



## George Pleasant Willis III

May 26, 1936 - May 19, 2023

George Pleasant Willis, III, 86, of El Campo, passed away Friday, May 19, 2023. He was born May 26, 1936, in El Campo to George Jr. and Catherine Moragne Willis.

George graduated from El Campo High School in 1954, and liked to brag that he won the “Ugliest Boy” contest his senior year, but what he enjoyed omitting was the fact that this was a popularity award and not, in fact, one judging his looks. He majored in Spanish at Amherst College in Massachusetts, started his legal education at Vanderbilt and completed his law degree at The University of Texas at Austin in 1960. George was a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon “DEKE” fraternity and remained a lifelong fan of the Longhorns. After serving in the United States Army, George followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather practicing law from 1961 until recently as part of Willis & Willis. The firm opened in 1904, shortly before the City of El Campo was chartered. In 2010, UT Law honored George as a “50-year Lawyer.”

With a photographic memory, George could cite statutes verbatim, recite poetry, or sing entire songs unprompted. He mastered the art of assigning chores to those around him, but also maintained clear boundaries when it came to chores and activities by announcing upon completion that everyone was “on free time.”

Among some of his favorite tales from his childhood, he would recall an unsuccessful dynamite attempt to change the course of the Colorado River, swapping school busses, borrowing a police car, and a two-month long trip to Europe for the Boy Scout World Jamboree in the early 1950s. George earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Most days after work, with a “Fast Eddie” cocktail in his infamous, grungy mug, George visited the family farm just outside of town where he monitored the cattle and planted an obscene amount of garden okra which he would say was “just about the right amount.” Hunting quail, ducks, doves, and occasionally deer, topped his list of favorite activities along with fishing in and around Caranachua Bay and in Louisiana. He and Gwen travelled routinely with both friends and family to New Orleans and the South of France interspersed with many other destinations in the states and abroad.

George took his role as “Papa” to heart by picking up the grandkids several afternoons each week starting at about age six months teaching each of them to swim. Alternately, he took them for a ride to the farm stopping for a snack and lotto tickets along the way and on many a Saturday morning, making them “pankies.”

Quick-witted and highly intelligent, George enjoyed good food (in particular Blue Bell ice cream, fresh crabs, and a taste of almost anything), wine, cooking, dining out, music, gambling, and continuously reading. Known for his numerous dry, sometimes cryptic remarks, George could equally confuse people or make them laugh, but many times only later when they finally “got it.” He liked to show up early for events or parties which then allowed him to bow out early for the night. He worked nearly every day at his office, took helping others to heart, and genuinely cared about his clients.

He was preceded in death by his parents, brother J. Bruce Willis, niece Stephanie Durrance, and his former spouse and mother of his children Gail

Stanton Willis. He is survived by his beloved wife of 37 years, Gwen Dohner Willis, daughter Nicole Ruth Willis of Houston, son George Willis IV and wife Holly of El Campo, grandchildren Malia Noel Willis, Ivy Victoria Willis, Nathan George Willis, and a very important little guy named Evan Durrance. He also is survived by his sister Diana Willis Mattingly and husband Joe of Houston, and many nieces and nephews.

The family will celebrate George's life at a private event in June.

It would honor George for memorials to be made to the Boys & Girls Club of El Campo, the Library, Hospice, any local Boy Scout Troop, or your favorite charity.

# Tribute Wall

AB

“ *Mr. Willis was a kind, generous, soft spoken and had a charitable heart and always smiled with a twinkle in his eyes. This is how we remember Mr. Willis. He was a friend to the Beltran family the old generation my father in law and when we married he inherited Augie and our family. He was more than a lawyer he was a friend. We will miss you Mr. Willis, may you rest in peace and may the perpetual light shine upon you.* ”



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**Augie & Terri Beltran** - May 26, 2023 at 12:24 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of George Pleasant Willis III.* ”



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May 23, 2023 at 12:36 PM

MS

“ *Martin Strarup lit a candle in memory of George Pleasant Willis III* ”



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**Martin Strarup** - May 23, 2023 at 08:47 AM

AA

“ *Aileen Avendano lit a candle in memory of George Pleasant Willis III*



**Aileen Avendano** - May 22, 2023 at 11:27 AM

CT

“ *Carol Tomlinson lit a candle in memory of George Pleasant Willis III*



**Carol Tomlinson** - May 22, 2023 at 09:30 AM

MB

“ *Mary Jo Beery lit a candle in memory of George Pleasant Willis III*



**Mary Jo Beery** - May 20, 2023 at 10:41 PM

LM

“ *Linda John Merck lit a candle in memory of George Pleasant Willis III*



**Linda John Merck** - May 20, 2023 at 08:14 PM

LM

*Our deepest sympathy. John and Linda Merck*

Linda John Merck - May 20, 2023 at 08:15 PM

SH

“ Sheldon & Karen Holub lit a candle in memory of George Pleasant Willis III



Sheldon & Karen Holub - May 20, 2023 at 05:52 PM

TK

“ Nicole and George my sincerest condolences upon learning of the passing of your father. Strength and resilience during your time of mourning. Todd W Kocian Rockport TX. 🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸

Todd W Kocian - May 20, 2023 at 01:46 PM

DC

“ George was always first to say hello how are you. Always welcoming and warm. He will be missed.

David Caldwell - May 20, 2023 at 09:22 AM

PT

“ Pat Taylor lit a candle in memory of George Pleasant Willis III



Pat Taylor - May 19, 2023 at 07:42 PM

BW

“ Our condolences and expression of sympathy go out to the Willis Family  
Mr. Willis was a great friend and good lawyer. To the Willis Family-  
You are  
in our thoughts and prayers.  
Bernice & Larry Wagner

Bernice Wagner - May 19, 2023 at 06:55 PM

SS

“ Sandra Stary lit a candle in memory of  
George Pleasant Willis III



Sandra Stary - May 19, 2023 at 03:23 PM

AC

“ My condolences to the family of George Willis a might fine man and  
a good lawyer Rest In Peace Mr Willis the door from heaven has  
open for you now you are home to rest you will be miss Sir.you are  
gone but not forgotten

Anita Contreras - May 19, 2023 at 03:14 PM

MG

“ Our condolences to Mr Willis family  
Fragoso Family ❤️



Martina Gonzales - May 19, 2023 at 02:08 PM

WO

“ *Our Condolences to the Willis Family.*



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**Wharton Co District Clerk's Office** - May 19, 2023 at 01:58 PM