



Mr. Gerald Redden Whitcomb

April 29, 1930 - November 28, 2016

Gerald Redden Whitcomb, age 86 died November 28, 2016 as a result of a fight with cancer.

He and his twin brother George H. were born into the large family of George Louis and Enid Alzine Redden Whitcomb at the family farm south of Cedar Point in the Kansas Flint Hills on April 29, 1930.

He is survived by his wife Kay LaCotts Whitcomb, daughters Susan Whitcomb of Alexandria, VA, and Jane Whitcomb of Maumelle, AR, a younger sister Rhoda Whitcomb of Forney, TX, a younger brother Marcus of Lincoln, NE, and two granddaughters.

After high school, he attended engineering school at Kansas State U where he was a member of Sigma Tau and Steel Ring honorary engineering fraternities and TKE social fraternity. He also served as president of the KSU agricultural engineering student association.

After college, he joined the Air Force and flew fighter aircraft for 6 years, then was a service manager for Layne-Arkansas Company and a field test engineer for Massey-Ferguson and for Oliver Corporation. He taught mechanics at the DeWitt Rice Belt Vocational School, was a customer engineer for IBM and became a certified FAA aircraft mechanic. He taught

FAA Airframe and Powerplant courses at SAU-Tech in Camden, AR, for 5 years and continued to study and teach related technical courses during that time.

In 1966, with little formal training, he accepted a teaching position in science and math at DeWitt High School. He later said that he was never at home in the classroom and would rather be fixing the heating and cooling systems. In spite of that and or reasons not easily explained, he said he felt an intense obligation to every student who walked into his classroom.

In his later years he was appointed chairman of the DeWitt Municipal Airport Commission where he was involved in a number of building projects and in the upkeep of the facilities. In 2014, the municipal airport was renamed Whitcomb Field. He was active in the Lions Club, sang in the Chancel Choir at Methodist Church , taught Sunday School, and continued to fly his "Puddle-Jumper" past age 86 when he needed help to climb into the cockpit.

A memorial service will be December 2, 2016 at 10:00 at the First United Methodist Church in DeWitt with internment in the DeWitt Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the DeWitt First United Methodist Church, 608 S. Grandview Dr., DeWitt, AR 72042 or to Habitat for Humanity, P.O. Box 6439, Americus, GA, one of many organizations which he helped to support.

Cremation arrangements by Essex Funeral Home. www.essexfuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall

DT

“ *My condolences to the family. He will be missed by our entire town ..*

Debbie Trussell - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM

AW

“ *Mr. Whitcomb was my teacher at Dewitt high school. He not only taught me about science and computers but also life skills. I loved listening to his stories. He will be missed around town. Prayers for his family.*

Amy Watkins - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM

BF

“ *Gerry and I were roommates for two weeks in Hunstville, AL for a NASA workshop for teachers. I could have had a private room but chose not to; one of the best decisions I made in my life. Though we were only together for two weeks and I was 24 years his junior we bonded and exchanged Christmas letters every year since we met in 1990. I remember him tightening screws at the NASA facility with the screwdriver he carried in his pocket protector as though it were the most normal thing to do ever. I was just looking for one of his letters to get his address for this years letter exchange when I ran across this. Makes me very sad to know all of us who will miss him but gloriously happy to know he has a perfect body and is in a better place.*

Bob Feurer - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM

TB

“ *What an amazing man. He gave so many of us not only a love of science, but the ability to think and question. His personality was contagious and his love for his students amazing. He will be greatly missed.*

Tressie Britton - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM

CH

“ *Many prayers for family and friends of Mr. Whitcomb. He was such sweet man that loved all. I'm so proud to had him as teacher at DeWitt High School. If we had more teachers like Mr. Whitcomb we would never have worry about our kids education. If he knew you learned differently from others that did not stop him, Mr. Whitcomb was so well rounded, he could teach from any angle! Mr. Whitcomb could sure make world spin in my eyes and he will be greatly missed! RIP Mr. Whitcomb!*

CHARLENE HARRIS - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM

JP

“ *So sorry to hear of Jerry's death. Know that all are in my thoughts and prayers as you go through this time of grief. I remember Jerry with fondness and thought a lot of him. My sincere sympathy is with you all. Will be thinking of you as you go through the memorial service.*

Joey Pedigo - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM

NR

“ *God's speed and tail winds Gerald. Peace*

Norman Faith Jr. MSGT USAF Ret. - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM

SA

“ *Mr. Whitcomb was by far the best and smartest teacher i ever had. His most important message was to think for yourself. Miss you Sir.*

Steve Allen - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM

MG

“ *My Whitcomb wasn't only one of my favorite teachers he was my favorite neighbor. I have fond memories of trick or treating at their house and basically growing up around him and his family. My Dad worked with him at the High School and I would visit when I went out with him to grade papers. He will be sorely missed. I still remember some of his sayings that make me laugh like, "Slicker than snot on a broomstick handle." I'll have to remember to use that one with my kids.*

Mary Gordon - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM

GG

“ *I will never forget the quirky little remarks that he would say to our class. He told us once to keep our "hamburger hooks" off of something on his desk and smiled at us and the entire class broke into laughter. He was a very caring and dedicated teacher. He gave me a grade of a D-- on a Geometry test one time and when I asked why the two minuses, he replied "because you were trying so hard in class, it was the only way to give you a passing grade..." He will be missed.*

Greg Griffie - April 27, 2018 at 12:58 PM