



Woodward Coulter Lee

SEP 22, 1931 - JUN 19, 2017



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FLORAL HAVEN

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Lee Woodward, long time local celebrity & Weatherman at KOTV, Channel 6, died Monday, June 19th at his home in Tulsa. He was 85. Born Coulter Lee Woodward on September 22, 1931 in Fort Worth, Texas, he was the youngest and fifth son of Dr. and Mrs. Valin Ridge Woodward of Arlington, TX. Lee attended Arlington High School & North Texas State in Denton, Texas where he studied vocal music. He was a Marine Veteran during the final years of the Korean War. While attending North Texas State, Lee began his long career in broadcasting as a Disc Jockey at KDNT where he met and worked with Willie Nelson. On a recommendation from Willie, Lee was hired by WBAP in Fort Worth where he continued to hone his signature voice and broadcast style. His first foray into TV came shortly after at KRBC in Abilene. A weekend trip back to Arlington in June of 1956 reconnected Lee with a younger classmate, Amelia Merritt. They married in 1957 and moved to Tulsa where Lee had secured a position at KOTV Channel 6 as a “staff announcer.” A twenty-five-year career at KOTV followed. Lee hosted the Sun Up morning show & performed other broadcast journalism tasks early on, but he is best known for his long tenure as the evening weatherman and creator of “Lionel,” his dry-humored, sometimes befuddled lion puppet sidekick. After the children’s show, King Lionel’s Court, ended, public demand brought Lionel back to the evening news where he and Lee dominated evening news ratings during the late 1960’s and 70’s, providing witty social and political commentary at the end of every newscast. Lionel’s birth is one for the storybooks. Found in a prop case in the KOTV attic, Lee researched the puppet, refurbished it & ordered the last 4 in existence from a novelty store in New York. He taught himself ventriloquism & developed a voice for each puppet, partly to amuse his newborn son. That creative impulse was typical of what drove Lee toward artistic success his entire life. He was a self-taught painter and sculptor and his artwork fills his & many of his family and friend’s homes and



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offices. An accomplished tenor and passionate opera aficionado, Lee was a long supporter of Tulsa Opera & Tulsa Philharmonic, where he was invited to sing on many occasions. With Lionel, he emceed over 26 children's benefit concerts for the Tulsa Public School system. Lee had the honor of singing at the opening of the 1969 Oklahoma Legislature & used his singing all through his years of broadcasting. Those dining at the Celebrity Club on any given weekend might find Lee singing impromptu in the bar along with the pianist after dinner. A lover of all the arts, Lee and his wife, Amelia, frequently attended Tulsa Ballet and were proud to show off Philbrook and Gilcrease to out of town visitors. An avid and passionate golfer, he was a regular at LaFortune, Indian Springs and Rolling Hills golf courses, to name a few. For many years he had a "scratch" handicap and was proud to "shoot his age" when he was 75, 76 and 83. Lee was the Emcee on the First Tee for many years at the annual Roy Clark Celebrity Golf Tournament which benefitted the Children's Medical Center. Another passion was aviation and cars, and after Lee retired from KOTV in 1982 he worked full time for Thomas Cadillac, with which he was already affiliated. Along with his artistic prowess, Lee will be remembered for his dry wit and sharp intellect. Lee was preceded in death by three brothers, Col. Valin R. Woodward of Albuquerque, N.M., Dr. Stanley Woodward of New Braunfels, TX, and Dr. Lewis Woodward of Modesto, CA. He is survived by his loving wife of sixty years, Amelia; brother Morgan Woodward of Hollywood, CA; son Stanley Woodward and daughter-in-law, Judy, of Dallas; daughter Valerie Naifeh and son-in-law, Brad, of Oklahoma City; son Matthew of Las Vegas, NV. Grandchildren Grace & Stephanie Woodward of Dallas, Megan Fleischfresser and Leigh Naifeh of Oklahoma City, and great granddaughter, Agnes Fleischfresser, of Oklahoma City, and many nieces and nephews. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Tulsa Opera, Tulsa Philharmonic, Tulsa Ballet or charity of your choice. An online guestbook is available by visiting www.floralhaven.com. Private funeral service.



Tribute Wall

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JW

John C. Walker posted:

Fond memories of a childhood waiting to see King Lionel and Lee Woodward. A man who made everyone feel good....and a musician! Like Father like Son.....great to see Lee Woodward character, humor, and talent live on in his family with friends like Stan. Our love and condolences to the entire family.

