



## Larry Dean Wilks

January 8, 1955 - August 30, 2011

Larry Dean Wilks, age 56, of Springfield died Tuesday, August 30, 2011. Funeral services will be conducted Saturday, September 3rd at First United Methodist Church at 1:00 pm. Visitation will be held at the church on Friday, September 2nd from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm and Saturday the 3rd from 10:00 am until the service at 1:00 pm. Following the service, interment will be at Memorial Gardens. Mr. Wilks was born January 8, 1955 at Fort Jackson in South Carolina to the late Ray Dean Wilks and Jean Garrett Wilks. He grew up on the family farm, raising tobacco and working in his parents' grocery stores. He graduated from East Robertson High School in 1973. He attended the University of Tennessee at Knoxville where he received his B.S. in Agricultural Economics in 1977 and his Doctorate of Jurisprudence in 1980. He was admitted to practice law in 1981. Mr. Wilks began his legal career as an associate at Mayo & Norris in Nashville but always wanted to come "home" to practice in Springfield, which he did for nearly 30 years. From 1982 to 1984, he was a solo practitioner, and in 1984 began a partnership as Walton, Jones & Wilks, thereafter known as Jones & Wilks, until 1989. From 1989 until his death, he was in private practice as The Law Offices of Larry D. Wilks on the square in Springfield. Mr. Wilks received numerous honors and served his community and the legal profession in many ways throughout his career as a trial attorney. In 2006, Mr. Wilks was chosen to serve as President of the Tennessee Bar Association. He also served as Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer 1999-2003; Board of Governors Member 1991-2008; Co-Chair,

Leadership Law 2003-2004 and 2008-2010; Young Lawyers Division Lifetime Fellow; and President of the TBA YLD, as well as Editor of the Quarterly (1987-1988). He was also a member of the Southern Conference of Bar Presidents. Mr. Wilks often said one of his proudest achievements was being “the lawyer to the lawyers” by serving as Assistant General Counsel and General Counsel to the TBA from 1994 to 1999. He served on the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education and Specialization and was a member of the Tennessee and Nashville Bar Foundations, Tennessee and American Associations for Justice, the National and Tennessee Associations of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the Association of Trial Lawyers of America President’s Club, as well as other professional organizations. He served on the Tennessee Supreme Court Board of Professional Responsibility and Tennessee Association for Justice (Board of Governors). He was President of the Robertson County Bar from 1993 to 1996. In addition, he served as Chairman of the Robertson County Democratic Party from 1986 to 1993 and President of the Robertson County University of Tennessee Alumni Association from 2003 to 2004. He joined the University of Tennessee President’s Club in 1987. Mr. Wilks was also a Director at Commerce Union Bank, Springfield. His honors include American Trial Lawyers Association Top 100 Lawyers (2010), Mid-South Super Lawyers (2009), Bar Registry of Preeminent Lawyers (2004-2011), and Best Lawyers in America (2006-2011). Of all these great successes, his pride and joy were his sons, John and Adam. Mr. Wilks is survived by his wife of 30 years, Jan McIlwain Wilks, and their sons, John Ray and Adam Garrett; mother, Jean Garrett Wilks of Orlinda; a brother, Tom (Janis) Wilks of Springfield; brother-in-law, Steven (Beth) McIlwain of Palm Bay, FL; sisters-in-law, Lisa Merritt and Gina (Robert) Trent, both of Nashville; nephews, Brad, Ross, and Alec Wilks, Al Merritt, Terrell and Andy McIlwain, Alex and Erik Trent; nieces, Sarah Merritt Wright and McKenzie Trent. In addition to his father, he was preceded in death by his son, Benjamin Dean Wilks. Brad Wilks, Ross Wilks, Alec Wilks, Al Merritt, Alex Trent, Erik Trent, John “Doc” Johnston, and Bill McKinney will serve as pall

bearers. The members of the Robertson County Bar Association will serve as honorary pall bearers. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to the following: Tennessee Judicial Conference Foundation Larry Wilks Memorial Fund, C/O Gary Wade, Justice, Tennessee Supreme Court, PO Box 444, Knoxville, TN 37901; First United Methodist Church, Springfield; or Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Orlinda.

