



Stephen J. Merrill

April 15, 1957 - May 3, 2026

Stephen J. Merrill was born in Alva, OK on April 15, 1951 and passed away May 3, 2026 in Tulsa, OK. He laughed his way through life as a masterful storyteller who loved sharing his favorite funny stories of misadventures — often more than once.

He was devoted to Zoe, his smiling standard poodle who, like Steve, had an uncanny ability to charm people wherever they went.

No one thought more highly of him than his dad, J.C. Merrill, and Steve thought his dad hung the moon as well. No one enjoyed sports more than these two — from playing to coaching to watching any possible sport on TV.

His mother, June Merrill, was an angel. She quietly supported her children and grandchildren every way she could.

He enjoyed fishing, hard work, and all things OSU with his lifelong best friends who just happened to be his cousins, Ken and Keith Merrill.

In the last couple of months of his life, he loved talking about coaching his kids in their various sports. He did well as an Oil and Gas Attorney for many years and had an adventurous spirit when it came to opportunity.

He loved teaching Dale Carnegie courses and fully embodied its charismatic principles, gaining many friends over the years and leaving a lasting impression on everyone he met.

He said a few profound things during that precious time when it feels thin between this world and what's next, the most meaningful was "It's about the heart that matters."

He leaves behind his children: April Merrill of Tulsa, OK; Ryan Merrill of Tulsa, OK; Cody Merrill of Dallas, TX; and Aaron Merrill (Haley Hoffman) of Tulsa, OK; his brother, Chris Merrill (Amy) and their children and grandchildren; and his beloved cousins and lifelong friends, Ken and Karen Merrill and their children and grandchildren, and Keith and Jean Merrill and their children and grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his parents, J.C. Merrill of Prattville, OK and June Merrill of Tulsa, OK.

His children would like to express sincere thanks to the following people:

Nicole Richardson, the angel caregiver and death doula; Deena and Richard Collins, the heart-led folks in charge of the senior living facility; Jenny, Twanna, and the Southern Hills cafeteria team; Sheila for the April birthday party and other fantastic activities; and the Rivercross Hospice team including both Emilys, Sadie, Maria, Julie, Kristie, Tamara and amazing volunteers Kris Murray and Juliana, along with all the folks behind the scenes whose names we may not know but whose work we deeply felt.

We are also deeply grateful to the staff, volunteers, and donors of Clarehouse — a place so special, you can feel the reverence the moment you walk through the doors.

We are especially proud of how the kids came together to provide 24-hour

care during his final weeks.