



## John Ronald Preston Sr.

November 20, 1932 - November 27, 2021

John Ronald Preston, Sr. was born November 20th 1932. His love of adventure never faltered in 89 years and it was a private joke between his grandchildren that he had been outsmarting and scaring off death for the last decade. Unfortunately, on November 27th, after a life full of adventure and misadventure, John peacefully passed away due to congestive heart failure. His son, Ron, was at his bedside as John took his last steps from this life into the next.

John had many friends and family waiting for him in death, but there was truly no one he was looking forward to seeing more than Sara, the love of his life and eternal companion. John and Sara met in high school. The family legend goes that John was walking with a friend down a country road past Sara's family farm. John saw Sara from afar and turned to his friend and said "that's the girl I'm going to marry." No one can remember the name of the friend now, but the important thing is that John's prediction came true. John and Sara were married November 26, 1952 as John was studying at Oklahoma State University.

John's love for nature and wildlife must have been part of his DNA because he was educating himself by exploring the outdoors long before any formal education began. John earned his Bachelor's degree in Biology from Oklahoma State University, and a Master's degree in zoology from the University of Arkansas. He was passionate about educating students across the country about the great outdoors. John loved to share his enthusiasm for

nature and adventure with people of all ages. He worked with schools, museums, zoos, and camps to educate children and adults about animals and the environment they live in. Wherever John worked he immediately created and implemented educational and outreach programs that really were his true love. He was a prolific writer beginning in Ft. Worth, TX to Weston, CT to Fayetteville and Little Rock, AR and finally in Oklahoma City John continuously was writing outdoor education material including nature programs and displays.

John was also an avid photographer. Until his eyesight prohibited it, he constantly carried a camera with him. His family has been richly blessed by his photographic family history! He also curated a very impressive collection of wildlife and wild flower photographs that have been featured in several nature centers in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

John was preceded in death by his parents, Ray Sherrill Preston and Lorena Blanton Preston, his daughter Teresa R. Owens, his great granddaughter, Clara Renae Gardner, and his wife Sara Huggins Preston. He leaves behind three children, John R. (Ron) Preston, Jr., Lolly (Ben) Lyman and Aaron R. Preston.

His grandchildren are: Matthew and Daniel Owens, Katye (Mark) Gardner, Missy Preston, Hansen Lyman, Tressa (Jarren) Rochester, Preston (Naomi) Lyman, Shayla (Jackie) Morales, Eliza (Jacob) King, and Robison Lyman.

John's great grandchildren are: Clara Gardner (deceased), Fox Gardner, Adelia Rochester, Lyla Rochester, Ben Rochester, Jubilee Lyman and Miriam Rochester, who was born on John's 89th birthday. John also left behind countless friends and colleagues. He was a man who touched and changed many lives and we are all counting the days till we see him again. It is only a matter of time. This obituary was beautifully written by the family of John Ronald Preston, Sr.

Visitation for John will be 10AM-11:30AM, Friday, December 10, 2021 at Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home in Fort Gibson.

A service Celebrating John's life will be 1PM, Friday, December 10, 2021 at

the Citizens Cemetery Pavilion, Fort Gibson.

The family of John Ronald Preston, Sr., has entrusted his care, service and burial to Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home, Fort Gibson, OK. 918-478-2555.

Online condolences may be left for the family at [clifforddgarrettfamilyfh.com](http://clifforddgarrettfamilyfh.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Citizens Cemetery

Fort Gibson, OK 74434

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **10**. 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home (Fort Gibson)  
1224 E Poplar St  
Fort Gibson, OK 74434  
(918) 478-2555

## Graveside Service

DEC **10**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Citizens Cemetery  
Fort Gibson, OK 74434

# Tribute Wall

DA

“ I first met Mr Preston when I was in 5th grade and had been selected to attend Camp Goddard near Sulphur, OK. I recall nature walks that he led and his beloved ferrets. We were all in awe of his knowledge of the natural world. Many years later about 2017 while I was working as an insurance claims adjuster the stars aligned and I was randomly assigned to his claim. I didn't realize who he was until I met him at his home. It took about a minute and I was instantly transported back 30 years to Camp Goddard. We sat and talked for nearly an hour. People like him had such an impact on so many that it is immeasurable. Thank you Mr Preston for a lifetime of inspiration.

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**Diron Ahlquist** - August 09, 2025 at 09:34 PM

LS

“ So sorry to hear. I had not seen or talked to Mr. Preston for probably 25 years, but he was my boss for a while at the Museum of Science and History in Little Rock in the early 1970s. He was a great teacher and an advocate for wildlife. I went on a few field trips with him including a caving trip in NW Arkansas with some Explorer Scouts and "collecting" trips in West Texas and New Mexico. On one trip we visited his mother in Hollis, OK. He was a large and positive influence on me and he will be missed.

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**Larry Sessions** - July 25, 2024 at 01:34 PM



“ *John Ronald Preston Sr.*

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January 29, 2023 at 12:59 PM

CW

“ *What a truly gifted and interesting man who enjoyed a well lived life that included so much abundant flora and fauna!!! His family, friends and students benefited greatly from his adventurous spirit, deep knowledge and affection of our natural world. Wishing I could have learned from his lifetime knowledge of it. Sadly, I did not know this remarkable man but can only imagine the beautiful life he led beside his wonderful family and loving wife Sara. Wishing all his family and friends much comfort as they grieve the loss of him. I know for sure that he was much loved and appreciated by all the Huggins family as they are so closely connected and beautifully bonded in love of each other and any of us lucky enough to know them. With love and deepest sympathies. Carolyn Cahoon Watts*

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**Carolyn Watts** - December 10, 2021 at 04:17 PM

DH

“ *When I would go to Uncle Johnnys house, I would never know what kind or reptile may be in the bath tub, or new pet had been added to run around the house! ❤️❤️👩♀️*

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**Deborah Huggins** - December 04, 2021 at 07:26 PM



“ *3 files added to the album Memories Album*



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**Clifford Garrett** - November 28, 2021 at 09:59 PM