



Willard Valdean Akins Sr.

October 1, 1941 - August 6, 2023

IN MEMORY OF:

Willard Valdean Akins Sr.

Serving Location:

CRAIN FUNERAL HOME – MURPHYSBORO

1421 Walnut Street, Murphysboro, Illinois

Willard Valdean Akins Sr., 81 of Murphysboro, passed away Sunday, August 6, 2023, at 12:07 PM, at Deaconess Midtown Hospital in Evansville, Indiana. He was born October 1, 1941, in Centerville, Missouri to the late Willard and Alice June Tate Akins.

God called Dean into ministry at age 12 and he began preaching. At just 18, he pastored his home church in Centerville, Missouri. His pastoring took him to Ellsinore, Missouri, Stockton, Missouri, Jackson, Missouri, Ava, Illinois, Metropolis, Illinois, Iron Mountain, Missouri, Hayworth, Oklahoma, Staunton, Illinois and the last 21 years at First Assembly of God in Murphysboro, Illinois. Dean was a talented musician, singing, playing guitar, piano, banjo, fiddle, and lap harp. When Dean wasn't preaching and making music, he enjoyed drafting, and architectural design. He was a very good artist; he was skilled in many mediums from drawing, painting, wood working, carving and refinishing furniture. He loved to freshwater fish. Earlier in his life he hunted, enjoyed

working on cars. He customized a couple of vans and was good at construction. He composed and recorded a gospel album in the late 70's. Dean was a very loving, kind, and gentle man. He lived his life serving the church and honored God.

Loving survivors include his wife, Wilma Jean Johnson Akins; daughter, Valerie Jean Kopischke; sons, Willard Valdean Akins, Jr., Vaughn Nelson Akins and Vancil Neal Akins; 18 grandchildren; 9 great grandchildren and one on the way; sister, Shelba Akins Heady.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Visitation will be Wednesday, August 9th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the First Assembly of God in Murphysboro. A celebration of life funeral will be Thursday, August 10th at 11:00 a.m. at the church with Rev. Dr. Richard Pruitt, Director of Called College, Carlinville, IL officiating.

He will be interred later that day at Reynolds Cordon Cemetery in Reynolds, Missouri.

You are welcome to send flowers or plants. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to First Class Scholarship, in honor of Pastor Dean and Wilma Akins. Make checks payable to: Called College P.O. Box 620 Carlinville, IL 62626.

<https://www.shelbygiving.com/App/Form/4d8736ba-209d-47bb-9b9c-20f68f57ba65>

Cemetery Details

Reynolds Cordon

Reynolds, MO

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **9**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

First Assembly of God
445 N. 16th Street
Murphysboro, IL 62966

Celebration of Life

AUG **10**. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Assembly of God
445 N. 16th Street
Murphysboro, IL 62966

Tribute Wall



“ *Willard Valdean Akins Sr.*

October 23, 2023 at 06:26 AM



“ *I am so sorry for your loss miss Wilma. He was always smiling and a very caring person. May Heaven enjoy him as well as everyone around him did. Sending hugs and prayers.* 🤗💕

Gaby - October 11, 2023 at 12:07 PM



“ *The sweetest, caring man. Life won't be the same without you. Love you so much Grandpa.*

Lindsay - August 15, 2023 at 03:45 PM



“ *Pastor Akins was our family pastor in Staunton, Ill until we had to leave. We always treasured pastor and his family as he was always sweet, friendly, cheerful, and helpful in any way he could be. Linda and I will always treasure our memories of a wonderful man and know he is enjoying his very first sight of his Lord and Savior. John and Linda Davis*

John Davis - August 15, 2023 at 03:20 PM



“ *I have been blessed through his life in knowing Val and his family. I am praying for you all with much love, Allison Moore*

Allison Moore - August 10, 2023 at 09:47 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Willard Valdean Akins Sr..*



August 09, 2023 at 12:38 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Willard Valdean Akins Sr..*



August 08, 2023 at 10:57 PM



“ *Pastor Akins was a kind and friendly person to my husband and me. He was a wonderful church neighbor and we will miss him. I hope the lilac bush we gave him continues to bloom! Sincerely, Elmer and Sandy McRoy*

Elmer and Sandy McRoy - August 08, 2023 at 05:54 PM



Pastor Dean was a kind and wonder man was a good pastor me n cheri loved him he had a pastors heart I loved him like a big brother ill miss him greatly

Elmer Ellis - August 12, 2023 at 11:41 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Willard Valdean Akins Sr..*



August 08, 2023 at 12:29 PM



“ *Tender Tribute was purchased for the family of Willard Valdean Akins Sr..*



August 08, 2023 at 11:45 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Willard Valdean Akins Sr..*

August 08, 2023 at 11:45 AM

“ I first met Pastor Akins and his family as a child as our church received new pastors in the early 70s. I knew him as a great father to his children, a loving husband, and a man of integrity. He was church builder... both literally and figuratively.

I have many memories, but the one that is most vivid (likely because I've seen it many times on super8 film from my dad's projector) is from the mid 70s when our church in Metropolis was thriving and growing. He had promised that if we reached a specified number in weekly attendance, that he'd eat a "cheeseburger on top of the church". Mind you, that was likely every bit of 40 ft above the ground with a very steeply pitched roof. Not quite sure he'd thought that through at the time of speaking the words.

Well, we hit the number, and he figured it out. And he figured it out with flair. He not only kept his promise, but when we walked outdoors after service on that sunny Sunday afternoon, there was sitting atop the roof at the pinnacle, a card table and a chair.

As the hordes gathered in the streets, appeared Pastor Akins. I have no idea where he came from. He sat on the chair and put a burger sack on the table. He prepared his napkin, methodically opened the bag to retrieve his lunch, All the while he was shouting down to us below to remind us of why he was up there and to further the terror of his wife because of the genuine danger in what he was actually doing.

The church had grown and more people were now attending. Many of which continued to attend and hear the word weekly. I can't help but think, that there are those that in heaven that will remember that sunny afternoon.. And they're there to greet him, because of a cheeseburger.

This is just one of thousands of stories I'm sure, in the life of a great man of God. We love you and your family. You've impacted me, my children, and my children's children. - Brian Wieneke, Camden SC

Brian Wieneke - August 08, 2023 at 09:16 AM

LD

“ *Pastor Dean always treated you as an Ole friend that he knew for years. Loved listening to his sermons and his singing. He will be missed by all. Pastor really helped my husband & I through some hard times. Wilma & family I'm so sorry for this loss but he's in heaven rejoicing. Linda*

Linda Durham - August 07, 2023 at 08:11 PM



“ *Celestial Love was purchased for the family of Willard Valdean Akins Sr..*



August 07, 2023 at 04:49 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Willard Valdean Akins Sr..*



August 07, 2023 at 04:43 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Willard Valdean Akins Sr..*

August 07, 2023 at 04:43 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Willard Valdean Akins Sr..



August 07, 2023 at 02:22 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Pastor Willard Dean Akins.

August 07, 2023 at 02:22 PM



“ Judy Calcutta lit a candle in memory of Pastor Willard Akins



Judy Calcutta - August 07, 2023 at 01:20 PM