Austin & Bell Funeral Home in Springfield is in charge of these arrangements.  
AUSTIN & BELL FUNERAL HOME- 509 WALNUT STREET, SPRINGFIELD,  
TN (615) 384-1000

# Tribute Wall

RK

“ *Larry was one of the greatest of our UT law school class of 1980. Ironically, my son, George Hatcher, became a friend of the family through relationships in Springfield TN--little league sports, etc. I kept up with Larry through George for many years. Peace be with you and the family during this difficult time and thereafter.*

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**Rose Ann Kile** - September 06, 2011 at 11:41 AM

AW

“ *Jan and Sons,  
Hirsch and I are saddened to learn of the loss of Larry. Your family and your community have lost a wonderful human being.  
Love, Cousin Amelia and Hirsch*

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**Amelia and Hirsch Wierzbicki** - September 03, 2011 at 09:40 AM

SD

“ *Larry Dean Wilks*

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**Sue Drake** - September 02, 2011 at 10:01 PM

BH

“ *Dear Jan, Ms. Jean and sons,  
I am so sorry to hear about Larry. He defines the words southern gentleman. My thoughts are with all of you.  
sincerely,  
Beth Wiggins Hall class of 1973*

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**Beth Hall** - September 02, 2011 at 08:28 PM

MB

“ Jan,  
*I know it's been many years since I've seen you but I wanted to offer my sincerest condolences. I know no words can really ease the pain you and your family are feeling but know that many of us are thinking of you.*

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**Mike Bell** - September 02, 2011 at 07:39 PM

JC

“ *I'm so sorry to hear of the death of your loved one. I am Lisa Merritt's pastor at Hillcrest United Methodist Church in Nashville. Our church is in prayer with you and your family in this time of grief and loss. God bless you, James Cole*

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**James Cole** - September 02, 2011 at 03:05 PM

CL

“ *Jan, John and Adam - I am praying for you during this great time of loss. I know what a great dad and husband Larry was and that you will miss him deeply.  
Love Cousin Cindy*

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**Cindy Lawrence** - September 02, 2011 at 02:09 PM

DB

“ *I am so sorry to hear of your loss. May God comfort you and your sons during this time of sorrow. Will continue to prayer for you!  
Love, Donna Banks Brown Class of '75*

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**Donna Banks Brown** - September 02, 2011 at 12:00 AM

GD

“ Jan, I am so sorry for yours and your sons loss. Please know that I will keep you and your family in my thoughts and prayers through this difficult time.

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**Gail Wells Duncan** - September 01, 2011 at 10:43 PM

VF

“ Deatr Jan and Family: I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Please know that I will be keeping you and your family in my thoughts and prayers.

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**Vickie A. Farrar** - September 01, 2011 at 08:03 PM

SG

“ When we were 12 yrs. old, Larry stepped out to the front of the church and gave his life to the Lord. Seeing him gave me the courage to follow and do the same.  
Thank you for your big brother love. sue ann

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**Sue Ann Groves** - September 01, 2011 at 08:02 PM

JG

“ Dear Jan, I am so very sorry to hear of your loss. I am praying for you and your sons to find the strength to carry on in your husband/father's absence. In reading about his life, I know you all were extremely proud of him...please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. Love you, Janice Myers Goins

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**Janice Myers Goins** - September 01, 2011 at 05:29 PM

KE

“ Larry was in my law school class. He was then, and remained, the person who you wanted to talk to first when you entered a room. He always made me feel that he was so genuinely happy to see me. What a great gift. His passing diminishes us.

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**Karen Ellis** - September 01, 2011 at 10:48 AM

CW

“ We were so very sorry to hear the news. We always thought very highly of him. Our families thoughts and prayers go with you.

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**Clint Willis** - August 31, 2011 at 10:00 PM

PG

“ Dear Jan, We are so sorry for your loss. Our prayers are with you and your sons. I hope you can find some solace in the heartfelt condolences of those of us thinking of you. I hope that words of comfort rest gently upon your heart, and in time may they become words of healing. Love, Penney and Garry Gilliland

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**Penney and Garry Gilliland** - August 31, 2011 at 07:00 PM