



## Vernon Lee Smith

May 4, 1942 - November 23, 2022

Vernon Lee Smith passed peacefully on November 24, 2022 in Yreka after walking down the long road of dementia. He was born on May 4, 1942 in Newton, Kansas to Virgil and Elizabeth Smith. He survived his parents and three brothers, Kermit, Stanley and Gordon.

Vern was raised in Newton and graduated from Newton High School in 1960. He was an accomplished three sport athlete, excelling in football, baseball and basketball. He chose to focus on basketball and played his freshman collegiate year at Oklahoma State before transferring to Wichita State University. There he studied education and played basketball for the Shockers under legendary coach Ralph Miller, highlighted by playing in the Final Four against Princeton in 1965. He met Dwala Kim while at WSU and the two were married on October 1, 1966. He was drafted in the U.S. Army and completed officer training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where the couple welcomed daughter Stephanie. The family then moved to Emporia, Kansas, where Vern completed his master's degree in counseling. Through his beloved high school coach, John Ravenscroft, he accepted a teaching position all the way out in Yreka, California, where he and Dwala settled and welcomed a second daughter, Shelly. In a career that spanned 31 years at Yreka High School, Vern taught English and Math and then became the guidance counselor. He also coached football and basketball. "Mr. Smith" coached, guided, counseled and supported countless YHS students over the years. He embraced the close-knit community for decades.

Vern retired from YHS in 2001. Vern and Dwala enjoyed traveling to Oregon to spend time with their daughters and their families...mostly just to have fun with grandsons Spencer and Morgan and granddaughters Claire and Hanna. They also made a number of trips back to Kansas, where Vern was honored by being inducted into his high school's athletic Hall of Fame, as well as being honored and acknowledged with his Final Four team on numerous occasions. Vern is survived by his wife of 56 years, Dwala; daughter Stephanie Hoffman and her husband Gary of Pleasant Hill, Oregon, and their children Spencer and Claire; daughter Shelly Smith and her husband Erik Israelsson of Gresham, Oregon, and their children Hanna and Morgan. He was a gentle-spirited, good humored, loving husband, father, grandfather and friend. Vern, Dad, Papa, and Grandpa, Mr. Smith will always be dearly loved and forever remembered.

Memorial services are pending.

# Tribute Wall



“ 6 files added to the album *Obituary Wall*



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**Girdner Funeral Chapel** - April 27 at 03:53 PM

WB

“ *What a great life. We appreciated the fine obituary and pictures. He made a wonderful contribution to society.*  
*Your Friends in Newton,*

*Bill & Karen Brown*

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**William L. Brown** - December 12, 2022 at 12:00 AM

WW

“ *I'm so sorry*

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**Wendy Wallace** - December 12, 2022 at 12:00 AM

WW

“ *he was an awesome guy*

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**Wendy Wallace** - December 12, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MW

“ *Dwala, Steph, and Shelly. The boys and I send our love. We have so many wonderful memories of our times together- house parties, cabin. Vern was a wonderful man and a very special friend everyone could depend on. I grieve your loss and keeping your family in our prayers.*  
*Martha Fair Williams*

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**Martha Fair Williams** - December 06, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ *Vernon was one of the best and a wonderful role model for many. I greatly appreciated getting to know him while we attended Wichita State together. My condolences are extended to his family and friends.*

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**John Morton** - December 06, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LA

“ *So sorry to hear of Mr. Smith's passing. He was a good guy and huge part of so many Yreka High school student's lives. Rest in peace Mr. Smith.*  
*Sending hugs to Dwala , Stephanie, Shelly, and families!*

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**Lyna ablack** - December 05, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MZ

“ *Dwala:*  
*With Love in my Heart and tears in my eyes my deepest sympathy and condolences to you and your entire family on the passing of your beloved husband , Vernon.*  
*In my senior at Wichita both Vernon and I were roommates and it was a pleasure being with him.*  
*Both on and off the court, Vernon was a very special and caring individual .*  
*On the court he played a Key Role in bringing Wichita State to its first Final Four Appearance.*  
*Off the court he was very caring to all of us and made us feel good about ourselves .*  
*Memories of the past, but not forgotten.*  
*All my love ,*  
*Manny Zafiros*

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**Manny Zafiros** - December 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DL

“ *Vern and I first met when our Bullpups of McPherson Ks and his Railroaders of Newton Ks met in a Regional finals basketball game.*  
*Vern was the star of the show sending us home with our first defeat of the season. We later both ended up at Wichita State becoming teammates and good friends. Vern was as good as they get as a teammate, man and friend. Vern and Dwala both have had a special place in our lives over the years. Peace be with you. Rae Ann and Dave Leach*

