



First Presbyterian Church Waco, TX



Celebration of Life and Faith
Dr. David Young
October 8, 2026

About Dr. David Young

David Edward Young, 86, peacefully passed away at his home on October 1, 2026. He had been and was surrounded by family during his last few weeks.

David was born in Beaumont, Texas, on February 6, 1940. An only child, he grew up with his friends from school and Westminster Presbyterian church and his dear cousins. Because he loved baseball, even as a young child, he studied the box scores and statistics in the newspaper and learned how to read before attending school. David remembered fondly, "Since I already knew how to read, my first grade teacher let me read whatever I wanted to." He attended Edwards Elementary School where his mother was a teacher of mathematics. He played Little League baseball during the summer and was president of his class at Bowie Jr. High. At French High School, he continued to combine athletic and scholastic accomplishments. He was an all-district catcher, a pitcher, and a home run hitter in baseball, and he won three letters in basketball and football. He was a school leader, serving as president of his class, and a class favorite. He was also an honor student, winning history and science awards, and graduating as valedictorian in 1958.

David attended Baylor University on a baseball scholarship and majored in chemistry. He was active on campus and served as president of his fraternity in his senior year. He was selected as Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities and was named one of the top 12 chemistry students in the nation by the American Chemical Society.

Because of his academic attainments, he was awarded a graduate science fellowship to The Ohio State University and studied with Sheldon Shore. He received a PhD in chemistry in 1967. His first position was as Director of Research for Allied Chemical Corporation in Denville, New Jersey. In 1972, he moved to Glendale in Cincinnati and was promoted to vice-president and technical director for Shepherd Chemical Company. He retired from Shepherd in 1982 and became a consultant for public utilities.

After reuniting and marrying his college sweetheart, Susan Johnsen, he returned to Austin, Texas in 1984. In 1989, he and his wife, Susan, joined the Baylor faculty as teachers, he in chemistry and she in educational psychology. He was beloved by his students, honored as a distinguished professor, and provided individual honors using "pink flamingoes." He retired from Baylor in 2012. Many of his students later became his physicians.

David continued to love Ohio, particularly the Buckeyes of Ohio State. Having season tickets, he traveled to Columbus to watch games in-person or to Cincinnati to watch via TV with his daughter, Becky, her husband Dave, and their sofa dogs.

During his free time, David would play golf regularly with friends. He was a scratch golfer and known for his long tee shots.

David loved nature and had a talent for growing plants. In fact, he took a stem from a dying Schefflera plant, stuck it in a pot, and cultivated its roots. This 10-foot plant now resides in the living room of his home.

Continued on back...

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The Gift of Life Bestowed
Entered Gift of Life Released

February 6, 1940
October 1, 2026

Prelude String Quartet

Opening Litany

+ Call to Worship (Psalm 121)

One: I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come?

Many: My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

One: He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

Many: He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

One: The Lord is our keeper; the Lord is our shade at our right hand.

All: The sun shall not strike us by day nor the moon by night.

Hymn #664 *Morning has Broken* BUNESSAN

Remembrances from the Family

Unison Prayer

God of Beauty and Grace, we are so grateful for the energy that you infuse into our lives. What a privilege it is to walk, talk, work, and play. Each day is a humbling experience of challenges. Each day is a rich experience of joy and triumph. We are grateful for each day and moment in which we can live with loving integrity. We pause with gratitude for the time that we have spent with your son David. We are so grateful for all who loved him and for the way they contributed to his best life. We pause to stretch our heart and mind contemplating his life and legacy. May we live offering you beauty and grace from our own life circumstances. Be with us now and always, O Great Redeemer. Amen.

Special Music – Quartet *Sheep May Safely Graze* J. S. Bach

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (OT pg. 616) | Romans 8:31-35 & 37-39 (NT pg. 158)

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:1-12 (NT pg. 4)

Hymn #43 *You Who Dwell in the Shelter of the Lord* EAGLE’S WINGS

Eulogy Leslie King, D. Min

Hymn #326 *For All the Saints* SINE NOMINE

+ Benediction

Thank you to the musicians for today’s music:
Soloist: Austin Ingalls | Organist: Becky Ward | String Quartet: Amanda Schubert, Kristin
Mortenson, Megan Miller, Lisë Engel

In visiting his home, friends also know David developed excellent photographs of nature, which were on every wall in every room. Many chronicled his road trips, which included the mountains in the West, National Parks, and visits with family and friends. They were not short. One trip started in Texas, then to the Mass MoCA in Massachusetts to see James’s performances at “Bang on a Can”, then over Niagara Falls to Canada, across the Trans–Canada Highway to Vancouver, and then south to Sun Valley, Idaho, to gather with all the children and grandchildren before heading back to Texas.

He loved music and was an audiophile, collecting vinyl records and CDs from every genre, but particularly classical music. He built his home so that the music/library room would have the best musical equipment and be a special venue for his family and friends to enjoy their favorites. Every day, he would meet with his lunch bunch—Kurt Kaiser, Donald Bailey, Harry Elzinga, Stephen Heyde, Robert Young—to discuss music, performances, and composers. He was known for his expertise and was even asked to sort records according to their value for local classical radio stations.

His neighbors and close friends also knew him for his delicious Cincinnati Chili on New Year’s Eve. He spent a week, spicing and fermenting his chili until it was ready for a four-way option (spaghetti, chili, onion, and cheese) or simply a topping on a hot dog.

Using his intelligence, quick wit, and great one–liners, David brought laughter with wisdom to those around him throughout his life. He cared and lived his life “to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” As one nephew mentioned, “he saw me in a way that few do and made my wife feel like family.”

David was preceded in death by his parents, Zetta Turner Young and David Wheeler Young of Beaumont. He is survived by his devoted wife, Susan Kay Johnsen, their loving daughters, Melissa (Molly) Young and her husband Kyle Harmer of Salt Lake City, Rebecca Lesley Leach and her husband David Leach of Cincinnati, their loving son, James David Young of Baltimore and their two granddaughters, Paige Meyer of Denver and Marlo Harmer of Salt Lake City. He is also survived by many cousins and friends.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in David’s honor to the Chemistry Department at Baylor University, First Presbyterian Church in Waco, or a charity of choice.