



## Dr. Vernon L. Odom

October 15, 1924 - September 30, 2022

Vernon Lewis Odom, Ed.D., took his last breath on Friday evening, September 30, 2022, with family attending. He's now rejoicing in Heaven, receiving deserved "well done's" from his Lord and savior Jesus Christ, and having a joyous reunion with his wife of 71 years, Grace, who got there a couple of years earlier.

Services are scheduled for Saturday, October 15 at 1:00 PM (which would have been his 98th birthday), in the chapel of Sanders Funeral Home of Lubbock, with viewing 30 minutes beforehand.

Vernon was intelligent, energetic, and caring. Born in 1924 in Breckenridge, TX, his family later moved to the Kermit area. His father worked largely in a carbon black plant. For unclear reasons, Vernon graduated from Monahans High School early, at 16. He then drove a delivery truck for RC Cola.

He volunteered for WWII, becoming a radio operator in the Army Air Corps, at airstrips in the Pacific, and advancing to staff sergeant. His promotion recommendation to that rank reads in part: "He has contributed suggestions as to details of message handling and arrangement of certain equipment in the radio room which have proved valuable and time-saving." (So even back then, he was looking for ways to do things better. This trait also proved valuable when he was running the bookstore.) While on a convoy ship to

liberate the Philippines, he narrowly survived a kamikaze attack.

College had never entered his mind, until an army buddy advised it. He used the G.I. Bill to enroll at Oklahoma Baptist University, where he got a teaching degree, while playing on the softball team (and once pitching a no-hitter).

He also spent time in Lubbock, where he met Norma Grace Reid when he agreed to help her with grocery shopping for a church social. She was pursuing a teaching degree at Texas Tech. For a year after she graduated, he lent her his car to get to her teaching job in Ralls, while he hitchhiked from Oklahoma to see her. They married on August 12, 1949. They honeymooned in a mountain log cabin her parents had built in the 1930s, near Tres Ritos, NM, between Taos and Santa Fe. It had no running water, and an outhouse up the hill. He went sight unseen.

They settled in Lubbock (after his final year in Shawnee, OK), attended the First Baptist Church, and taught in Lubbock schools. Vernon was guidance counselor at Lubbock High School while Buddy Holly was there. Later Vernon joined the Texas Education Agency. He made some extra money doing photography, and even had a dedicated darkroom in the house to develop and print photos. He taught his kids how to do it too.

After a few years, Vernon took a work hiatus to earn a doctorate in education at Texas Tech, to secure a position as Regional Director of the American College Testing Program. Still based in Lubbock, this job entailed much travel, by road and air, around his 5-state region.

Later, the family joined Trinity Church in Lubbock. Grace and Vernon taught Sunday School. They started to sense the need for a Christian bookstore that would carry a fuller line of merchandise than was available in Lubbock. They opened Good News Book Store on 34th St. Grace ran it alone at first; later

Vernon left his job and they ran it together. This was the start of his "2nd career." It grew to a major operation, especially after moving to 50th St.

Vernon was an elder at Trinity Church for some years. When Trinity Christian School was created, he used his broad education experience to make sure it got a highly qualified leader, Joyce Herron.

The family's lifelong love of the mountains often took them back to the cabin -- for hiking, skiing, fishing, or just relaxing. Around 1958, indoor plumbing was added; and in the 1980s the family sold the old cabin and built a new one a few miles up the road. He loved fly fishing for trout. He would always fish with two flies, and once, he caught two fish simultaneously that way.

Even in his 60s, Vernon ascended Jicarita Peak (the 3rd highest in New Mexico) with the family, including a grandson. And he was skiing into his 70s.

In the late 1980s they sold the bookstore and "retired," residing largely in the new cabin, and traveling. Vernon also dabbled a bit in farming. He still owned one piece of farmland until he died. One group trip took them to southernmost Mexico, to build a church. While there they were struck by the rather primitive medical care, and a conviction started that led to their building a free clinic near Cintalapa (in Chiapas, the poorest state in Mexico). This was Vernon's "3rd career."

