



Early, Gary Kenyon

1938-2025

[By Lexi Flusche](#)

on February 25, 2025

Gary Kenyon Early, of Bridgeport died Feb. 22, 2025, at the age of 87.

Gary was born Jan. 23, 1938, in Lott to George Luther (Lute) Early and Elsie Clara Denman Early Brazier. Gary attended Bridgeport schools and graduated in 1957. His school years were marked by sports participation, lifelong friendships and an abundance of “tomfoolery”. Some of these antics are legendary and protected by the statute of limitations!

Gary married his High School sweetheart, Wanda Jean Leinart on Aug. 16, 1957. Born to this union was Lana Sue (Early) Heaton, Leslie Bret Early and Gary Clinton Early. At the age of 26, Gary became a follower of Jesus and was baptized in Minneola, KS.

Gary began his career with Natural Gas Pipeline Company in 1958 in Bridgeport and assumed positions in Minneola, KS, Dodge City, KS, Wharton and Nederland.

After taking an early retirement in 1993, Gary and Jean moved back to Bridgeport, designed and built a house and planted 200 pecan trees as a new hobby. Over the next 24 years, Gary was highly sought after by natural gas companies to supervise new plant construction projects, updates and modernization. These short-term jobs were adventurous and meaningful for Gary and Jean, taking them to 28 different locations in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Nebraska, Kansas, New Mexico and Texas. Gary finally retired in 2017.

Survivors include his wife, Jean; daughter, Lana Heaton (Chuck); sons, Bret Early (Kathy), Clint Early (Kate); sister, Jan White; sister-in law, Evelyn Lewis; and 14 grandchildren, Tyson Heaton (Jessica), Tanner Heaton (Katie), Tara Gunelson (Trevor), Travis Heaton, Tami Sartain (Trae), Tucker Heaton, Nathan Early, Nick Early, Madison Jones (Andrew), Kenna Steele (Josiah), Kelsi Dostal (Dylan), Austin Early, Caroline Early and Riley Early. Also surviving are 10 great-grandchildren, McKinli, Journee, Braelyn, Kiana, Eva, Addie, Layton, Morgan, Liam, Vivien and numerous nieces and nephews.

“Pop” blessed his children by emphasizing a good education, adventures with an element of risk and modeling good financial management. He taught his grandchildren important life lessons and humorous stories that will continue on in our memories. Pop loved well and was well loved.

Visitation will be at Hawkins Funeral Home, 1909 9th St, Bridgeport, TX, on Thursday, Feb. 27 with the Family present from 6-8 p.m.

Memorial services will be held at Decatur Church of Christ, 2601 S. FM 51, Decatur, TX, on Friday, Feb. 28 at 10 a.m.

Burial will follow at Eastside Cemetery in Bridgeport.

Memorial gifts may be designated for Ecuador Mission Trip in care of Decatur Church of Christ, 360 Old Reunion Rd., Decatur, Texas 76234.

Hawkins Funeral Home Bridgeport | 940-683-2211 | hawkinsfuneralhome.com