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**Dave and Rae Ann Leach** - December 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ *The Smith family was near and dear to our hearts many years ago in Yreka. We celebrate all the warmth and love they shared during Larry's years of coaching with Vern. Those were good times that will never be forgotten.  
Much love to all.  
Maureen and Larry*

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**Maureen Mousley** - December 02, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ *So sorry to hear about Vernon. A great teammate. I never heard him say anything bad about anyone. May he rest in peace. Dwyla may God be with you and your family. My thoughts and prayers are with you. John*

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**John Criss** - December 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SS

“ *Vernon Lee Smith*

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**Shelly Smith** - December 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BP

“ *Dwala you married a good man. Quiet and calm always a kind word. In your final journey with Vern I am sure it took everything you had to cope. Your memories for the two of you and your family will keep you at peace. I like thinking of the two of you just as you were at our last reunion.  
God Bless your beautiful family.  
Teammate and good friend.  
Bob and JoAnn Powers*

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**Bob Powers** - December 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

RL

“ I was lucky to meet Vernon at the 50th reunion dinner for the 64-65 team. Was a big fan of his when I was growing. My condolences to his family. His many contributions to WSU and to our larger world will long be remembered.

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**Robert Litan** - December 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

CA

“ I am so saddened by this news. Mr. Smith was never my teacher but he was a very kind man who truly loved what he did. When I was a varsity cheerleader he took all 6 of us cheerleaders to several stores in Redding to assure we all got the right size matching shoes, he was so patient.  
My condolences to Dwila and the entire family. You are in my thoughts and prayers  
Cecile (Moore) Avery

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**Cecile Avery** - November 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LR

“ Dwala our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Vern was a special teammate, roommate, and friend at Wichita State. He will be missed.  
Sincerely,  
Jerry and Linda Reimond

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**Linda Reimond** - November 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JE

“ Coach Smith was the best basketball coach I ever had. Taught me how to play and be a good sport. I will always remember him and what he taught me. My heart and prayers are with his family. Rest in peace coach.

With Love,  
Jeff Evans

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**Jeff Evans** - November 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

RW

“ Rest In Peace, Mr Smith❤️

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**Rachelle Williams** - November 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KI

“ RIP to you Mr. Smith . You were one of my instructors at YHS in the 80's.

Such a kind man ❤️

PRAYERS to Mrs. Smith and your Family 🙏❤️🙏

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**KimLen** - November 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LH

“ Prayers and special thoughts for Vern's family, friends and all those he touched with his calm presence. Hugs Dwala, Steph and Shelly.



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**Liz Hockaday** - November 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

GC

“ Vernon Lee Smith

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**Girdner Funeral Chapel** - November 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KB

“ Vern and Dwala were two of the first people I met in Yreka. I had a flat tire on the Highway while making the last move there having to unpack the whole trunk to change the flat. When I arrived at the party they were hosting, Vern had put a bunch of old tires on the front lawn to welcome me. That humor lasted throughout our friendship. Vern counseled both my kids at Yreka High. A kind man with an equally kind family. Dwala, Steph and Shelly: my deepest condolences.

Fondly, Kathy

Kathy Birdsong - November 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

RY

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Ronald Young - November 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AS

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Girdner Funeral Chapel


A Memorial Tree was planted for Vernon Lee Smith - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

GC

“ Vernon Lee Smith

Girdner Funeral Chapel - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JJ

“ Sorry to hear about Mr Smith's passing. Condolences to Stephanie, Shelly and Mrs Smith. 

Julie Pearl Johnson - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KH

“ Prayers and blessings to Dwala, Stephanie and Shelly! The Hendryx families send you their love! May God bring you comfort and healing ❤️🙏

Kathleen Hendryx - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KE

“ Our deepest condolences for your loss. Peace be with you Dwayla, Stephanie and Shelly.

Karen Healy Eller - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

PS

“ Mr. Smith was so cool, I loved that dude!

Paula Sarmiento-Haines - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DT

“ Loves to Dwayla, Stephanie and Shelly❤️❤️

Donna Kleaver Thompson - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MJ

“ Love to all of you. I respect and honor this man. Thank you for being a part of my daughter's lives.

Maureen Jones - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ It's been a blessing to know and love Vern and his family. We have missed him in our lives and in the neighborhood. God speed buddy.

LuAnn Betts McKee - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ So so sorry

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**Bob Schultz** - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ Rest in Peace Mr. Smith. You were a great teacher and a wonderful man. You will be missed dearly.

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**Robin Byrd** - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

RY

“ Rest in Peace Coach Smith. It was an honor to play for you!

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**Rick Young** - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ God bless smith family

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**Sadie Gorseth** - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

EJ

“ God bless

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**Elieene Jones** - November 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM