



Monty Lee Franks Jr.

February 10, 1949 - August 2, 2025

Monty Lee Franks Jr., born February 10th, 1949. Monty passed away peacefully on the morning of August 2nd 2025. Monty was born and raised in Miami, Oklahoma, where he graduated from Miami High School in 1967. Monty was a caring husband, beloved father, proud grandfather, and great grandfather. His life's journey was marked by a deep dedication to Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, and set the standard of what it means to be a true Norseman.

His passions for sports and journalism blossomed at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College (NEO), which he attended from 1967 to 1969. He served as equipment manager for several teams, including the 1967 and 1969 NJCAA National Champion Golden Norsemen Football teams. He later earned a bachelor's and master's degree in junior college education from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, where he honed his skills as a sportswriter and editor.

In 1974, after a brief teaching stint at Claremore Junior College, Monty returned to his beloved NEO. He became the public information director, a journalism instructor, and a longtime advisor for the Norse Wind student newspaper. He was known for his love of the college and his ability to tell the stories of its students and athletes through his writing and mentorship.

Monty's excellence was recognized nationally. He was named Outstanding Junior College Sports Information Director in both 1978 and 1979 by the College Sports Information Directors Association. His football media guides

were awarded "best all-around" by the NJCAA for four consecutive years, from 1977 to 1980. His lifetime contributions were honored in 2004 with his induction into the NJCAA Football Hall of Fame.

Even after retiring from NEO in 2002, Monty remained a passionate voice for the college, continuing to write for the Miami News-Record. His storytelling not only preserved NEO's legacy but also strengthened the community's connection to its history. Monty was inducted to the NEO Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012. In 2023, he was honored as NEO's Outstanding Retired Faculty recipient, a fitting tribute to a life dedicated to service, scholarship, and his unwavering commitment to the college he loved so deeply.

For Monty, his proudest roles were not defined by accolades but by the love of his family. He was a caring husband to Pamela Bushyhead as she journeyed with Alzheimer's and Dementia and would pass away from colon cancer on March 7th 2016.

Monty was preceded in passing by his parents, Monty Franks and Gail Beck and his step dad George Beck, Brother Thomas Forbes and sister Twyla Sizemore.

A loving father to their five children; son Chris and his wife Penny of Stillwater, Ok, daughter Jennifer and husband Matt of Jacksonville, Fla,; son Matthew and wife Ashley of Castle Rock, Co.; daughter Amanda and husband Justin of Roland, Ok and daughter Kimberly and husband Brett of Adair, Ok. His love for his many grand and great grand kids was unmeasurable. Along with his sisters Judy Pittman of Miami and Kay Atkinson and her husband Jerry of Chickasha.

Monty Lee Franks Jr.'s legacy will live on in the generations he taught, mentored, wrote about, and loved. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

In honor of his service, we ask that you wear St. Louis Cardinals gear or NEO gear.

Visitation will be from 6:00 PM until 8:00 PM Friday, August 8, 2025 at Brown-Winters Funeral Home and Cremation Service in Miami.

Services will be 11:00 AM on Saturday, August 9, 2025 at First United Methodist Church in Miami with his Son Reverend Matt Franks officiating. Interment will follow at a later date at Duffield Cemetery in Jay, Oklahoma. Friends and family may send the family notes of encouragement by viewing Mr. Franks' Tribute Page at www.brown-winters.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 8. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Brown-Winters Funeral Home and Cremation Service
5 B Street NW
Miami, OK 74354
(918) 542-3311
info@brown-winters.com
<https://www.brown-winters.com>

Celebration of Life

AUG 9. 11:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church - Miami
200 B NW
Miami, OK 74354
<http://www.fumcmiami.org>

Tribute Wall



“ *Brown-Winters Funeral Home and Cremation Service created a Tribute Video in memory of Monty Lee Franks Jr.*



Brown-Winters Funeral Home and Cremation Service - August 08, 2025 at 11:00 AM

MJ

Beautiful.

Monty Johnson - August 09, 2025 at 05:55 AM

PM

“ *I was surprised and saddened to read about Monty's recent death. I worked with him briefly at the Miami News-Record in 2014 when I was managing editor. Monty always made me laugh with his crazy stories. My favorite was him telling of picking up Malcom X at the airport and driving him to a speaking engagement. (Monty would have had to have been in high school at the time, as Malcom X was assassinated in early 1965.) He told me he greeted the civil rights activist with, "A pleasure to meet you, Mr. X." The other -- timely and a bit morbid, granted -- concerned his then-future memorial service. He said he wanted two directional signs: "Clowns on the left of me, jokers on the right" from the 1972 song "Stuck in the Middle with You" by Stealers Wheel. He was a funny guy, and he certainly left an impression on me.*

Patrick Timothy Mullikin

Patrick Mullikin - September 27, 2025 at 05:12 AM

MH

“ There aren't enough words to describe Monty. He had a complex intelligence that will never be matched. He was loving, caring, and just dang courageous. I am SO fortunate to have seen him laugh, and cry. I have truly LOVED only three men in my life. My father, my best friend (RIP JEFF G.) and Monty Franks. His last words to me were, "I love you too." Rest in peace, Franks. I'll see you in Valhalla.

□

Mike Hignite - August 12, 2025 at 02:21 AM

CB

“ Candice Byrd-Boney purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Monty Lee Franks Jr..



Candice Byrd-Boney - August 08, 2025 at 10:45 AM



“ 300 files added to the album LifeTributes



Brown-Winters Funeral Home and Cremation Service - August 08, 2025 at 10:45 AM

RG

“ Monty was a wonderful colleague at NEO for 16 years. He worked tirelessly to promote and support the college and especially the athletic department. His job should have realistically been done by at least 2 or maybe 3 people. But I’ll always remember Monty as a good friend who made me laugh, really hard at times. You can’t imagine what you missed out on if you never went to a St Louis Cardinals baseball game with Monty. Like the time he promised my brother Larry and I he got tickets right behind first base, which he did, two rows from the top of the stadium! We could see I-44 better than we could see the pitcher!!
Rest in peace my friend!

Randy Gipson

Randy Gipson - August 07, 2025 at 09:45 AM

JB

“ Monty was an important mentor for me during my time as an instructor at NEO. He was always funny and helpful.

Jeff Birdsong - August 07, 2025 at 08:08 AM



“ Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Monty Lee Franks Jr..



August 06, 2025 at 07:21 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Monty Lee Franks Jr..

August 06, 2025 at 07:21 PM

MJ

“*Monty was my friend, pure and simple. When we first met as journalism students at NSU (and later wrote Redman sports together) we were “Monty 1 and Monty 2”. I watched as he distinguished himself at NEO, and shared pride in his accomplishments...and love of the STL Cardinals! Life well lived, my friend! I'll miss him...*

Monty Johnson - August 04, 2025 at 06:06 PM



“*Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Monty Lee Franks Jr..*



August 04, 2025 at 05:08 PM

TE

“*I first met Monty in the street of A St SW in Miami, when we 9 or 10 years old, when I would visit my grandmother - played ball in the street. Miss you 'ole buddy.*

Troy Essex - August 04, 2025 at 03:20 PM

“ *Franks ends long career in journalism*

July 6, 2018 | Miami News-Record (OK)

Author/Byline: Staff reports jellis@miaminewsrecord.com | Section: College

MIAMI — It's -30- for Monty Franks.

The longtime instructor and sports information director at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College as well as Miami News-Record sportswriter, retired June 30.

"Monty has been the face of NEO athletics for decades," News-Record sports editor Jim Ellis said. "Who knows how many miles he has traveled over the years to document the various sports at the college? And who knows how many lives he has touched over the years?"

"He's been an important part of the News-Record in spirit and in many other ways: he's done a good job of keeping those in the newsroom and other MNR departments in line. He has been a good sounding board.

"Wow, we are really going to miss him around here, not just a co-worker, but more importantly, as a great friend."

News-Record managing editor Dorothy Ballard echoes those thoughts.

"We are a unique sort, those of us who commit our working lives to journalism – sensitive, curious, and driven, and Monty Franks is among the best of us," Ballard said. "When you get the opportunity to work with someone as seasoned and passionate as Monty, it changes how you see and do your job. I have been made better and this region has been served by one incredible person. From his time teaching our craft at NEO to his decades in the newspaper industry bringing us compelling sports reporting — there is no way to

adequately distill the full impact of someone like Franks. It has been an enormous privilege having him as a

colleague and I am even luckier to count him as a friend."

A 1969 NEO graduate, Franks was inducted into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012.

His byline has appeared on thousands of stories chronicling the highs — and lows — of the Golden Norse and Lady Norse.

"We wouldn't have the nationally renowned athletic program without the things Monty did when he was SID," said former NEO athletic director Dale Patterson.

