

OBITUARY
DR. JAMES LEE WILSON SR.

DR. JAMES LEE WILSON SR., 87, internationally recognized expert on geology of carbonate sedimentary rocks, passed away on February 13, 2008 at his home in New Braunfels, Texas. He was born in Waxahachie, Texas on December 1, 1920, and was raised in San Antonio and Houston, Texas. Jim leaves behind the love and helpmate of his life for nearly 64 years, his wife, Della Moore Wilson; his children James Lee Wilson Jr. and wife Carolyn Ann Wilson, Burney Grant Wilson, his brother Phil Wilson, grandchildren Kimberly Wilson Broesche, Robert M. Wilson, Amanda Wilson Loggins, Jason Wilson, James Burney Wilson II, Holly Wilson, Hayley Wilson and 4 great grandchildren and numerous grand nieces, nephews, cousins and all the students he taught over the years. Dr. Wilson was preceded in death by his son Dale Ross Wilson, his sister, Betty K Mitchell, his mother, Christina Hawkins Wilson, and father, James Burney Wilson.

Jim Wilson was one of those rare people who knew exactly what he wanted to do in his life at the early age of 10 years. He wanted to be a geologist.

His many camping and fishing trips in Texas and Mexico with his father and brother during his early years prepared him for one of the things he loved most, geologic field work. His early geologic field studies for Carter and Shell Oil Companies made him a recognized authority on limestone geology, and later academic research at University of Texas – Austin, Rice University, and University of Michigan brought him international acclaim.

After graduating high school in Houston, he attended Rice University and then the University of Texas – Austin, where he earned B.A. (1942) and M.A. (1944) degrees in Geology. It was while doing field work in Montana in 1944 that Jim met and fell in love with a Methodist preacher's daughter, Della Moore, and they were married shortly thereafter. After serving in Italy at the end of WWII, Jim returned home, and he and Della and new baby boy moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where in 1949 he received his Ph.D. in Paleontology from Yale University.

Dr. Wilson was an associate professor at the University of Texas, Austin from 1949 to 1952. From 1952 to 1966 he was a research geologist for The Shell Development Company in Houston. During this time he worked in The Hague, Netherlands doing a research assignment in the Middle East. In 1966 Jim returned to the occupation he loved most, teaching. He accepted a Professorship of Geology at Rice University. While at Rice, Dr. Wilson held the Harry Carothers Weiss Chair of Geology and served as Chairman of the Geology Department, along with teaching and mentoring many graduate students. In 1979 Jim left Rice to join the graduate faculty in geology at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. He retired from there as Distinguished Professor in 1986. Although "retired," Dr. Wilson stayed very active doing extensive consulting Geology in Mexico and the United States and during his 21-year residence in New Braunfels, he and his wife took great pride and joy in helping the homeowners association on Patio Dr. caring for the beauty of their street. Throughout his busy career Jim worked in Texas, Mexico, New Mexico, North Africa, the Rocky Mountains, the Austroalpine and in the Middle East.

His 1975 book "Carbonate Facies in Geologic History" still is the standard text on stratigraphy of carbonate rocks. It has been published in several languages, including Chinese and Russian.

Dr. Wilson belonged to many geological societies, including the Geological Society of America, American Association of Petroleum Geology, SEPM – the Society for Sedimentary Geology, International Association of Sedimentology, Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies, the Paleontological Society, and the South Texas Geological Society. Dr. Wilson won high awards from several of these societies, including the prestigious Sidney Powers Award presented by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. This devoted family man, world-renowned

paleontologist, award-winning geologist and respected educator will be greatly missed by family, friends and colleagues.

A private memorial service was held for family and friends at the Zoeller Funeral Home, 615 Landa St. in New Braunfels, Texas on February 20th, 2008 at 10.00 at A.M. Anyone wanting to honor Dr. Wilson is urged to make a contribution to the James Lee Wilson Young Scientists Recognition Award through the SEPM, or the Heritage Museum of the Texas Hill Country Assn., P.O. Box 1598 Canyon Lake, Texas 78130, or Hope Hospice at 611 Walnut in New Braunfels, Texas 78130.