

# City, school district mourn loss of leader

Funeral services for long-time Jasper businessman and civic leader Herman Wright Jr., 74, will be held Thursday at 1 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 329 Bowie St. in Jasper.

Wright died in Houston at the Christus VNA Hospice after a long illness.

Burial will be at Springhill Cemetery in Magnolia Springs with full military honors.

Visitation will be held at Coleman's Mortuary, 1558 N. Fletcher St., Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wright's life could be labeled as one of several successful careers and ongoing community service.

A native of Mt. Union in Jasper County, he attended school there, then attended



Herman Wright

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Jasper's J.H. Rowe School his senior year and graduated. Wright went to Prairie View A&M College where he entered the U.S. Army Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), emerging as a commissioned officer after four years.

He spent 24 years in the U.S. Army, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. He served in two wars — Korea and Vietnam — and led a military mission in Liberia plus he led troops in riots at the Panama Canal.

Upon retirement from the military, he returned to

Jasper County and took up ranching. Then, he started at an entry level personnel job in the forest products industry. Wright rose over the years to become an executive with Louisiana-Pacific, from which he retired in the early 1990s.

As his son, Herman Jr., wrote of his father, his "passion during these years was his service to the community."

The elder Wright spent 17 years as president of the Jasper Independent School District Board of Trustees. During that time he also served as president of the

Jasper County Appraisal District board.

Wright was appointed to the Angelina Neches River Authority by then Texas Gov. Ann Richards.

He was a member of the Jasper Kiwanis Club and served a term as president.

Wright was a member of the board of directors of First Bank & Trust-East Texas, Jasper. He also served on the Jasper Housing Authority board.

He was a member of the Greater New Bethel Baptist Church where he taught youth Sunday School classes and was a member of the

Men's Choir.

Wright was a founding member of the Lone Star Youth Council, which built a youth center in 2002. His family has suggested that remembrances in Wright's name can be made to Lone Star Youth Council.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Mae Coleman Wright; a son, Herman Wright Jr. and daughter-in-law Debra; a daughter Yolanda Celestine and son-in-law, Von Celestine; grandchildren Elizabeth and Lauren Wright and Victoria and Grant Celestine.