



## Ernest David Ables

January 13, 1934 - March 7, 2026

Ernest D. (Ernie) Ables passed from this world on March 7, 2026 at the age of 92. He was born January 13, 1934 in Hugo, Oklahoma to Annie (Cooper) and Ernest Ables. He was preceded in death by his parent, brother and sister, first wife, Juanita and a son, Brian Ables. Survivors include his wife, Lucille of the home; son, Christopher Ables; daughter -in-law, Latasha Ables; four grandchildren, Krishana and Darius Ables, Jordan and Jaci Frost; two great grandchildren, Kingston and Kamar; step son, Tracy Frost; daughter in law, Heather Frost.

Ernie spent the first 20 years of his life on the family farm in the Shoat Springs community southeast of Hugo. He attributes his work ethic to life on the farm where he harvested peanuts, picked cucumbers and tomatoes, and bailed hay to supplement the family income. His first paying job was off-bearing for a bailing crew where the power was supplied by a horse walking in circles. After graduating from Hugo High School in 1952, he took his first non-farm job as a clerk and soda-jerk in Grave's Drug Store in Hugo. He volunteered for the U.S. Army in 1954, did basic training at Fort Bliss, Texas, did advanced training at Fort Belvoir, Virginia and completed his military duty in West Germany. After being honorably discharged, he attended college on the Korean G.I. bill at Oklahoma State University where he obtained a B.S. Degree in Zoology / Wildlife Management. From there he attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he earned his M.S. and PH.D in

the fields of Zoology and Wildlife Ecology.

Ernie had always as a child had dreams of visiting other countries, especially Africa. Those dreams became realities when he and Juanita spent a year in 1966-67 radio tracking impala antelope in Northern Kenya, East Africa. Upon returning from Kenya, he joined the Wildlife Faculty at Texas A & M University where the African work continued at a greater pace. He and Juanita once again lived and worked in Kenya, but Ernie's duties also took him to Tanzania, South Africa and Burkina Faso in West Africa. In total he visited the dark continent five times. In 1993, due to Juanita's need for a drier climate, they moved to Idaho where Ernie spent the remainder of his professional career at the University of Idaho. He taught there and Administered academic and research programs for 25 years. As an academic administrator, he emphasized improvement of instruction among the faculty and always reminded everyone that computers were tools, not surrogates or substitutes for the real world. While at the University of Idaho, his interest and participation in international activities continued. He taught courses and training programs and coordinated exchange visits for scientist in Honduras, South Korea, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, and China. He taught a 1- month wildlife management course in China in 1980, the first of it's kind in that country by a westerner. A second visit to China in 1987 took him to Wolong Panda Preserve and to Kerning where the famous WWII Flying Tigers were based.

Ernie was also active in his professional organization, The Wildlife Society. He served on numerous TWS Committees and as president of the Texas Chapter and of the Idaho Chapter of TWS. Upon his retirement he continued to keep active in the wildlife field, volunteering his time when and where it was needed. This included conducting problem related research for the National Park Service and doing wildlife surveys for the U.S. Forest Service on the Ouachita National Forest in Oklahoma. Finally a goat on his feet put an end to his active lifestyle. In his final years, he could only look at his wall full of awards and plaques and remember fondly a very rewarding life and how

fortunate he had been since dragging hay bales away from a horse - powered machine. He marveled at the hand of fate that led him from playing barefoot in the school yard of his youth to walking along the Great Wall of China and from hunting rabbits with a sling in Oklahoma to facing off a charging elephant in the wilds of Africa.

Pallbearers are Jerry Pearce, Don Wolverton, John Slater, Charles Covington, Sonny Tyson, and Jack Cospier

Visitation will be on Wednesday, March 11th, 2026 from 4:00PM to 6:00PM at McCarn Funeral Service in Talihina.

Services will be on Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 11:00AM at Talihina First Baptist Church with Bro. Sonny Tyson and Bro. Justin Turney officiating.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 11. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

McCarn Funeral Service  
500 Dallas Street  
Talihina, OK 74571  
(918) 942-5004  
<https://www.mccarnfuneralservice.com>

## Service

MAR 12. 11:00 AM.

Talihina First Baptist Church