



Bro. Steve Hays

May 11, 1946 - June 9, 2019

Bro. James William “Steve” Hays entered into eternal rest on Sunday morning, June 9, 2019, the day of Pentecost, surrounded by his children and grandchildren. He was born May 11, 1946 in Towoomba, Australia to Aussie war bride Jessie Mavis Berghoffer Hays and WWII veteran James Otto Hays, Jr. He emigrated to the United States along with his mother at 6 weeks of age, on a 6 week boat journey with other war brides. He and his younger siblings Debbie and Mark helped in the family business of farming, trapping, hunting, and running Hays Fish Market.

He attended Laneville Schools and graduated in 1964. He played basketball for the Laneville Yellowjackets and took them to state playoffs in his senior year. At the age of 17 he heard his Uncle Bob preach the gospel in West Main Baptist Church in Henderson and gave his life completely to Christ. He soon after began to preach and share the gospel with his family members and many of them also began serving the Lord. He married Helen Ruth Munden Hays in 1965. They both attended Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO before moving to Port Acres, TX in 1965 for Steve to pastor Garnet Avenue Baptist Church- at the ripe old age of 19. In 1972, Garnet Avenue merged with Fellowship Baptist Church in Nederland, TX, and Bro. Hays faithfully served as pastor there for 45 years. After a very brief retirement, he began pastoring a small church in Tyler County, and then became the oldest church planter in the Southern Baptist Convention when he planted Peach Tree Community Church in Chester, TX in 2018, right before he turned 72. In all, he served as a senior pastor for over 50 years. In addition to pastoring until the day he died, Bro. Hays had the vision for and started Camp Ta-Ku-La in Chester, TX in 1987. The vast impact of this children’s and youth camp will never be known as over 5,000 were saved and hundreds of men and women surrendered to ministry at this small camp in rural East Texas. He also served on several short term missions trips to the Philippines, Japan, Australia, Hawaii, Mexico, Russia, and London.

Bro. Hays was devoted to his family. In a generation when many pastors’ families’ needs were overshadowed by their churches’ needs, he consistently loved and spent time with his family, and most importantly, shared his love of Christ and missions with them. He took

his family on several mission including to Australia, his home country. He taught his sons to love their wives faithfully and unconditionally. His family legacy is evident in the life of his two sons, Steven Shane Hays and Benjamin James Hays. Both are full time ministers with a heart for international missions. Papaw, as Bro. Hays was known to his 9 grandchildren, was always good for a lot of fun and a lot of junk food. He had a special bond with each of them. He taught the ones that were old enough how to hunt, and even the ones who weren't old enough how to drive! Their strong love for him was evident in his last days when they rarely left his side.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Helen Ruth Munden Hays of Chester, TX; his sons Steven Shane Hays and wife Phyllis of Lumberton, TX and Benjamin James Hays and wife Kelli of Houston, TX; his 9 grandchildren: Lauren Renae Hays Perkins and husband Cody of Lumberton, Cayla Grace Hays and Andrew Shane Hays of Lumberton, Landon Taylor Hays, Allison Danielle Hays, Evaleigh Austen Hays, Canaan James Hays, Jeremiah Dancan Hays and Gwendolyn Elaine Hays of Houston. His sister, Deborah Jean "Debo" Maddox and husband Joe of Laneville, TX; brother Mark Allen Hays of Laneville, TX; Nephews and nieces: Kit Maddox and wife Jen of Henderson, Scotty Smitherman of San Francisco, CA, Amanda Hays Wherry and husband Jay of Henderson and Bonnie Hays Hairston and husband Zach of Henderson, along with numerous grand nieces and nephews and many friends that were like family.

Bro. Hays' legacy is immense and will last for generations to come because he chose to pursue the things of Christ instead of the things of this world. He showed kindness when that kindness was not returned. He saw hope in people that others could not. He did not give up on important relationships and ministry, even when it was difficult. His greatest desire was to serve the Lord and his family, and his second greatest desire was to see how many deer he could kill and not get caught. He was a man of integrity, hard work, love of Jesus, and always a little bit of mischief. In the words of his son Steven, "If you want to carry a torch onward: hunt, fish the seas, fly to far flung corners of the globe and represent our Savior, love everyone you meet, and believe Christ can help the down and out. Build churches, love people, find your bull and ride him. Shoot straight in all endeavors. It may be the end of an era, but there are those who are forging a new one."

