

Grapeland
messenger

July 27, 2000

Services Held Tuesday For Jay Cliff Gray

Funeral services for Mr. Jay Cliff Gray, age 88, of Grapeland were held Tuesday, July 25, in the First United Methodist Church, Grapeland, with Rev. Keith Broyles officiating. Burial was in the Centerville Cemetery, Centerville, under the direction of Bailey & Foster Funeral Home.

Pallbearers were Carol Owens, W. E. Musick, Walter Scott, Lloyd Chiles, W. A. Smart and T. P. Cutler.

Jay Cliff Gray, retired attorney, died Sunday, July 23, 2000, at the Hospice House Place in Tyler of leukemia. He was born on August 26, 1911, in Ashtabula, Ohio, to Laura Moody Gray and Grant Gray, the second son of three children. He graduated from Ashtabula High School in 1929, then attended Ohio State University and Texas A&M. During the Great Depression he became involved in working for progressive causes, mainly the protection of the working man and working woman. He also moved to the Houston Heights and started working at the Sinclair Oil Refinery Lawndale Plant as a pipefitter. He was a member of Pipefitter's Local 211 and Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 4-227.

In 1942, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, 483rd Bombardment Group, and commenced an 18-month tour of duty including Italy and a citation in the American Theater of War for German anti-sub activities at Eglin AFB, Florida. He rose to the position of Staff Sergeant, and was very valuable to the war effort as a Norden bombsight mechanic.

On July 27, 1947, he married Betty McEachern, formerly of Centerville, in Jewett, Texas. Their first daughter, Karen Elizabeth Gray, arrived in 1948. He started night school at the Downtown YMCA and was elected president of the South Texas College of Law Class of 1951, and founded the Student

Bar Association there. After graduation he started practicing law at Pasadena, Texas, in General Civil, Family, Probate and Tax Law. His second daughter, Laura Sharon Gray, arrived in 1955. He was active in local & state Democratic politics. Retired from Sinclair Oil Co. after 30 years of faithful service in 1966.

In the 1990s, he retired from the practice of law and moved to Grapeland with his wife. Continuing his pattern of community service, he became active with the Grapeland Senior Citizens Center and helped in fund-raising for the organization. He served as the organization's president for a number of years. His keen observations and dry wit will be greatly missed. His other interests were art museums and listening to music, especially classical and jazz.

He was predeceased by his parents, his elder daughter, Karen Elizabeth Gray, in 1990, and his sister, Lena Lucile Hotchkiss of Ashtabula, Ohio, in 1995.

Survivors include his wife of 53 years, Betty Gray of Grapeland; daughter, Laura Sharon Gray of Houston; granddaughter, Laura Marissa Hutchinson of Houston; and a brother and sister-in-law, Oren and Eleanor Gray of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.