Topeka , KS

Rev. James Floyd Coder, 93, of Topeka, KS passed away Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at Stormont Vail Hospital. He was born July 19, 1924 in Wamego, KS the son of Ralph Albert and Leona Gladys (Fleck) Coder.

 Jim graduated from Wamego High School in 1942. He attended Kansas State University from 1944-1946 and later graduated from Highland Community College in 1950. Jim received his AB Degree from Washburn University in 1958 and his MS Degree from University of Kansas in 1965. In 1969, Jim completed his Ministerial Correspondence Course of Study in Nashville, TN and was Ordained Deacon in 1970 for United Methodist Church in Baldwin, KS. He completed graduate work in the summers of 1974, 1977 and 1986 at Washburn University in Topeka, University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO and University of California in Berkeley, CA.

 Jim married Dorothy L. Huffman on June 6, 1948 in Havensville, KS. To his union, three children were born, Timothy L. Coder, Terry L. Coder and Tamara L. Coder.

 In 1942, Jim worked for Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendorf Engineers at Fort Riley, KS and from 1942-1944 he worked for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He was a teacher for School District #11 in Pottawatomie County from 1945-1946 and later became principal for Belvue Grade School in 1946. He has also worked as a claims adjuster for Farm Bureau Insurance Co in Manhattan and he was a partner in Williams and Coder Insurance in Hiawatha. From 1955 – 1958 he was Director of Religious Education and Assistant Pastor for Lowman United Methodist Church. Form 1958 – 1974 he worked for Topeka High School as a Social Studies Teacher and later Guidance Counselor. From 1974-1986 he was Director of Guidance Services for Topeka Public School; retiring in July 19, 1986. Jim had many part-time jobs, including mail carrier, custodian, Pastor (for Padonia UMC, Elmont Methodist, Pleasant Hill Methodist and Williamsburg UMC), teacher, consultant and columnist for Topeka Capital Journal.

 He was a member of Citizens Potawatomi Nation, Kansas National Education Assoc., a representative for KNEA Professional Standards Committee, member of KPGA and later President of Northeast Kansas Personnel and Guidance Assoc. Jim was also on the Advisory Committee for ACT and SAT, Chairman of KPPGA State Legislature Action Committee,

President of KACES, member of State Dept. of Education Title IV Advisory Council and presenter of Houghton-Mufflin International Conference on Iowa Tests.

Jim was best known in Northeast Kansas as the Emcee for over 40 years of the Elmont Opry. He was co-founder, with the Lawton family, of the wonderful outreach musical ministry of the Elmont United Methodist Church. Over the years, thousands attended the Opry and heard Jim's voice as he sang classics like "Great Speckled Bird", "Red Sails in the Sunset", and "Sioux City Sue." He loved introducing all the "Opry Boys and Girls" and welcoming guests from all over Kansas and the world. Jim had a great eye for talent and traveled with his wife, Dorothy, all over Kansas and neighboring states, searching for potential Opry performers.

Throughout his entire life, Jim served as a mentor, counselor, and pastor to individuals from all walks of life. He was love in action.

Survivors include his wife; 2 sons, Tim Coder (Marlene) of Hoyt, KS and Terry Coder of Topeka, KS; a daughter, Tammy Coder Mikinski (Mike) of Linwood, KS; 7 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Muriel Grant and 5 brothers, Ralph, Jr., Robert, Frank, Andrew and Eugene "Gene" Coder.

Funeral Services will be 11:00 a.m. Saturday, October 21, 2017 at Elmont United Methodist Church. Burial will be 10:30 a.m. Monday, October 23, 2017 in the Wamego Cemetery. Family will greet friends 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Friday evening at the church and also, from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Saturday morning. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to the Elmont United Methodist Church c/o Mercer Funeral Home, P.O. Box 270, Holton, KS 66436. To leave a special message for the family, please visit www.mercerfuneralhomes.com.