The clinic grew to a campus with several buildings. For about 20 years they traveled back and forth, taking donated equipment, supplies (including thousands of eyeglasses), and medicines there; and sponsoring campaigns where visiting doctors performed thousands of surgeries for cataracts, cleft palates, etc. Often they had to sneak donated medical supplies across the border. The family marveled at the foolishness of the Mexican government's

policies, the cloak-and-dagger exploits often needed to get around their import barriers, and the primitiveness of their medical system.

On some occasions Vernon and Grace were featured in the Lubbock paper -- especially the emergency during which a visiting surgeon reattached a boy's severed thumb, with online real-time guidance from a specialist in Lubbock. The Lubbock City Council also honored them in a ceremony for the work in Mexico. Both Grace and Vernon said this period was the most rewarding -- and important -- portion of their lives.

In 2013 they moved to Carillon Senior Living. Their 70th anniversary was a joyous occasion for their large extended family to get together. In 2021 Vernon moved to Carillon's assisted living section. In 2022, after hitting his head in a fall that caused a brain bleed, he moved to their nursing facility, Carillon House.

The family wishes to thank Carillon and American Star Hospice for the loving care shown to our dad during his last year.

Vernon was preceded in death by his wife Grace Odom of Lubbock, parents Henry and Murlin Odom of Kermit, TX, and brothers Cecil Odom and Charles Rayford Odom. He is survived by sons Warren Odom (Lubbock), with wife Tammy (Hicks), David Odom (Elgin, TX), with wife Paula Smyth, and Milton Odom (Tulsa, OK), with wife Barbie (Livingston), 7 grandchildren (Brandi Walker, Travis Odom, Shannon Ronit Payne, Jayme Ficken, Joseph Odom, Wesley Odom, Chad Odom), 3 step-grandchildren (Angela Haywood, Sheila Mika, John Dirickson), 14 great-grandchildren, 6 step-great-grandchildren, and 5 step-great-great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorials to the Alzheimer's Association ([alz.org](http://alz.org)), or For Her Women's Medical Services (a free non-

abortion clinic - forherlubbock.com).

# Cemetery Details

## City of Lubbock Cemetery

2011 E 31st Street  
Lubbock, TX 79404

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

OCT **15**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Sanders Memorial Chapel  
1420 Main Street  
Lubbock, TX 79401

## Graveside Service

OCT **15**. 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM (CT)

City of Lubbock Cemetery  
2011 E 31st Street  
Lubbock, TX 79404

# Tribute Wall



“ Sanders Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Dr. Vernon L. Odom

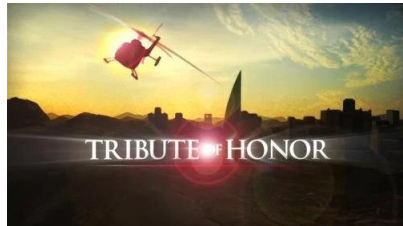


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**Sanders Funeral Home** - October 15, 2022 at 01:47 PM



“ Sanders Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Vernon L. Odom



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**Sanders Funeral Home** - October 12, 2022 at 10:15 AM



“ Vernon, an amazing man, who lived his life as a true servant of God. He will be missed greatly. Sincere sympathy, Theresa and Tommy Wallace

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**Theresa and Tommy Wallace** - October 15, 2022 at 12:38 PM



“ 22 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



Sanders Funeral Home - October 12, 2022 at 10:12 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *LifeTributes*



Sanders Funeral Home - October 10, 2022 at 04:14 PM



“ 71 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



Sanders Funeral Home - October 10, 2022 at 02:24 PM

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“ *Roger Reid purchased the Sweet Tenderness for the family of Dr. Vernon L. Odom.*



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**Roger Reid** - October 10, 2022 at 10:59 AM