



Johnnie Ray York

October 19, 1944 - April 3, 2025

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Johnnie York was the kind of man you don't forget.

Born October 19, 1944, in Purcell, Oklahoma, Johnnie Ray York was the eldest of three sons to John Albert and Edith Juanita (Stanton) York. Though his family moved often due to his father's oilfield work, Lexington was always home. He graduated from Lexington Public Schools and would remain rooted in the community that helped shape him.

In 1966, Johnnie enlisted in the United States Air Force. He was stationed across the U.S.—primarily in California—and also in Guam, where he worked on B-52 bombers as a jet engine mechanic, where he kept missions flying and people safe. He served honorably and faithfully until 1970, but his patriotism never wavered. Even after the uniform came off, he continued serving his country as a welder at Tinker Air Force Base for nearly 26 years, eventually retiring from the role he called his dream job.

In 1980, Johnnie met Sherland Gale Madden—and four weeks later, they were married. Love at first sight became a partnership of 44 years, full of laughter, hard work, shared adventures, and the kind of devotion that leaves a lasting mark. Their life together was one of deep-rooted love, and the warmth they created extended to everyone who entered their home.

Johnnie built a rich life on the shores of Lake Texoma, where he ran a fishing guide service and a bed and breakfast, with Sherland. An expert fisherman

with a deep love for the water, he wasn't just casting lines—he was creating memories and loved helping others find the joy and quiet reward of a good catch. He loved old cars, boats, and equipment—auction treasures he brought home with pride. Each one had a unique story, and he'd beam when sharing the tales: a special model, a bit of history, or just the story of how he ended up with it. They couldn't possibly hold the same meaning for others, but they resonated deeply with Johnnie—tangible memories of history or something he simply understood and valued. To him, they were symbols of a life well lived. He poured himself into life with grit, purpose, and heart. Later in his life, gardening brought him joy—he grew tomatoes like a seasoned farmer, giving away hundreds of pounds to nourish friends, neighbors, and even strangers. His hands were those of a craftsman, and his creativity knew no bounds. He made custom jewelry and belt buckles, including pieces gifted to Dolly Parton and Buck Taylor. And perhaps most meaningfully, he crafted and gave away more than 10,000 handmade crosses, spreading faith, hope, and strength to people all over the world.

Johnnie was, in every way, a family man. He relished in the successes of others and got great joy from spending time with his loved ones—often gathered around a custom-built table he made to accommodate the many people he welcomed into his life. It was long enough to share meals, create memories, and celebrate special moments together. He also enjoyed moments filled with fun, laughter, and conversation while cruising—where his sense of adventure might even lead him to toss a bottle into the ocean with a note and a piece of bubblegum.

He faithfully and eagerly followed the lives of those he loved—especially on Facebook—celebrating their milestones and everyday moments alike. You could always count on his enthusiastic “Awesome!” or “Fantastic!”

He was honest, direct, and genuine. You always knew where you stood with him. Though he had strong opinions and never hesitated to share them, he was also a great listener who loved a good conversation with anyone, anywhere. He could be blunt, but his loyalty ran deep. If he admired you, you

knew it.

Above all, Johnnie was a man of great faith. His love for his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, was evident in everything he did. His creativity, his giving spirit, and his enduring strength all flowed from that foundation. Even in the face of life's hardest challenges, he carried himself with grace, courage, and steadfast faith.

He built things—engines, gardens, relationships, and legacy—and he gave freely of all of them. He never stopped giving, never stopped loving, and never stopped building—even when most would have had nothing left to give. He was preceded in death by his parents, John and Edith York, and his daughter, Kameron York.

He is survived by his loving wife, Sherland York of the home; daughters, Stephanie Harding and husband Eldon of Norman, and Ann Schmidt and husband Leon of Lexington; sons, Michael York of Norman, and Joe Hamil and wife Shem of Norman; brothers, Jerry York and wife Karen of Florida, and Roger York of the Philippines; 12 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren, with 2 more on the way; and a host of extended family and friends.

A great man, deeply loved and dearly missed.

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 P.M. on Friday, April 11, 2025, at Little's Chapel, with burial following at Lexington Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Lexington Cemetery

Lexington, OK 73051

Previous Events

Funeral Service

APR 11. 2:00 PM (CT)

Little's Chapel
127 S. Canadian
Purcell, OK 73080
<http://www.wilsonlittle.com>

The family will receive friends from 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM Thursday at Wilson-Little, Purcell.

Tribute Wall

SH

“ *I miss you and love you so much, Dad.*

Stephanie Harding - April 06, 2025 at 05:58 PM

CH

Stephanie and Eldin, I'm so sorry for your loss. He was a very nice man.

Christine - April 08, 2025 at 06:09 PM