



Woody Wolverton

July 5, 1934 - August 18, 2025

M.E. Woody Wolverton

Funeral Mass for M.E. Woody Wolverton will be Wednesday, August 27, 2025 at 3pm at St. Mary Star of the Sea, Longboat Key, FL.

There will be a subsequent Memorial service at Ft. Sill National Cemetery tba.

Woody Wolverton, 91, of Longboat Key, Florida passed away Monday, August 18, 2025 at his home in Longboat Key.

Woody Wolverton was born July 5, 1934 in Lawton, OK. To Ralph W. Wolverton and Mary Morton Wolverton. Woody attended Washington Elementary School until his father, Ralph who was a lieutenant in the Army, was deployed to Hawaii. Since no concurrent travel was permitted, Woody with his mother and brother, John, made passage to Hawaii via the USS Matsonia on Woody's seventh birthday, July 5, 1941.

Woody started back to school in Hawaii in September, and in October, the family joined Ralph in Schofield Barracks. Ralph had made captain about then and was named battalion commander of Battery C, 52 nd Field Artillery Battalion, in Schofield Barracks.

On December 7, 1941 the family was going to go on a picnic. Woody "woke

up to a lot of noise outside and through the window could see Japanese planes strafing the area." "Dad strapped on his .45 and put his uniform on". "We went outside and looked up. The sky was just full of planes flying over... any kind of plane you can imagine." He remembered the planes going from his right to his left, and the machine guns firing: "Every fifth bullet was a tracer bullet." After months of nightly blackout warnings and air raid warnings they sailed out on the USS Lurleen, part of the Matsonia Line. Two ships stood guard, on either side, as they steamed back to California, where Woody and John's grandparents met them to escort them back to Lawton by train.

Woody later graduated from Lawton High School where he excelled in Football, Basketball, and Track. He was a member of the South All-State football squad in 1953. Woody often joked that he was the only person he knew of that set the 200 meters high hurdle state record and came in third place.

Woody attended Sullivan's Prep school in Washington D.C. to study for entrance exams to Annapolis and subsequently received his appointment. He ended up graduating from the University of Oklahoma with a Geological Engineering degree. He played football for the University of Oklahoma from 1953 – 1956 coached by Bud Wilkinson. He received two commemorative National Champion rings for the 1955 & 56 National Championships.

Woody married Maerita Ann Riddle on November 30, 1957. They had 3 children Brendan, Kim, and Mike. In May of 1959 Woody entered active duty as a Second Lieutenant. He completed the Infantry officer leadership course, the Army Aviation Helicopter course, and Fixed Wing Courses. He flew Huey helicopter's and soon became an Army Helicopter instructor. He and Maerita were stationed in Ft. Lewis, WA before leaving active duty as a Captain. After leaving the Army he was the 4 th generation to enter the family business; Wolverton Furniture and Appliance referred to affectionately by his mother as

“the golden goose.” At one time in the late 60’s and early 70’s Woody ran 7 furniture stores throughout the state. He also served 2 terms as a Lawton City Councilman and Mayor Pro tem.

Woody loved to be with his kids. He spent many a summer camping at Lake Lawtonka with the family. He logged countless hours pulling the kids behind the boat while they water skied, knee skied, and bare footed. He coached Brendan & Mike in little league football at Western Hills Elementary, drove Mike back and forth across the state to tennis tournaments and was Kim’s most adoring fan when she was on the OU Pom-Pom Team. He loved to show his kids off to his friends!

Woody married JoAnn Flaherty October 11, 1974, OU/Texas weekend. In addition to the furniture store he owned and operated Woody Wolverton Construction Inc. They built 42 Kiowa-Comanche homes and a dozen apartment complexes throughout southwestern Oklahoma. October 14, 1994 Woody and JoAnn were inducted into the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Woody adopted Michael James Judge Wolverton in 1975. JJ worked for Woody as a broker for several years after getting out of the Navy.

Throughout his life Woody’s commitment to OU Football never wavered. He flew Barry Switzer on numerous recruiting trips. The Selmon brothers, Jack Mildred, Joe Washington, and Scotty Hill were but just a few of the players he was instrumental in recruiting.

In 1984 Woody made a career change and moved to Sarasota, FL. He initially became a Financial Advisor with Prudential and ended his career 41 years later as Managing Director of Investments for Stifel Nicolaus. He also served as the Longboat Key Town Commissioner.

Woody married Sue Louis January 1, 2006. He and Sue loved to do everything together including golf, travel, and flying airplanes. Sue earned her pilots license, and since Woody's passion was flying, the rest is history, as they say. Woody's lifelong dream was to own and fly a jet. He started with a Mooney, then traded up to a Cessna 182, then to a push pull, a Piper Saratoga, progressed to a twin Cessna, and finally a Citation II Jet! Woody received his type rating for the Citation II from the FAA when he was 80 years old. According to the FAA he was the oldest person on record to earn a type rating on this model aircraft. His last recruiting trip for OU was flying Coach Lincoln Riley. He flew actively until he was 85 years old. Woody loved his family with all of his heart!

He is survived by his wife, Sue Wolverton of Longboat Key, FL; Son, Brendan Wolverton and daughter-in-law Rhonda (Lawton, OK); daughter ,Kimberly Shahan (Lawton, OK); son Mike Wolverton and daughter-in-law Suzanne (Abilene, TX); son Mike JJ Wolverton and daughter-in-law Jill (Scottsdale, AZ); step daughter Jessica Ross and her husband Mike (Tuttle,OK); step son, Jason Jeep Rutter (Tulsa); Grandchildren: Joshua Wolverton and his wife Jessica (OKC); Wesley Wolverton and his wife Vanessa (Edmond); Shane Shahan (Houston); Elizabeth Roberts and her husband Eddy (Houston); Lindsay Radford and her husband Jackson (Edmond); Kate Stair and her husband Todd (Houston); Kris Halliday and her husband Riley (Jeffersonton, VA); Matt Wolverton (Tulsa); Parker Ross (Tuttle); Nathan Ross and his wife Alexis (OKC); and 15 great grandchildren!

Woody is preceded in death by his parents Ralph and Mary Wolverton and brother John R. Wolverton.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Kiwanis Club on Longboat Key

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

AUG 27. 3:00 PM.

St. Mary Star Of The Sea