William Joel Wright, 82, died peacefully in the early morning of Sunday, July 11th, 2021. Joel was born on March 16th, 1939 in Maryville, Missouri to Joe and Helen Wright and grew up in Hopkins, MO. He was enormously proud to be from Hopkins and it was there that he learned, played and developed a lifelong love for the game of baseball - ultimately leading to a serious look as a pitcher by the St. Louis Cardinals. He attended the University of Missouri, Hamline University (MN) and graduated from William Jewel College in Liberty, Missouri. After attending Drew Theological Seminary (NJ) for a short period of time, he received his Bachelor of Divinity from Saint Paul School of Theology in 1966 (bestowed Master of Divinity in 1971).

Joel married Alice Ann Gleason on August 10th, 1963 at North Cross Methodist Church in Kansas City, Missouri. After moving to Madison, New Jersey in 1964 to attend Drew, roots were established in the area over the next 10 years with Joel ultimately pastoring at 3 Methodist churches, making a significant and positive difference at each stop. In 1974, Joel and Alice became full time staff of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) and over the next 14 years, lived and worked all over the world, 100% dedicated and committed to economic and community development in areas of need. Joel worked in countless countries and stepped foot on 6 of the 7 continents around the globe (Antarctica did not make the cut and for those that knew Joel, extreme cold weather was not of his liking).

In 1989, Joel and Alice moved to Kansas City, MO which brought them back home and closer to many family members. It also enabled Joel and his business partner, Priscilla Wilson, to both become fully immersed in the development of what would later be known as TeamTech, Inc. In 1996, Joel and Priscilla became business partners with Kathleen Harnish McKune and over the next 20 years worked for two Kansas Governors; almost every state agency in Kansas; touched almost all 105 counties in Kansas; and many non-profit organizations and foundations in the state. TeamTech won the 2006 Innovations Award from the Council of State Governments for work in the Kansas Collaborative. Governor Kathleen Sebelius’s Chief of Staff once told Joel and Kathleen privately that “Kansans will not know the positive impact you have had on their lives by your work, but we three will know.” That is all that mattered to Joel – the difference-maker behind the scenes.

Since his retirement in 2015, Joel enjoyed spending his time with his family, most especially attending sporting events for his grandchildren, Pierce and Kate Wright. He also spent many nights at Royals games during the “Glory Years” highlighted by the World Series Championship in 2015. He and Alice also spent time traveling, most memorably to France and England with their son’s family and then to Eastern Europe (both in 2014) which was always a desired location for Joel. Three other trips in the last few years that were extremely memorable were to Roatan Island off the coast of Honduras with Kathleen and David McKune; Glacier National Park with very close friends, Jeff and Frances Roper; and New York City with Alice’s sister and brother-in-law, Grace and Jim Hobbs, and brother and sister-in-law, Bill and Candy Gleason. Highlights of the trip included a stay at the TWA hotel at JFK airport (long history of TWA with the Gleason family) and seeing Andrea Bocelli in concert (a favorite of Joel’s) at Madison Square Garden.

Joel is preceded in death by:

Joe Heber Wright – Father

Helen Elizabeth Moorhead Wright – Mother

Joel is survived by:

Alice Ann Gleason Wright – Wife

Joyce Wright Robison – Sister

Stuart Kingsley Wright – Son

Shannon Powers – Wright, Daughter-in-law

Pierce Woodrow Wright – Grandson

Katharine Ann Wright – Granddaughter

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to any of the following organizations Joel actively engaged with, worked with and/or deeply respected the work they were trying to accomplish to make a difference in the world we live in:

New Nodaway Humane Society

829 South Depot Street

Maryville, MO 64468

Attn: Sharon Bonnett

[Nodawayhumanesociety.wordpress.com](http://www.Nodawayhumanesociety.wordpress.com)

Friends of Johnson County Mental Health Center

6000 Lamar Ave, Suite 130

Mission, KS 66202

Attn: Tim DeWeese

[Friendsofjcmhc.org](http://www.Friendsofjcmhc.org)

Southern Poverty Law Center

400 Washington Ave.

Montgomery, AL 36104

[Splcenter.org](http://www.Splcenter.org)

All are 501©(3) organizations and thus all donations are tax deductible.