

Brother Leonard Schroeder

January 9th is the anniversary of the death of Brother Leonard Schroeder. Robert Schroeder was born in Windthorst, Texas, on September 28, 1927. After attending grade school there, he came to Subiaco Academy for his high school studies, and graduated in 1945. He professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on February 14, 1948, receiving the name Leonard. His first assignment was as gardener and butcher, interests and skills that would remain with him throughout his life.

As part of his work on the farm, Brother Leonard was assigned to the care of the hogs in 1950. His animals repeatedly won honors at state fairs. Gradually, another skill of his, as a "dowser" or water witch, became known. People from miles around called on him to "witch" their wells, with much success.

Assigned to the kitchen in 1965, Brother Leonard was both cook and, for a time, kitchen supervisor. He continued in the kitchen for the next 16 years, adding bakery duties in 1970. Freed from the kitchen in 1982, though continuing as baker, he returned to gardening and grounds keeping, doing extensive work in East Park, the cemetery, and the flower house.

In early 1983, Brother Leonard was discovered to have cancer. As treatments were undertaken, he continued to work as much as he could throughout 1983. Fully aware of his terminal condition, he became an example of prayer and fortitude during this time, offering his sufferings as a prayer for vocations.

Brother Leonard died on the evening of Monday, January 9, 1984, at St. Edward Mercy Medical Center in Fort Smith with his parents, family members, and confreres at his side.

On Wednesday, January 11, Abbot Raphael was celebrant of the Mass of Christian burial for Brother Leonard. Bishop Andrew J. McDonald performed the absolution and Abbot Raphael conducted the graveside rites.

At the time of his death, Brother Leonard was 56 years old and in the 35th year of his monastic profession. He is buried in our cemetery.

