



Elbert Gene Wheat

February 4, 1934 - May 13, 2026

Elbert Eugene (Gene) Wheat left this earthly life on May 13, 2026 in his home in Winters, Texas, surrounded by the love of his family and the grace and mercy of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Gene walked closely with God and lived a fruitful life of 92 years filled with acts of service and ministry to his family, his church and his community. A celebration of Gene's life will be held on Friday, May 15 at 2 pm at First Baptist Church in Winters. The family will receive visitors on Thursday, May 14 at 6 pm at the Winters Funeral Home.

Gene was born on February 4, 1934 as the youngest of seven children to Willie Washington (Bill) Wheat and Lena Mae Bryan Wheat on their family farm outside of Wingate, Texas. He attended school in Wingate through 8th grade and then attended Winters High School where he graduated in 1951. Gene served in the U.S. Army from 1956 to 1958 followed by several years in the Army Reserve. He was stationed in Orleans, France where he enjoyed taking weekend leaves to travel with his buddies around Europe, forming bonds of friendship that lasted a lifetime. Gene was deeply impacted at a young age by the death of his brother Cullen in World War II and the sacrifices made by other family members who served during wartime, and it shaped his outlook and determination to live a productive and faithful life of service. In 1962, Gene met the love of his life, Dorris Jean (Jeanie) Seals, through mutual friends in Winters and they began dating by sharing cokes at the local drive-in restaurant and attending high school football games together. Gene

and Jeanie were married in 1965 and during their 60 years together they built a strong and loving family, grew a business, and worked side-by-side serving the Winters community. They had three children, Bill Wayne, Douglas Eugene and Julie Carol, born in 1966, 1968 and 1971. Gene faithfully loved Jeanie and his family, setting an example of how to live a righteous life through the kindness and generosity he demonstrated to EVERYONE he met. He welcomed his children's spouses into the family with open arms, and he especially loved his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Pa-Gene was always ready to attend the kids' birthday parties, sporting events, music recitals, plays and any other family gathering, where his unpredictable, goofy and dry sense of humor was on display.

Gene enjoyed music and playing the guitar and piano. His early influences were the country singers he heard on the radio, and he and a buddy once played and sang a tune on a radio show in Abilene. Throughout his adult life, Gene used music as his ministry to share the love of Jesus with others. He was the volunteer song leader for Wingate Baptist Church for more than 40 years, and he, Jeanie and their children sang together in many worship services there. Gene served as the music leader for revival services at multiple churches around the Wingate and Winters area, and he sang at countless funeral services over several decades. He continued singing occasional solos at First Baptist Winters well past his 90th birthday and his family recalls with fondness him playing the guitar and singing at family gatherings.

Shortly after graduating high school in 1951, Gene was hired by Bob Loyd to work in the office for his fuel business in Winters. Gene had a strong work ethic and a good business mind with a conservative and thoughtful approach to making decisions. He ultimately became a partner in the business and he and Jeanie purchased the company. Gene and Jeanie worked together to both raise their family and grow the business, with an approach of service-first, honesty and fairness to their customers, employees and neighbors. There were many weekends and holidays when Gene left home to take a

propane truck out to fill the tank of a customer who had run low on fuel. Their son Doug joined Gene and Jeanie in the business in 1991 and they later renamed the company to Wheat Energy Services, which continues operating today. In 2017, Doug, his wife Amy and the family opened The Crossing Travel Market in Winters which serves the locals as well as travelers and truckers from across the nation who are traveling through northern Runnels County with a smile and some genuine Texas small-town hospitality. Gene was also recently a driving force behind the community investment group that built and opened a Cobblestone Inn and Suites hotel in Winters in 2024. Gene was a big sports fan, and his favorite sporting event by far was watching the Winters Blizzards varsity football games on Friday nights. He and Jeanie were named Blizzard fans of the year in 2021 in recognition of their longtime support. From the 1940's into the 2020's, Gene, Jeanie or one of their children or grandchildren have been students in the Winters ISD in every decade. Gene demonstrated his commitment to education by serving on the Winters ISD school board and on the Education Service Center Region 15 board for many years. He also was on the founding board of directors for the Winters Area Foundation, which provides financial support to numerous community organizations and funds many scholarships to Winters High School students to continue their education in college or trade schools. Gene served as a deacon and bible study teacher at both the Wingate Baptist Church and First Baptist Church Winters, where he served on numerous committees and helped begin ministries to help those in need. He also served for several years on the Winters Housing Authority board and was a member of the Winters Lions Club civic organization for more than 60 years. Gene leaves a legacy of kindness and generosity that will be greatly missed by his family, friends and community, but we all will endeavor with the Lord's help to carry on his legacy. Gene is survived by his wife of 60 years, Jeanie Wheat of Winters; his three children and their spouses, Bill and Julie Wheat of Aledo, Doug and Amy Wheat of Winters and Julie and Bryan Green of

Winters. Pa-Gene is also survived by his beloved grandchildren Lauren Wheat, Erica Martinez and husband Jon, Josh Lujano, Zachary Wheat and wife Maddie, Avery Poteet and husband Cameron, Kaden Green and Laken Green; great-grandchildren Evyn Martinez, Ellie Martinez and Colt Poteet, who was born April 29, 2026 and got to meet his Pa-Gene last week; sisters-in-law Darlene Pennington and Doreen Seals, numerous nieces and nephews, and their crazy but sweet beagle Katy.

Gene was preceded in death by his parents and all his siblings and their spouses; Jerry Wheat, Bryan Wheat, Cullen Wheat, Veda (Wheat) and L.C. Briley, Gladys (Wheat) and W.F. Matthews, and Arley and Joy Wheat; his parents-in-law Marvin and Louise Seals, and brothers-in-law Jimmy Seals and Shelby Pennington.

Pallbearers will be his nephews and grandsons. Honorary pallbearers will be the deacons of First Baptist Church Winters and the members of the Winters Lions Club.

The family expresses thanks to the health professionals that cared for Gene at North Runnels Hospital and the caregivers and hospice professionals who cared for him in his final days at home. Special heartfelt love and appreciation also goes out to Rosie Tamez, who has been a faithful friend and support for Gene, Jeanie and Katy for many years.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to First Baptist Church Winters, North Runnels Hospital, the Winters Area Foundation or your favorite charity.

Upcoming Events

Celebration

MAY 15. 2:00 PM.

First Baptist Church

Previous Events

Service

MAY 14 (CT)

Winters Funeral Home
120 State Street
Winters, TX 79567

Tribute Wall

GV

“ *Jeanie, Bill, Doug and Julie and families. So very sorry for your loss. You're in my thoughts and prayers.*

Ginny Vest - 27 minutes ago

JJ

“ *Dear Heavenly Father who art thou in Heaven, Please comfort The Family of Elbert Gene Wheat in this hourly need and please wrap your healing and loving arms around them. Dear Heavenly Father who art thou in Heaven, Please welcome Elbert Gene in Your Holy Kingdom of Restful Peace with open arms. In Your Holy Name... Amen. Jean, Doug, Julie and The Rest of The Wheat Family, The Jones Family sends our deepest sympathy on the passing of Elbert Gene. If there's anything that y'all need please let us know.*



Jeremy Jones - 1 hour ago

PD

“ *Heartfelt sympathy & love to the family— You all are in our thoughts & prayers.*
Mike & Patti Decker

Patricia Decker - 1 hour ago