

## James A. McNeese

James A. McNeese, resident of Ponca City, passed away Wednesday, October 16, 2013, at the age of 95.

The memorial service will be held at 10:00 a.m., Monday, October 21, 2013, at Grace Episcopal Church with the Rev. Fr. Dee Wellington Bright, rector, as celebrant. Arrangements are made under the direction of Trout Funeral Home and Crematory.

Jim was born on March 3, 1918 in Oklahoma City to James Ashenhurst and Maria Harbaugh McNeese. He was born at home, delivered by his grandfather. At the age of 6 months, he moved to Ponca City which remained his home for the rest of his life. He graduated from Ponca City High School in 1936. He attended the College of Wooster for two years before transferring to the University of Oklahoma in 1938. He received his bachelor's degree in 1940 and his law degree in 1947.

Jim enlisted in the Navy in June 1941 and was called to active duty in September of that year. During World War II, he served on the U.S.S. Hannibal operating out of Norfolk, Virginia and later on an attack transport, the U.S.S. Montrose, in the Pacific where he was navigator and senior watch officer. He was part of the closing operations in the Philippines and Okinawa and left the Navy in 1945 as a Lt. Commander.

Jim married Ruby Porter on June 17, 1942, and they raised a family of six children in Ponca City during their 63 year marriage. He was one of the organizers of Sooner Life Insurance Company which was started in 1958 and sold to US Life in 1979. He was a director of Oklahoma Natural Gas Company for 23 years and a commissioner for the Oklahoma Welfare Commission for 6 years.

Jim McNeese loved Ponca City and was active in the community, serving a 3 year



term as mayor. He was chairman of the board of St. Joseph's Medical Center for 6 years. Other boards of local organizations on which he served include the Chamber of Commerce, the Ponca City Industrial Foundation, the Ponca City Library Trust Foundation, the Ponca City Art Association and the Ponca City Police Foundation. Jim also served in the Oklahoma Legislature as a representative from Kay County.

While a member of the First Presbyterian Church, Jim served at one time or another as elder, trustee, or deacon. He also served a term as trustee of the Presbyterian Synod of the Sun Foundation. He and Ruby joined Grace Episcopal Church in Ponca City, where he served as treasurer and helped create an endowment fund for the church.

In his later years, he was active in the refurbishment of the Artist Studio of the Marland Estate to house the works of the New York studio of Bryant Baker, the sculptor of the Pioneer Woman.

He is survived by his children, John McNeese of Ponca City, Bill McNeese and his wife, Loa of Cypress, Texas, Mike McNeese of Springdale, AR, Martin McNeese and his wife, Martha of Edmond, Hank McNeese and his wife, Sandy, of Ponca City, and Becky McNeese of Oklahoma City; 10 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Jim was a gentle man whose kindness, generosity, and wisdom touched the lives of many people. He was a blessing in the lives of his family, his friends, and his community. He will be missed.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Grace Episcopal Church, 109 N. 13th, Ponca City, Oklahoma 74601.