



Mr. Allan V. Cecil

March 16, 1941 - July 19, 2025

Allan Vaughn Cecil passed away on July 19, 2025, at The Levine & Dickson Hospice House in Charlotte, North Carolina, following a long illness. Despite living in the Carolinas, Allan was an Okie through and through. He embodied the Sooner spirit with values of independence, determination, and perseverance. The son of Mary and Bud Cecil, Allan was born on March 16, 1941, in Bristow, Oklahoma, a small town where his family owned the shoe and leather repair shop, Redbird Boot & Western, on Main Street. Allan helped out at the shop from a young age and learned the value of hard work. He often talked about the local ranchers and farmers who brought their boots and saddles for repairs, and the neighbors who came into town late on Saturday nights to shop, the only time they could get away from work. He described his childhood as idyllic, growing up in a town where no one locked their doors and people looked out for one another. Allan loved sports and, as early as junior high, was calling the games at local sporting events and writing a sports column in the local paper. During high school, he wrestled and played football and often bragged about enduring the grueling temperatures of football camp.

That perseverance prepared him for the University of Oklahoma, the school he dearly loved and supported throughout his life. To earn his way, Allan cobbled together scholarships and a variety of jobs, including working as a houseboy in one of the sorority houses on campus. Allan graduated from the

University of Oklahoma with a degree in journalism and a minor in Asian studies and began graduate studies at the university in public relations.

At the university, Allan participated in ROTC and, with the Vietnam War ramping up and a draft in the imminent future, he took a commission into the United States Air Force, where he eventually became a captain. Allan married his hometown sweetheart, Ellen, and, in 1964, the two drove to California to begin a five-year adventure in the Air Force. His first assignment as a Public Information Officer took him to the Strategic Air Command at McClellan Air Force Base near Sacramento, California. As a young officer, he was tasked with fielding journalists' phone calls when B-52 bombers were seen flying over the Golden Gate Bridge. Allan's job was to deny all sightings, whether or not they were true.

Managing that trial by fire led to his next assignment working as the Public Information Officer aboard Air Force One with President Lyndon B. Johnson. He served as the liaison between the Capitol Press Corps and all presidential, vice presidential, and cabinet-level arrivals and departures at Andrews Air Force Base. He also served as the military adviser on the set of Alfred Hitchcock's movie Topaz. Ultimately, he was stationed in Thailand for 12 months, where he served as a combat historian. He flew on more than 30 missions aboard KC-135s and B-52s, often amid enemy fire. His job was to record the activities during each flight, sometimes skewing the truth when they flew in no-fly zones. Allan earned a Bronze Star and the Air Force Commendation Medal before returning to civilian life.

Allan began his corporate career in 1969 at Kerr-McGee Corporation in Oklahoma City, where he served as the Administrator of Communications Services. To gain more expertise, Allan then had brief stints in marketing and advertising at N.W. Ayer & Son, often referred to as the oldest advertising company in the US, and Starline Printing Company in Albuquerque, New

Mexico.

In 1976, Allan combined his experience in public relations, corporate communications, and marketing and applied it as the Director of Corporate Communications at Mesa Petroleum Company in Amarillo, Texas. Allan worked directly for Mesa's CEO, T. Boone Pickens, during a time when Pickens was making a name for himself in the petroleum business and Mesa was one of the largest independent oil companies in the world. Allan again managed trial by fire during the years of corporate raids when he developed Mesa's corporate image and wrangled the media during hostile corporate takeovers. He said he never knew what the day would bring during his tenure at Mesa.

In 1985, Allan took a position as the Director of Corporate Relations for the National Gypsum Company in Dallas, and later became the Vice President of Corporate Affairs. After a merger, Allan was relocated to Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1992. During his time with National Gypsum, he worked on the company's leveraged buyout and several complicated legal issues. As a corporate sponsor of Habitat for Humanity, Allan represented National Gypsum on building sites alongside Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, as well as Jane Fonda.

Finally, in 1996, Allan joined Sonoco Products Company, a global leader in the packaging industry, in Hartsville, South Carolina. As the Vice President of Investor Relations and Corporate Affairs, he particularly relished managing investor relations, establishing relationships with analysts who followed the packaging business. He was especially proud of organizing the company's centennial celebration, which included publishing a book about Sonoco's history and commissioning a life-size bronze statue, "People Build Businesses" by artist Charles Parks, to commemorate the achievement. As

one of the faces of the company, his responsibilities took him all over the US and Europe. Allan finally retired from the corporate world in February 2007 at the age of 65.

