



## Dr Gale Ion Harris

August 7, 1935 - April 16, 2024

Dr. Gale Ion Harris avid learner and researcher passed away at his home in East Lansing, Michigan, Tuesday April 16, 2024, at the age of 88 years surrounded by his family. Gale was born to Albert Ion and Carmen Angeline (Waters) Harris in Arlington, California, August 7, 1935. Two brothers shared his life: Leaman Don, married Judith Komives; and Rex Layne, married Carol Parry.

Gale married Bonnie Jean Hazlett in Cunningham, Kansas, March 31, 1956, the daughter of Theodore and Edith (Shafer) Hazlett. They had two children Gay laJean, married to Fred Goffnet, and Nathan Ward. Gay has given them three grandchildren: Andrew, married to Mary Schmidt; Brooke, married to Castle Trees; and Courtney. Andrew has given them a great-grandchild, Ruth Maureen.

Gale's academic career began at the Tully School, a one-room country schoolhouse near Cunningham, Kansas, where he excelled by graduating with the highest grade point average in the county. This was followed by being salutatorian of his high school class in Cunningham, and a doctorate in Physics from the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Later academic achievements include a Master of Science degree from the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a Juris Doctorate from the Cooley School of Law in Lansing, Michigan, passing the Michigan Bar on his first try. He also became a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists, and co-editor of its journal *The Genealogist*, earning in 2010

its highest award for genealogical research, the Coddington Award.

A family history of military service, manifested by three uncles who served in the World War Two Army Air Corps, resulted in Gale's enrollment in the Air Force ROTC at the University of Kansas where he became the Cadet Colonel of the Air Force unit there. His commissioning and attainment of a PhD in Physics resulted in his being assigned to head a nuclear physics research laboratory at Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio. After completing his required military duty he continued to lead the laboratory as a civilian employee. His management training at MIT enabled him to obtain administrative positions and professorships in radiology and physics at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland and then at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, where he retired in 1997. In retirement Gale continued to serve for many years as Chairman of the MSU Radiation Committee, but genealogical research and editing *The Genealogist* came to dominate most of that time. A study of Gale's vitae will find numerous professional articles in scientific and genealogical journals. His book *Harrises of Connecticut* has become a family heirloom and is available to other researchers in numerous libraries and on the internet. He was a member of many scientific and honorary societies including the American Physical Society, American Association of Physicists in Medicine, New England and Maryland Historical Societies, Sigma Xi, Sigma Tau, Sigma Pi Sigma, and Tau Beta Pi. There will be a private service held in Alva, Oklahoma.

# Cemetery Details

## **Alva Municipal Cemetery**

1698 Flynn Street  
Alva, OK 73717

# Tribute Wall



“ *View and Download the Funeral Program*

Wharton Funeral Chapel - April 26, 2024 at 01:35 PM



“ *He made a big impact on me. Spend 4 years at VoTech with him and his lovely wife. Couldn't decide what i wanted to be in life. Thanks to the many time we sat and talked. I have used all my skills learned under the care of this wonderful soul. May he fly high and free. Thanks for the fond memories.*



Lisa Lopshire - May 09, 2024 at 01:43 AM



“ *I will dearly miss Dr. Harris. I've been his hygienist for nearly 16 years and he has a very special place in my heart. He will be missed. I will be thinking of his family at this time especially Bonnie.*

Jessica - April 29, 2024 at 08:50 AM



“ 6 files added to the album *Gale Memories Album*



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**Wharton Funeral Chapel** - April 25, 2024 at 12:54 PM