June 26 at 6:51 PM

MB

Marylyn Baumann posted:

I will always remember him in his front yard practicing his golf shot and a friendly wave as I drove by.....Marylyn Baumann. Neighbor

June 26 at 4:23 PM

KK

Karel Kolker posted:

Valerie, a long time ago you designed rings for my husband, Richard Creech, and I. It was not until much later that we realized who your Dad was. Knowing that, it was so apparent how much like him you were: kind, charming, talented but so approachable. He must have been so proud of you. You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. Karel Kolker

June 25 at 6:57 AM

DK

Dkerr posted:

A wonderful talent in so many areas.....Tulsa was so blessed to have him and his family as part of our community. My children loved King Lionel.....and we loved his political satire....joyous memories.....thank you Lee

June 24 at 10:13 AM

NP

Nancy Taylor Payne posted:

In my younger days I checked the weather by holding a damp finger in the air outside. Then I saw Lee Woodward and King Lionel on TV. I tried to not ever miss his weather report. What a pleasing presence he exhibited with his wonderful deep voice and great sense of humor. He brought me lots of fun and smiles. Nancy Taylor Payne-Tulsa

June 24 at 9:51 AM



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VN

Valerie Naifeh posted:

Thank you, Bill and Julie. You know all too well what it's like to lose a father. I have the best memories of your dad, Jim, as well, Bill. Such a talented professor at TU and wonderful mentor to me.

June 24 at 5:37 AM

VN

Valerie Naifeh posted:

With Lionel, you just never knew who was going to be tagged on air! Thank you for the great memory!

June 24 at 5:35 AM

VN

Valerie Naifeh posted:

Thank you for sharing, Priscilla. Lionel was able to say things on prime time news that my dad and the anchors would never have gotten away with. It was fun to watch, and the whole thing was very organic, never rehearsed.

June 24 at 5:34 AM

VN

Valerie Naifeh posted:

Nice to hear from you, Marty! Dad did love his recumbent bike; he initially tried a regular bike but, as you mentioned, it was hard on his back. Ever the utilitarian, he loved that particular model because he could fold it up and put it in the trunk of his car. Years ago he told me that he liked to drive out to new developments, pull out his bike, and ride around. Surveying the new homes while getting his exercise. Ever curious, it amused me to know that it wasn't enough just to "get out and get exercise." For dad, he mine as well combine that effort with a learning experience. Morgan is still alive at 91, though also battling cancer. He still lives in the Hollywood home he purchased in the 50's, located right above the Hollywood bowl.

June 24 at 5:32 AM



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PR

Priscilla Robinson posted:

Lee and Lionel were members of our family. As a teen, I was impressed at the kick my mom got out of the low key dry humor of Lee and the King. We had to watch for the political musings of Lionel and Lee's success at cracking up the anchors. I smile everytime I think of you Lee. Thank you for enriching our family time in front of the TV with you and your King and Granny. Sincerely, Priscilla Ann Williams Robinson

June 23 at 7:27 PM

MR

Marty Randall posted:

He was in my dream, following 6-8-74 tornado aftermath. ... I guess naturally you associate weather, and "weatherman" I would see he would play golf, and for years, would take a recumbent bicycle, through the neighborhood. ... I really rarely, if ever, saw, a bike like that, anywhere. ... The bicycle would be better on the back, of course. ... His brother, Morgan, who played a prison guard, in "Cool-Hand Luke", was silent, but bore a strong family resemblance. ... He was very active, and outgoing man, that is to be sure.

June 23 at 5:42 PM

MN

Miki Nixon posted:

Lit a candle in memory of Woodward Coulter Lee

June 22 at 5:08 PM

RK

Randy Kindy posted:

I was a young radio news anchor when Lee and Lionel surprised me by referring to me in their on-air banter. Lionel said, "Have you heard that new guy on KRMG? He has a randy kidney." What a talent Lee was, and a genuinely nice guy. Randy Kindy

June 22 at 11:58 AM

BW

Bill And Julie Watson posted:

A talented artist who raised a remarkable daughter. Our best wishes to the Woodward and Naifeh families.

June 22 at 10:29 AM



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John Carmichael posted:

Rest in peace Lee, glad we had the chance to chat recently. Will miss you. John Carmichael

June 22 at 9:19 AM



Judi Vanet posted:

When I was a child I told my parents I had to always watch Lee and Lionel He was a great memory from my childhood as he was always my favorite even when I'd outgrown puppets!

June 22 at 4:55 AM



Karma Norjin Lhamo posted:

I will always remember Lee for his kindness, his wonderful sense of humor and of course his marvelous voice—and for the time my family visited Tulsa when I was very young and Lee and Lionel mentioned our visit on TV! For a young girl who had been a junior bridesmaid at Lee and Amelia's wedding, that was quite a "big deal" and I have no doubt that Lee thrilled and inspired many other young people in similar ways. Deepest sympathies, big hugs and love from Lucinda in Florida.

June 22 at 3:24 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Woodward by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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