Like Franks, Patterson ended a long affiliation with the school on June 30 with his retirement.

"They throw the word 'legend' out there, but Monty is a true legend," Patterson said. "Very few people that I run into that were here when Monty was here, the first thing they ask is 'how is Monty?' or 'is Monty still around?'

"Everybody loved Monty and everybody respected Monty."

"Monty Franks is one of the most unique and admirable people I have ever met," said Larry Gipson, who guided the NEO men's basketball team to a national championship in 1989. "He is a great example of what the human spirit can accomplish. He was a great colleague and is a great friend."

Franks — a diehard fan of the St. Louis Cardinals — cut his teeth at Miami High School, graduating in 1967, and continued his education at NEO, graduating in 1969.

While at NEO, Franks was equipment manager for several of the athletic teams, including the 1967 and 1969 National Junior College

Athletic Association national champion football teams.

Bill Yocum was a classmate/teammate of Franks, and then they worked together during Yocum's time as a football assistant and head wrestling coach at NEO from 1997 to 1981.

Yocum is being inducted into the NEO athletic hall in September.

"Monty Franks is a true Norseman," Yocum said. "He is the definition of 'what it means to be a Norseman.' He exemplifies the grit and toughness of a Norseman. He possesses the fighting spirit of every Norse that has taken the field, run the court, or crossed the foul line.

"He picks up the oar and rows for his fellow Norseman when one goes down. He is the greatest teammate of all time, for all ages."

Franks was editor of The Northeastern student newspaper at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, where he was a graduate assistant in the sports information department.

Part 1 of 2

Troy Essex - August 04, 2025 at 03:05 PM

“ Part 2 of 2

He also wrote for the Tahlequah Pictorial Press newspaper.

Veteran educator Ken Collins has known Franks at all three of his education stops, MHS, NEO and NSU, starting in 1965.

"He was an excellent student and writer who loved sports and sports writing," Collins said. "He has always had a zest for life, an abundance of energy, and an outstanding personality. I was so proud of him when he joined the faculty at NEO, where he was a very popular instructor for many years.

"Monty has touched a lot of lives during his career."

After a year as student newspaper and yearbook advisor and journalism instructor at Claremore Junior College, Franks became public information director, journalism instructor and Norse Wind advisor at NEO in 1974.

Franks was honored as the Outstanding Junior College Sports Information Director by the College Sports Information Directors Association (CoSIDA) in 1978 and 1979.

His football media guides were selected best all-around by the NJCAA from 1977 through 1980.

Franks retired from NEO in 2002, but continued to write for the News-Record, covering NEO athletics and high school football.

"I saw right away how the players took to Monty, not out of pity, but, he was just a work-a-bee and did everything he could to help the players have clean and right fitting gear," said Chuck Bowman, who coached the Norsemen to the '87 and '89 championships. "He always had a smile on his face. And, I knew there were many times he was not feeling good or even hurting.

"I can remember (assistant coach) Bob Maxwell taking kidding a bit too far with Monty, but, Monty loved Coach Maxwell for it. He knew where it was coming from. My life has been strengthened by Monty's attitude and approach to tough times."

Before going on to win the Heisman Trophy at the University of Oklahoma, Steve Owens, was a multi-state standout and classmate of Franks at MHS. Owens went on to win the Heisman Trophy at the University of Oklahoma in 1969.

"Monty has had a tremendous career," Owens said. "He has been so respected by everybody. I think in my books, he is a true hall of famer. What he has accomplished in his life, with all his challenges, he's a hero."

Owens calls Franks "a brother."

"The Owens family always looked at him as a brother, a part of the family," Steve Owens said. "That is the way we treated him, part of the Owens clan.

"Over the course of 50 years, our friendship has been solid; I have a great respect for Monty," Owens said.

Steve Watson, who quarterbacked the Norse to the 1969 national championship, said Franks "was the one constant in an ever changing landscape of players and coaches."

"For me, his dedication, his love for NEO, love for the players and coaches defines him as a person," said Watson, a member of the first NEO hall class in 2012. "Monty was constant, steady, loyal and a man who dealt with his own disability in a noble way, never letting his personal challenges keep him from pursuing his dreams, carving out his own path.

"Monty Franks is NEO; he is the true Norseman. Monty embodies all that is good in sports: persistence, doggedness, toughness,

loyalty. He is the teammate you always want with you. Good teams need the 'Monty Franks.'

