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**Joe Albright** - January 07, 2016 at 09:06 AM

 Chuck-Dama McKennell

“ *We are sorry for the loss of your husband, father and grandfather. We are praying for your continued comfort. Chuck and Dama McKennell*

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**Chuck-Dama McKennell** - January 06, 2016 at 09:38 PM