

# George Wilson Jr. Obituary

George Raymond Wilson Jr. passed from this life to his heavenly home on September 20, 2023—just over a month shy of his 96th birthday.

Born the son and grandson of preachers, George felt the call to give his life to missions after a visit from a missionary to China at his father's church when he was 12. His resolve—his call—to serve in China was further strengthened when he was 14 and attended a WMU camp where a nurse who had been serving in China spoke about the great need there.

The Lord faithfully prepared George for his life of service, although not in the way that he might have expected. When he was 14 his father left his pastorate and was sent overseas as a chaplain in the US Army and the family lost their home at the church parsonage. His mother found work at a nearby air force base so that they would have living quarters. George became the one “in charge” of his three younger siblings.

After graduation from Tucson High School he attended Oregon State University as part of a program to train engineers for the war. Only months later, the war ended, the project was discontinued, and George, a member of the Reserve was called to service. He served in the United States Air Force as a chaplain's assistant in Imagawa, Japan until he was able to return to the US after his father helped him enroll in Oklahoma Baptist University where, in the spring of 1947 he began his studies in music and religious education.

That summer he met his future wife Beth—Elizabeth Schreiber—in a music harmony class. She too, had given her life to missions. He said of her, “I spent the next 60 years of my life with Beth. Beth's will for missions was in step with my own. In my life she was my very best companion.”

George and Beth married in 1948, but many difficult years followed—years in which they suffered loss and privation before they realized their calling to become missionaries. Beth had polio while pregnant with their second child and their third child was stillborn on the day he was to be delivered; funds were limited and jobs hard to find. Yet God provided from the start—employment as a social worker for Beth, a track scholarship for George and \$5 jobs singing at funerals for example—just enough for them to get by.

George later recognized the years of hardship as part of what strengthened and prepared him for service. He said, “We cannot control any of these things. But we have an eternal, omnipotent, all-knowing God in charge of our lives. Our worries and our cares can be changed into blessings and happiness.”

In 1956, while George was preparing his doctoral thesis, serving full-time in a church and overseeing five choirs, he and Beth were also busy meeting the requirements of the International Mission Board to receive training as missionaries. They completed their final interviews and training in Richmond, Virginia in December of 1956, and in January of 1957 George received his PhD - Doctor of Religious Education with Honors. By April of that same year they were on a

ship with their then three children (their fourth born in Hong Kong), bound for Hong Kong and the greatest adventure of their lives.

Once in Hong Kong, they joined with the other missionaries of the Hong Kong-Macao Baptist Mission and began their private language study. George found joy in learning not just the Cantonese language but also the culture—he relished the new associations and friendships they forged—and the food! George was ordained as a deacon in 1959 at Tsim Sha Tsui Baptist Church, and given a Chinese Bible—his greatest treasure, and a way to share God’s good news in Chinese.

George’s life was one of service. His greatest joy was to serve in Hong Kong. Over the years he served in many different positions, many of them concurrently. He was committed to the work of the Hong Kong Baptist Convention and the local church. He served at Hong Kong Baptist College; he was a trustee of Hong Kong Baptist Hospital in its formative years. George served at Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary and Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary both as professor and as president. He was advisor and mentor to many churches, and served as interim pastor at several of them. He and Beth also served at Tsim Sha Tsui Baptist Church’s English service which he pastored.

His most important service, wherever he was, was in relationships. It was his desire to lead others to lead and serve.

In the United States, during three separate furlough years, George served as visiting professor at three seminaries: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also taught for a year at Oklahoma Baptist University as Professor of Religious Education. During an extended stay in the US, to care for Beth’s aging parents, George again taught at Southwestern—this time for five years. During this time he and Beth served at the Chinese Chapel of Gambrell Street Baptist Church where he pastored.

When they retired from Hong Kong in 1995 George and Beth served for 3 years—pastor and wife—at Pakuranga Chinese Baptist Church in Auckland, New Zealand. It was the first time they served together without other outside responsibilities. It was a slower pace, but working with the Chinese people there—many from Hong Kong—helped bridge the move from Hong Kong back to the United States and eased the loss of their life-time home of Hong Kong.

In retirement George and Beth continued to serve in Chinese churches, and traveled across the US and Canada where George preached and taught. He also served as pastor at Trinity Chinese Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. They never truly retired.

After Beth’s passing in 2010, until August of 2020, George traveled to Hong Kong often; he spent several months out of each year there and worked with Castle Peak Baptist Church in an advisory capacity as preacher, teacher, and mentor.

It was his greatest wish in his last years and days to return to Hong Kong. It was also his great joy to stay connected with those with whom he worked and served all over the world, and who had long since become lifelong friends.

George cherished his family members and was proud of their accomplishments. He leaves behind his children: Sarah Clark of Houston, Denise Cottrill and husband Eric of Tulsa, George Wilson III and wife Pat of Norman, and Dale Wilson and wife Snow of New York City; his grandchildren, Erin Clark, Maureen Clark Culbreath and husband John, Bailey Cottrill Farrell and husband Luke, Dayton Cottrill Schaefer and husband Matt, Sean Clark, Andre Wilson, Chloe Wilson, and Ethan Wilson; and his great grandchildren, Max, Charlee, Ellie, Lilly Claire, Perry, Patton, Dylan, and Parker. He is also survived by sister Sara Davis and husband Bill, brother Clifford and wife Emmalyn, and numerous nephews and nieces, as well as a host of friends worldwide. He was preceded in death by wife Beth, his sister Blodwen Henry, parents George Wilson Sr. and wife Blodwen, and parents-in-law August Schreiber and wife Bessie.

A service to celebrate George's life will be held October 20 at 2 p.m. at First Baptist Church, 211 West Comanche, Norman, OK. The service will be live-streamed by the church and available for later viewing [here](#).

In lieu of flowers or gifts, the family requests those who wish to express sympathy to consider making a donation to the George R. Wilson Jr. Memorial Fund established by his family (with the technical help of Castle Peak Baptist Church), to be used for support of the gospel at work in Hong Kong and Asia.

The secure PayPal link is: George R. Wilson Jr. Memorial Fund [<https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/georgewilsonjunior>] Please include your name and address in the PayPal comments so that the family may thank you directly.

The family of George Wilson would like to thank the staff of Brookdale Norman and of Traditions Hospice. Special thanks go to Dr. Wai Yee Wan for her many years of support for George and for her provision of a way for George's friends and students to connect with him from across the globe via video calls she organized each week.

**In lieu of flowers or trees, the family requests those who wish to express sympathy to consider making a donation to the [George R. Wilson Jr. Memorial Fund](#) to be used for support of the gospel at work in Hong Kong and Asia.**

To [send flowers](#) to the family or [plant a tree](#) in memory of George Raymond Wilson Jr., please [visit our floral store](#).