Written by George Browning
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A longtime Austin businessman, Eugene “Red” Perry, 84, died on Tuesday, January 22, in Clarksville.

At one time, nearly every resident of Austin knew Perry on sight. He owned and operated the Perry Oil Service, which stood for years just south of the U.S. Highway 31/State Road 256 intersection next to the old Austin Public Library. Both buildings were demolished in the 1990s, and Huck’s, a gas station and convenience store, now occupies the sites.

Red Perry had an extensive customer list in a time when many homes and businesses were heated by oil furnaces. Many a time he answered the phone late at night or early in the morning to help out a family whose tank had gone dry. He and his employees also performed minor car repairs and maintenance services. Perry was respected for his business acumen and liked because of his open, friendly manner.

Perry was also well known from his support of local school sports teams, Little League teams and his participation in such organizations as the Austin Lions Club and Masonic Lodge.

Perry was born on February 20, 1928, in Austin to the late Altus and Anna Guynn Perry. He and his wife, Thelma Fields Perry, were married on January 15, 1950. He was a U.S. Army veteran of the Korean War.

When Perry sold the business to Raleigh Campbell Sr., the couple retired to Jeffersonville. Thelma died in 2003.

Perry is survived by his son, Ben and his wife Sue of Clarksville; daughter, Carrie Towle of Louisville, Ky.; and three grandchildren, James Towle III, Tori Towle and Joy Vest.

A memorial service for him was conducted at the Buchanan Funeral Home on Sunday, January 27.

Burial was in Austin Cemetery.

Memorial gifts may be arranged through the funeral home staff to benefit the J.B. Ogle Animal Shelter.