



Willard Samuel Stidham

September 21, 2021

Newark, OH

In the arms of Angels, on September 21, 2021, Willard Samuel Stidham was carried home to be with his Lord and Savior. He was 94 and a half years old. On March 26, 1927, Willard and Nora Myrtle welcomed a son to their small family. Willard Samuel "Sam" was their second child and second son. He was born in Roda, Virginia.

Sam, and his big brother, Emmett, did everything together. They were inseparable. Life was immensely difficult with abject poverty and the rigors of the Appalachian mountains. From such stark means, Sam learned how to persevere with hard work, and a skilled eye at hunting. Sam knew the treasures of the mountains: the name of every tree, plant, spring, and the animals that shared them with him.

Sam entered the coal mines at seven to assist his father in gaining the daily quota after his father was injured. With a small hand pick, Sam sat crouched at the lead of the vein for long hours. One day, a piece of coal flew back at Sam's face, lodging itself next to his eye. When his mother saw that, she ended his time in the mine. That piece of coal is still embedded next to Sam's eye.

World War II began, and Sam wanted to serve his country, however; he was not old enough, nor did he weigh enough to be inducted. He went from one branch to the next and back through again. During this time, he agreed to join his friend Jack Scott and Jack's girlfriend, Jean, on a blind date with a young

girl named Mary Lee "Sug" Reese. They were immediately smitten with each other. They dated until Sam joined the Army as a medic corpsman at eighteen. He acquired the rank of T-Sargent (Technical 3 which was slightly above a Staff Sargent). Sam and Sug wrote letters to each other, Sam asking her to marry him in one. The war ended, and Sam returned home. Wanting desperately to marry Sug, he wore the soles off of his shoes looking for work. This was her mother's requirement that Sam have a job before he could marry Sug. Unable to find work, and not wanting to wait any longer, Sam and Sug eloped to Whitesburg, Kentucky, to a Justice of the Peace, on December 26, 1947.

Their first son, Jerry Allen, was born on October 11, 1948, followed by Larry Wayne on May 31, 1950. Kathryn Marie was born on December 1, 1958, and the youngest son, Randy Howard was born on November 17, 1962.

After a few jobs in Pennsylvania, and again in Virginia, Emmett told Sam of a job in Hamilton, Ohio. Sam became employed with the Pillsbury Company, sending for Sug, Jerry, and Larry to join him. I, Kathryn, and Randy were born in Hamilton, Ohio. Sam was a Purchasing Agent and supervisor for the Pillsbury Company for twenty-four years. The plant closed, and Sam gained employment the next week at Fisher Body in Fairfield, Ohio. Moving from production operator to a Millwright, Sam was able to work until the Fisher Body plant closed its doors in 1989. Sam was sixty-two years old.

Sam and Sug moved to Mansfield, Ohio, to enjoy their grandchildren, Lisa Marie and Ryan Anthony Blanchard. The winters were too extreme for Sug and Sam, so they moved to Arcadia, Florida after four years. They lived together in Arcadia, Florida until Sug's passing on February 15, 2020, however; Sam continued in Arcadia until August 2020, when Larry and Ava arraigned for a senior condo in Panhandle, Texas. The condo was across the street from Larry and Ava. Sam enjoyed spending quality time and good meals with them.

Texas proved to be too far away from Sug's grave site, so on May 1, 2021, Sam moved to Newark, Ohio. Sam's younger brother, Ralph, his wife Heidi,

and their children all live in the Newark or greater Columbus, Ohio area. Kathryn still lives in Mansfield, Ohio. Ryan, his wife Angel, and his five sons Coby, Skylar, Khi, Dominic, and Keegan would come to visit. Sam enjoyed visiting with family members that he had missed seeing over the years. He watched his great-grandson, Ethan, play soccer. BBQs were a regular activity at Shawn and Crystal Stidham's home. Ralph would pick Sam up and the two would go to many different places.

Sam was a life-long member of the Church of Christ. He attended church in Hamilton, Ohio; Arcadia, Florida; Panhandle, Texas; and, Newark, Ohio. Sam served in the positions of Deacon of Benevolence, Treasurer, Song Leader, and any activity asked of him. Always ready to help people in need, Sam would donate his time and skills to accommodate others. Sam was a gifted woodworker, creating rocking horses, gliders, dressers, and numerous birdhouses for fun. A jack-of-all-trades, Sam could learn and accomplish a variety of homeowner feats. Adding to this, being the "Captain" of his pontoon boat gave him much enjoyment..

Sam had a love of hospitality. Everyone knew they would be welcomed to visit. His kindness was one of his best features. Always encouraging family to do their best, and gently consoling them when things were not going well for them. A calm strength that let us know that he loved us.

I would be amiss if I did not give a nod to Sam's infamous sweet tooth. He certainly loved all sorts of sweets.

Many have gone on ahead of Sam, including Sug whom he was married to for seventy-two years; his son, Jerry Allen; his parents, Willard Owen and Nora Myrtle nee Boggs; brothers Emmett, James, Paul, and Odell; and sister Mary Ruth. Brother and sister-in-laws; nieces and nephews; and many cousins.