"Monty touched the lives of hundreds, made all of us grateful that we came to NEO. His lighthearted spirit, his joyful approach to life, inspired us all."

"It's hard to imagine NEO without Monty Franks," said longtime friend and Miami businessman Bill Osborn. "Monty has mentored many young adults to successful careers. I don't think you can talk about your experience at NEO without several stories that center around Monty."

"His loyalty to Miami and NEO is irreplaceable."

<http://www.miamiok.com/article/20180706/SPORTS/180709824>

Caption:

Retired NEO sports publicist and Miami News-Record sports writer — and lifelong St. Louis Cardinals fan — Monty Franks has a little fun in a News-Record promotional photo. Franks retired on June 30.

Troy Essex - August 04, 2025 at 03:03 PM

SH

“*Monty was my advisor when I attended NEO. He was an amazing man. He will definitely be missed.*”

Sherry - August 04, 2025 at 11:54 AM

BC

“ I knew Monty from high school band. Even though it could have been difficult he was a proud member of the award winning Miami High Schoil Band the Marching Wardogs back in the 60’s. He was always kind and dedicated and a good friend to everyone in band. Following school I would rarely see him but when I did he never forgot his ole friends. He will be sadly missed.

Barbara Kyser Collier - August 04, 2025 at 09:52 AM

SB

“ Steve & Kristi Bashore purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Monty Lee Franks Jr..



Steve & Kristi Bashore - August 03, 2025 at 11:16 PM

JM

“ I have known Monty since my college days at NEO and NSU, then he joined my family when his daughter married my son Brett. He ran the NEO HS basketball tournament (one of the largest in the world) and I was coaching the Girl's team from South Coffeyville. We were in the tournament playing a 10:00 game as most know NO ONE there. Monty came over and sat behind our bench. Yep, Monty got a tech from the ref about half way in the game. Hey, he was the ONLY one sitting behind our team. The ref came over and I heard Monty say the REF sure can't see but he sure can HEAR. I could not help but laugh. I wish the family peace and especially Kim.

Johnny Morgan - August 03, 2025 at 09:01 AM

JP

“ We had many good times when he and I were at Northeastern State. We even roomed together when he worked on his master's. I always enjoyed it ever since then when he called me "roomie." Really enjoyed trips to St. Louis to see the Cardinals. And even though we were on opposite sides, we enjoyed going to OU-OSU football games when we could work it in around our own jobs. He even helped me move to Arlington, when I left Tahlequah. He has touched many lives throughout the years and was just a wonderful person. Thanks for all you've done through the years Monty. Rest in peace.

Jim Patterson - August 03, 2025 at 07:42 AM



“ I haven't seen Monty in a while but he was my friend for many years. He would always listen when I needed someone to talk to. He was always so much fun to be around. I'll never be able to think about the Spook light without thinking of him. I know he loved his family as much as they loved him. And he will be missed by everyone that knew him.

Kathy Leamon Bailey Runk - August 03, 2025 at 03:05 AM

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“ I remember dancing with Monty at Virginia Lee's Ballroom dancing. He was a good friend in school and also as a workmate at NEO. '

.Shirley Blair (Williams) - August 02, 2025 at 09:48 PM

RL

“ Monty was a huge influence in my life and newspaper career. Not only was he my college advisor and mentor, he was also a dear friend. My prayers to his wonderful family during this. Love you all!

Rick Lomenick - August 02, 2025 at 08:55 PM

RB

“*Monty was my dear mother’s favorite student throughout her entire education profession, Ruth Breane often talked about Monty’s resilience and happy face. She never forgot about him and we are reminded about him every time we visit our family graves in Jay, Oklahoma as we pass the memorial there to his beloved wife. Fly high, sweet Monty! A life do well lived. Rest easy. You sure earned it.*

Roberta Breane - August 02, 2025 at 08:52 PM

LG

“*Monty and I started our education journey together at Lincoln Grade School with Mrs Mayo. Our lives were interspersed through grade school, and college. After NEO we ended up working in adjoining offices at NSU and had many long talks. Monty was always a kind and caring friend. I always considered Monty to be one of my very best friends in this life.*

Go with Jesus Monty! Run and play and sing and shout like you always do wanted to but were limited by the earthly shell. Now you have the new perfect glorified body!! See you soon dear friend!!
Linda Johnson Gillian

Linda Johnson Gillian - August 02, 2025 at 07:31 PM