

Owen Wherrett, 93

June 2, 1910 - Sept. 18, 2003

HARLAN – Owen Ellis Wherrett was born June 2, 1910, in Chicago, IL, to Howard W. and Elsa Ida Sebastian Wherrett. He attended grade and high schools in Chicago, graduating from Carl Shurz High School in 1929. He graduated from Northwestern University with a B.S. in education in 1935, and from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Th.B. in 1936, a B.D. in 1937, A Th.M. in 1942, and M.Div. in 1972. He was ordained to the Christian ministry June 23, 1937, at the Albany Park Baptist Church in Chicago. He began his ministry in 1936 with a student pastorate in Western Springs, IL. His first full-time pastorates included the First Baptist Church of Lebanon, OH (1937-1943), First Baptist Church of Green Bay, WI (1943-1945), and Park Place Baptist Church of Aurora, IL (1945-1957). While in Aurora, he contracted polio and was expected to die. Because he lived, he was convinced that God had spared him for a purpose. Owen determined that the Lord wanted him to take his considerable education and experience and use it in small, possibly rural churches, which led him to serve the Community Baptist Church of Truman, MN (1957-1966) and Merrills Grove Baptist Church of Audubon (1966-1976). While at Merrills Grove, the American Baptist Convention awarded him the "Outstanding Work in Town and Country" award. Following his retirement in 1976, he began to work as in Interim Pastor, serving the First Baptist Church of Albert Lea, MN; Lincoln Park Baptist Church in Cincinnati, OH; Christ Baptist Church of Brookville, OH; First Baptist Church of Marshall, MI; First Baptist Church of Atlantic; Merrills Grove Baptist Church of Audubon; and First Baptist Church of Harlan. He preached his last sermon on his 54th anniversary of his ordination, June 23, 1991.



Owen married Elva Marjorie Krauss May 30, 1934, in Chicago, IL. They had three children, Marjorie Elva, Robert Owen and James Arthur. They celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary shortly before her death June 25, 1974.

Oct. 26, 1976, he married Helen Frances Skidmore Ullman in Lebanon, OH. They were married over 18 years before her death Jan. 9, 1995. He died Sept. 18, 2003, at Elm Crest Retirement Community at age 93 years, three months and 16 days.

Owen was preceded in death by his wives, Elva and Helen; his parents; and his brothers, Howard and Joseph Wherrett. He is survived by his children, Marjorie (Ernest) Plagman of Irwin; Robert Wherrett of Orlando, FL; James (Mary) Wherrett of Omaha, NE; two stepchildren, Mary (Gary) Moden of Athens, OH; Robert (Beverly) Ullman of Ashburn, VA; 12 grandchildren, Larry (Sarah) Plagman of Carson; Arleatta (Dean) Bartelson of Irwin; Nancy Jean (Keith) Nelson of Sturgis, SD; Patrick (Robin) Plagman of Gretna, NE; Nancy Ann Plagman of Coon Rapids, MN; Penny (Robert) Flint of Omaha, NE; Thomas Wherrett of Vancouver, British Columbia; Karen Wherrett of Omaha, NE; Erik Moden of Athens, OH; Alex Moden of Athens, OH; James (Ildra) Ullman of Norway; 11 great-grandchildren; and a sister-in-law, Mary Wherrett of Tucson, AZ.

Funeral services were held Sept. 23, 2003, at the First Baptist Church in Harlan, with Rev. Gundar Lamberts officiating. Burial was in the Merrills Grove Cemetery in Fiscus, with Robert Burton, James Nelson, Rowland Burton, Paul Nelson, Fred Nelson and Randall Nelson casket bearers, Patuley Jones Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.