Sam is survived by his son Larry Wayne and wife Ava Stidham of Panhandle, Texas; daughter Kathryn Marie Blanchard of Mansfield, Ohio; and son Randy Howard and wife Kym Stidham of Olympia, Washington; granddaughter Lisa and husband Tracy Butler of Galion, Ohio; grandsons Craig and wife Colleen Stidham of Panhandle, Texas; Sean and wife Brandy Stidham of Lubbock, Texas; Ryan and wife Angel Blanchard of Galion, Ohio; and Kody and wife Pamela Stidham of Olympia, Washington. Sam was blessed with great-grandchildren. They are Coby Blanchard, Mikaela Stidham, Shelby Stidham, Skylar Blanchard, Khi Blanchard, Kiley Stidham, Elijah Stidham, Dominic Blanchard, Keegan Blanchard, Ethan Butler, and Calvin Stidham. One brother, Ralph and wife Heidi Stidham of Newark, Ohio; two sisters Anna Lee Clay of Arcadia, Florida; and Helen and husband Floyd Poole of Corrigan, Texas. His two brother-in-laws and wives, Frank and Jackie Bowman of Big Stone Gap, Virginia; and Gary and Carol Bowman of Big Stone Gap, Virginia. Several nieces and nephews, all very dear to him.

If there is a front porch in Heaven, I know God is enjoying the rich Southern music of banjos, guitars, and melodies sung by my Dad and uncles. Everyone else is tapping toes. Dad is exactly where he wants to be... next to Mom.

The family will receive friends on Tuesday, Sept 28, 2021 from 11-1 p.m. for the visitation, the funeral service will be conducted following in the Funeral home's chapel. The committal service will follow in Powell Valley Memorial Gardens, the Active duty Military will perform the rites.

Family and friends will serve as pallbearers.

An online register is available for the family at www.holdingfuneralhome.com

Holding Funeral Home is serving the family of Mr. Stidham.

Tribute Wall



“ *Willard Samuel Stidham*

October 07, 2023 at 10:50 AM



“ *You will be missed so much and you will be in our hearts forever*

Mike and Carolyn Stidham - September 28, 2021 at 11:54 AM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Willard Samuel Stidham.*



September 26, 2021 at 08:37 PM



“ *To the Stidham family - Uncle Sam will always remain in my heart as dear & beloved to me. Uncle Sam lived a wonderful life full of love, family, service & devotion. His beautiful obituary gives thoughtful testament to that. May love fill & heal the hearts of those who so dearly miss you & Sug.*

*Love,
Zack Nakos*

Zack Nakos - September 26, 2021 at 07:51 PM



Thank you, Zack for the lovely words. Mom and Dad thought the world of you. You were very dear to them.

Kathryn Blanchard - September 27, 2021 at 05:22 PM

CJ

“ I am 10 years younger than Sam but I can remember he would come to Duffield to help Dad in the summer time on the farm. We will all miss Sam but we all getting old and we have done our work on earth. So we all will get a chance on e day where can sit and talk about the good old days.

carroll jennings - September 26, 2021 at 07:26 PM



“ Fall Fantasia was purchased for the family of Willard Samuel Stidham.



September 26, 2021 at 07:11 PM

EM

“ My dad sister aunt Myrtle and her husband Willard this was their son and my first cousin although I have not seen him since we were very young I do remember him and think of this part of my family God's blessings be with everyone

eloise boggs millspaugh - September 26, 2021 at 06:59 PM

MS

“ You will be missed.



Mike&Carolyn Stidham - September 26, 2021 at 06:29 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Willard Samuel Stidham.*



September 25, 2021 at 12:30 PM



“ *Lois Wade Porter lit a candle in memory of Willard Samuel Stidham*



Lois Wade Porter - September 24, 2021 at 05:12 PM



“ *Catherine Pelfrey lit a candle in memory of Willard Samuel Stidham*



Catherine Pelfrey - September 24, 2021 at 11:24 AM



“ *Deborah Stidham lit a candle in memory of Willard Samuel Stidham*



Deborah Stidham - September 24, 2021 at 11:17 AM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Willard Samuel Stidham.*



September 24, 2021 at 02:54 AM



“ *Hester Fox lit a candle in memory of Willard Samuel Stidham*



Hester Fox - September 23, 2021 at 01:00 PM



“ *I will never forget you. Just seeing you made me cry because you looked so much like dad. The memories are many and will be with me always. You were an inspiration to me. Able to text , sharp as a tack. Witty. But most of all a caring soul. I am so glad we got to meet again on August 20. It was a great blessing and your prayer for me was beautifully said. Go rest high now uncle. With much love . Your niece Hester*

Hester Fox - September 23, 2021 at 12:59 PM

RJ

Was just Reading about a gentleman name, Bob Stidham and it reminded me of my old acquaintance Willard. I worked with Willard for about eight years at the Pillsbury Company in Hamilton, Ohio. I never knew him by the name Sam it was only Willard. I remember that he was a devoted George Jones fan and I was a young buck and couldn't understand why anybody loved George Jones, I was all into Elvis. Years later, I learned to love the possum as well. Years later, I looked him up and gave him a call down in Florida. We talked for a while, and that was the last contact I had with Willard nice guy all around.

Ron Jockell - October 28, 2024 at 02:31 PM