



## **Otho Morris Hartgraves**

1933-2020

By [Messenger Staff](#) | Published on September 11, 2020

Otho Morris Hartgraves, 87, passed away at his home in Runaway Bay Aug. 27, 2020. He was surrounded by his loving wife of 61 years, Claudette (Ledbetter) Hartgraves; his daughter, Joni Kaye Hartgraves Latimer and her husband, Joe Latimer; and his son, Dr. Morri Dave Hartgraves and his wife, Letitia Simpson Hartgraves. In good health for his age, he passed away unexpectedly after a catastrophic fall in his home. Morris was born in Maryneal Aug. 9, 1933, to Otho Brice Hartgraves and Mary Inez (Russell) Hartgraves. He attended Highland School and then Divide High School in Nolan where he graduated in 1951. He graduated from McMurry University in Abilene in 1955 with a Bachelor of Science degree in business. He served his country in Korea from 1955 to 1957. He married the love of his life, Claudette Ledbetter, March 28, 1959. He then continued his education and earned his master's degree at McMurry University in 1963.

Mr. Hartgraves first worked in accounting at W.S. Gypsum in Sweetwater. He enjoyed his work and was quickly advancing in the business world. However, he realized his true calling was helping youth. He made a career change and began teaching. He began his career in education as a teacher in Sweetwater before moving to San Angelo with his young family in 1965. He worked as a teacher, coach and principal in San Angelo until his retirement in 1990.

Morris was a lifelong Methodist and a longtime member of Trinity United Methodist Church in San Angelo. He served in many organizations in San Angelo. They ranged from directing activities at the Boys Club to serving on the Cancer Board. He fought hard in getting the first youth recreation centers in San Angelo. He especially enjoyed the time he gave to children in Head Start and to helping individuals in the Adult Literacy Program.

He gave his heart and everything he had to his students in all walks of life. He was a dedicated "Dad" to many of his elementary students. He used his personal pickup truck to take kids to track meets, ball games, banquets, church and other community activities. What would start out with one or two kids needing a ride, would end up being a pickup bed full of children headed to school events or other community events.

Although he was offered many opportunities in business and within the school district, Morris dedicated himself to his grade school students, wanting to offer them a better chance in life. He was such a role model to these students that many said they wished he was their dad. And he wished every child could have a safe, secure life.

It wasn't uncommon for former students of all ages, from teenagers to 60-year-olds, to drop by just wanting to talk to him at school or while he was at home. Students frequently stopped by to ask for his advice and to ask for help with life decisions. He would quietly listen before answering. He loved this interaction with students, and it was never an inconvenience to him. Later in his life, former students, young and old, would ask his children, "Is Mr. Hartgraves your dad? He made a difference in how my life turned out."

Morris was a kind, selfless man. Even though he had to use a cane, one of the last things he did was walk in the woods behind his home to pick wildflowers that he brought home as a surprise for his wife.

No services will be held.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be made to West Texas Boys Ranch or your favorite charity.

Cremation arrangements handled by Alexander's Midway Funeral Home in Springtown. [midwayfuneralhome.com](http://midwayfuneralhome.com).