Services were held at Rader Funeral Home on Wednesday, June 12, 2019 with his sons Ben Hays and Steven Hays officiating. Burial followed at Chalk Hill Cemetery. To honor Bro. Hays, in lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Camp Ta-Ku-La at PO Box 7, Chester, TX 75936 or online at camptakula.com. Click "donate" on the right side.

Cemetery

Chalk Hill Cemetery

FM 1716

Henderson, TX,

Events

JUN **Visitation** 06:00PM - 08:00PM

11

Rader Funeral Home of Henderson

800 Kilgore Drive, Henderson, TX, US, 75652

JUN **Chapel Service - Henderson** 10:30AM

12

Rader Funeral Home of Henderson

800 Kilgore Drive, Henderson, TX, US, 75652

Comments



“ My parents help ordain Steve and Helen in the ministry. Tink (Durwood) and Inez Thomas at West Main Baptist Church.

Brenda Nichols - June 12 at 04:33 PM



“ Instead of Steve it was Ben. Praying for your family.

Brenda Nichols - June 12 at 04:37 PM



“ I met Bro. Hayes and Sis. Helen when I was a teenager back at Garnet Baptist Church in Port Acres. I remember him having my dad, J.D. Hargraves paint all the church buses - BLUE - so they would stand out as we ran the bus routes on Sunday. My family and I follow with him to the merge with Fellowship in Nederland right in the back yard of First Baptist Church then on to help build the first auditorium on 27th street. My dad is one of the guys in the ground breaking picture. We enjoyed many years with Bro. Hayes and Helen. J.D. has gone on to heaven and I am sure he is enjoying visiting with Bro. Hayes now. My mom, Audrey, now 80, my brother Johnny and myself all still live out in Fannett. Prayers with the family - you will miss him greatly - but he is having a great time in heaven getting reacquainted with all those church members that have gone on before him. Love & Prayers - Debbie (Hargraves) Thomas

Debbie Hargraves Thomas - June 13 at 09:11 AM



“ Dee Puckett lit a candle in memory of Bro. Steve Hays



Dee puckett - June 12 at 01:52 AM



“ We went to school with Steve at Laneville. I graduated in 1967 and Robert Allen graduated in 1966. At Laneville, everyone knew everyone. Steve was a great kind person even at the younger school age. We know he will be greatly missed but is sitting before the ONE he preached about so long. What a blessing. May God bless you all at this time.

Diane and Robert Gholson - June 11 at 06:11 PM



“ Janice Allen Pirkey lit a candle in memory of Bro. Steve Hays



Janice Allen Pirkey - June 11 at 05:23 PM



“ Love Tim & Silvia Baker , Alyssa, Tim Jr purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Bro. Steve Hays.



Love Tim & Silvia Baker , Alyssa, Tim Jr - June 10 at 11:20 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bro. Steve Hays.



June 10 at 11:13 AM



“ When Bro. Steve was the Pastor in Port Acres Church. I played the piano for him. I tell everyone we all grew up together. He and Sister Helen were so young then. I was probably in the 10th grade. We used to have so much fun. They could really make you laugh. I loved them so much and still do. I saw him several times over the years especially when I needed guidance. After he left Fellowship I went to the Church to see if I could get a phone number from them so I could go visit. I didn't get one from them. I have thought about those two very special people many times over the years. I think God is really going to enjoy him being there in heaven. I'm looking forward for the day I can give him another hug. I know He will surely be missed by me and everyone else who knew him. Wonderful great man of God!

Debbie Marlow Allen - June 10 at 11:09 AM



“ Vivian Ybarra lit a candle in memory of Bro. Steve Hays



Vivian Ybarra - June 10 at 09:41 AM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you



Michael and Polly Vardeman - June 10 at 08:14 AM



“ Jennifer Warnell lit a candle in memory of Bro. Steve Hays



Jennifer Warnell - June 10 at 12:17 AM



“ A great man who started from humble beginnings in a small town in Australia!





“ Liz&Rick Thrasher lit a candle in memory of Bro. Steve Hays



Liz&Rick Thrasher - June 09 at 01:26 PM