



## Rex D. Gardner

September 15, 1938 - November 4, 2019

Rex Derosé Gardner of Grove, Oklahoma passed away on Monday, November 4, 2019 at The Cancer Treatment Centers of America-Tulsa. He was in the presence of his loving family.

He was diagnosed initially with lung cancer and shortly after arriving at the Cancer Treatment Center, he was also diagnosed with adenocarcinoma. Facing his foe with grace, courage and dignity, he spent the last 3 weeks battling this implacable disease. He bravely chose to forego treatment and went into Palliative Care at the Cancer Treatment Center. His family would like to thank the entire staff at the Cancer Treatment Centers of America-Tulsa for their kindness, compassion and care that Rex received.

Rex was born in Wichita, Kansas September 15, 1938 and grew up in Murdock, Kansas. He was the son of Samuel Burch Gardner and Melva Erline Cheatum Gardner. He graduated from Kingman High School in 1956. Following high school, he went on Hutchinson Community College, where he studied Mechanical Engineering for one year prior to joining the military.

In 1958, Rex enlisted in the U.S. Army Corps and proudly served his country for 3 years serving as a Staff Drill Sergeant in Munich, Germany. He received an award for Expert (Carbine) and the Good Conduct Medal. While Rex was invited to attend West Point Military Academy to continue his education, he chose to return home to his family.

On August 31, 1960, Rex married the love of his life, Judy Brown in Newkirk,

Oklahoma. The couple made their home in Kingman, Kansas for 13 years where he managed Woolwine's Auto Parts. In 1973, he was transferred to Emporia, Kansas as Operation's Manager of Woolwine's. The couple spent many years in Emporia, Kansas, raising their children. They moved to Stilwell, Kansas where Rex worked for CarQuest Auto Parts Distribution for 15 years. Rex and Judy also owned and operated B & G Auto in Ottawa, Kansas for 5 years. Upon his retirement from CarQuest, he and Judy moved to Grove, Oklahoma where he resided until his untimely death. Judy remains in Grove. Rex was an avid car enthusiastic from a young age. He enjoyed building and collecting drag and antique cars. In the 1970's, he began drag racing with the National Hot Rod Association. He travelled the country, winning many races, far too many to count. He went from drag racing to rallying. In 1984, he entered the Great Race to rally his 1935 Ford Coupe from California to Indiana. He continued to familiarize himself with the rallying technique and went on to win the Great Race back to back in 1998 and 1999 with Gary Kuck as his navigator. He continued to be an active participant in the Great Race for the past 35 years. From 2009-2019, Rex rallied with his grandson Kolton Hastert as his navigator. Rex was considered a Grand Champion and scored in the top 10 during many Great Races. He was known for his sense of humor and contagious laughter among his friends.

In 2005, Rex, along with long-time friends, Charlie McKinney and Vic Thompson, founded VCRA – Vintage Car Rally Association. The VCRA is a non-for-profit organization that raises funds for children on the autism spectrum. This organization was founded by these three men due to their love for rallying and also out of the love Rex had for his grandson, Justyce Gardner, who was diagnosed with autism in 1999. To date, the VCRA has raised and donated \$970,000 to schools around the United States. The final VCRA rally will be held in 2020. The hope is to accomplish their goal of raising more than \$1 million dollars.

Rex is preceded in death by his parents, Samuel and Melva Gardner and his

son-in-law, Jerry Hastert.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Judy Gardner; daughters; Tammy Brown, Tarri Hastert and Tonia Carver and husband, Ray; siblings; Judy Olszewski and Jack Gardner; grandchildren; Todd Brown, Erika Brown, Ashlyn Brown, Kolton Hastert, Justyce Gardner and Kenedy Gardner; great grandchildren; Koryn Garcia, Katelynn Garcia and Eleanor Brown; as well as many nieces and one nephew.

A gathering for friends and family will be held at 10am Saturday, November 16, 2019, followed by funeral services at 11am, both at Nichols-Stephens Funeral & Cremation Services. A reception will immediately follow the service at the VFW Post 8380. And of course, we will have a Chinese buffet!

The family requests donation be made in Rex's memory to the: 2020 VCRA Fund, 1619 Buffalo Drive, Grove, OK 74344.

Arrangements entrusted to Nichols-Stephens Funeral & Cremation Services, Grove, Oklahoma.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV **16**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Nichols-Stephens Funeral and Cremation Service  
10201 U.S. Highway 59  
Grove, OK 74344  
(918) 786-6761  
nicholsfunerals@yahoo.com

## Funeral Service

NOV **16**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Nichols-Stephens Funeral and Cremation Service  
10201 U.S. Highway 59  
Grove, OK 74344  
(918) 786-6761  
nicholsfunerals@yahoo.com

# Tribute Wall



“ Nichols Funeral & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Rex D. Gardner



Nichols-Stephens Funeral & Cremation Services - November 15, 2019 at 12:36 PM

JC

Great man. Going to miss seeing him when we go to grove, fin to be around. God speed. Rip

Jimmie Cummings - November 23, 2019 at 09:57 AM



“ Rex D. Gardner

October 04, 2023 at 03:23 PM

JC

“ James C. purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Rex D. Gardner.



James C. - November 15, 2019 at 05:09 PM

WM

“ *With Love, David & Cheryl McGuire purchased the Sentimental Dreams for the family of Rex D. Gardner.*



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**With Love, David & Cheryl McGuire** - November 15, 2019 at 09:20 AM

JS

“ *Jeff Stumb purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of Rex D. Gardner.*



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**Jeff Stumb** - November 13, 2019 at 04:28 PM

JG

“ *Judy, so sorry to hear about Rex, we will call later when I can get a number,  
Love and prayers,  
John and Bev Gilligan & Family*

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**John Gilligan** - November 13, 2019 at 04:15 PM

AH

“ *All your friends at Hagerty purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Rex D. Gardner.*



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**All your friends at Hagerty** - November 12, 2019 at 04:57 PM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Rex D. Gardner.*



November 12, 2019 at 09:24 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Rex D. Gardner.*



November 11, 2019 at 11:48 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Rex D. Gardner.*



November 11, 2019 at 03:29 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Rex D. Gardner.*



November 11, 2019 at 01:31 PM

TG

“ *Doing what he loved!! Love you and miss you so much, dad!* ”



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**Tonia Gardner-Carver** - November 09, 2019 at 02:03 PM

SH

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album* ”



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**Steve Hedke** - November 09, 2019 at 01:15 PM



“ *Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Rex D. Gardner.* ”



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November 09, 2019 at 09:35 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Rex D. Gardner.* ”



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November 09, 2019 at 07:34 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Rex D. Gardner.



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November 08, 2019 at 02:26 PM