Allan was never very good at sitting still and always had projects to work on throughout the house and in the yard. He loved to piddle and kept busy in retirement collecting antiques, a hobby he learned from his mother. He loved “the thrill of the hunt,” attending auctions and antique shows as far away as Massachusetts, Texas, and even France. He established a workshop and loved nothing more than bringing an old, worn piece of furniture back to life. Allan even found a way to resell some of his finds from his booth at The Sleepy Poet Antique Mall in Charlotte.

Throughout his life, Allan was a news hound, particularly interested in politics. He enjoyed reading everything, including fiction and nonfiction, and anything by his favorite author, James Lee Burke. He was a history lover, particularly of World War II, Winston Churchill, and General George Patton. As he slowed down, he found respite in his jigsaw puzzles, often staying up too late to work on them.

Allan’s homes were filled with many beloved pets through the years. The most recent was a rescue dog named Ladybug, a faithful companion who “led” him on many walks. Ladybug even acted as an unofficial therapy dog in the Hospice House, offering comfort not only to Allan and his family but also to other families and the staff.

Somewhere along the way, Allan became known as Pops to his loved ones. Pops was a loyal and committed family man. He and his first wife, Ellen, shared 35 years of marriage before he lost her to cancer. Ellen supported Allan through each and every change he made throughout his career. When they were empty-nesters and life finally started to slow down, they enjoyed

each other's company, taking little weekend trips to the beach or mountains, and often joining each other for lunch during the workday.

They raised three daughters, Jill Snyder (Brent), Sarah Gray (Jason), and Molly Peterson (Steve). Those daughters gave him five wonderful grandchildren, Hayden Butler (Christopher), James Gray, Pete Peterson, Henry Gray, and Cal Peterson, and one great-granddaughter, Elliott Butler. Pops showed his love by showing up, listening, offering trusted advice, giving unconditional love, standing up for the right thing, and, most importantly, always supporting his girls and their decisions. He made them feel competent and confident, secure and loved. The daughters all have fond memories of their dad attending their sporting events when they were growing up. He was always their biggest fan. He yelled the entire game or meet and even held up a jambox playing the Rocky theme song during summer track meets. It was embarrassing, but they wouldn't have traded it for a thing! That support and interest transferred over to his grandchildren, as well. Pops was always interested in following the grandkids' varied pursuits and even managed to embarrass them with his often-stated and exaggerated pride.

Pops was married to his second wife, Tricia, for just shy of 25 years. They were fortunate to experience a later-in-life romance, sharing adventures and enjoying a true partnership. Pops and Tricia enjoyed traveling in retirement. They spent much of their time at the beaches in South Carolina and Florida. They visited antique markets, taking memorable trips to Texas, New England, and France. Tricia even surprised Pops with a few tickets to OU football games. They were thrilled to watch Baker Mayfield before he became a Heisman trophy winner and NFL quarterback, and they attended the 2018 Rose Bowl.

Pops always believed that life was for living, and we, his daughters, are grateful that Tricia stood by his side as he embraced that philosophy. The

Cecil girls would like to express their sincerest gratitude to Tricia for the immense love and joy she gave their dad over the past 25 years. She has been a tireless advocate and caretaker for him for the past few years, all while facing the immense loss of her husband and partner. We are forever grateful to her for putting up with the three of us and that damn alligator! Most of all, we are grateful for her unwavering love and commitment to him.

Allan will be interred in his hometown of Bristow, Oklahoma, alongside Ellen, his parents, and his brother, Gregg. He always wanted to return to his roots. Allan was a true son of Oklahoma. If you find yourself watching or attending an OU football game this fall, we encourage you to pause long enough to hear the OU fight song “Boomer Sooner” and think about Pops when you hear these lyrics: “I’m a Sooner born and Sooner bred, and when I die, I’ll be Sooner dead. Rah Oklahoma, Rah Oklahoma, Rah Oklahoma, OK U!”

Memorials may be made to the University of Oklahoma Foundation, specifically to help students from small towns in Oklahoma afford their college education.

The University of Oklahoma Foundation, Scholarship Fund #42324, P.O. Box 258856, Oklahoma City, OK 73125-8856 <https://give.oufoundation.org/AllanV Cecil>

Tribute Wall

JS

“ I'm so sorry to hear of Mr Cecil's passing. I was also awestruck while reading over all of his achievements! He came to our auction (So-Lina Auction) in Darlington SC many times. My condolences to all of his family and my admiration for a life well lived.

Jessie Stengel - July 25, 2025 at 03:01 PM

RS

“ Rebecca Skinner lit a candle in memory of Mr. Allan V. Cecil



Rebecca Skinner - July 25, 2025 at 02:41 PM

JB

“ Cecil girls and Tricia. So sorry to see of the passing of Allen. I'm Miriam Griggs sister and she thought so much of Allen, your mom and Tricia. May God give you strength in the days and months ahead. Love in Christ.

Janelle Britt - July 25, 2025 at 10:23 AM