



## Oakley Ronald "Ron" Stephenson

November 6, 1935 - June 23, 2021

Oakley Ronald Stephenson, age 85, of Dallas, Texas, went home to be with his Savior, Jesus Christ, on June 23, 2021. He was born November 6, 1935, in Tampa, Florida, to Oakley Samuel and Hester Stephenson. His early years were spent in Miami, Florida, where he learned to love the beach, Joe's Stone Crab and the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables. Ron worked various jobs from an early age starting in high school in order to fund his expenses and then his college education. After his father became paralyzed from a work accident, Dad, while in college, became the provider of his family. He carried that work ethic with him throughout his life. No job or project was below him in order to provide for his extended family, and his life stories entertained many. Even in his 80's, his alarm clock was set to 4:30 am, and the list of things to get done each day was finalized the previous evening. His will to live and live large motivated much of his life's story and accomplishments.

After attending the University of Miami, Ron arrived in Dallas in 1956, on his way to a job in California. At the Southwestern Motor Freight Bureau, he met Mom, who quickly became the love of his life and they never left Dallas, where they built their family and business together for 61 years. His career in the transportation industry took him to many locales as he built the pricing system for much of the regulated motor carrier industry. Known as "Operating Ratio (O.R.) Stephenson", Ron built relationships with a host of Fortune 500 clients who became friends and continued to keep up with him in his later years. His skill as an expert witness during regulatory hearings at the Railroad Commission of Texas, state capitols across the nation, and the ICC in Washington, D.C., became legendary, perfecting the game face, authoritative voice and statistical acumen needed to win cases. He insisted on precision and usually got it, except when Mother stepped in to smooth his occasional rough edges.

Ron's career began anew at age 65 when he became Baylor Healthcare System's head of medical record logistics. Charged with a year-long consulting project to centralize medical records storage for BHCS, he remained there until 2020 as Director of Records Management. During this period, he developed a system to recycle the silver content from

old x-ray film before it was discarded, adding to Baylor's bottom line each year as silver prices appreciated. It was this type of creative genius that kept him mentally engaged at all levels well into the twilight of his career. Even in his 80's, Ron maintained a hectic work pace and loved his colleagues and every minute of his work for Baylor. Baylor kept him focused on excellence at an age when most of his friends were long retired. His memory was exceptional. He could remember the smallest of details and work out complex problems in his sleep. He often remarked he could relive each frame of his life with a movie that ran inside his head.

Throughout life, Ron found happiness in surprising people with gifts small to large, ranging from Stein's Cheese Pockets (aka Ron's 'Baylor Biscuits'), magazine subscriptions, classic neck ties or model (or real) cars, his favorite. He collected vintage Corvettes and rebuilt them as a hobby in mid-life. An avid reader, he finished at least one book each week, and his last fun project was setting up his personal library at home. His lifelong love of good music grew from his early years with the Drum and Bugle Corp where he traveled to Cuba as a young adult, his high school years as a talented competitive ballroom dancer and his admiration for his Uncle Claude, an executive with MGM and a movie and music aficionado. Ron loved his music loud, his cars fast and his pranks unforgettable. In all things, he sought, expected and admired excellence.

Ron was a patriot's Patriot, earning officer rank of 'Captain' while he served in the Army. He started his Army career at Ft. Slocum on Davids Island in New Rochelle, NY. He loved his country, and all those who served it with a deep passion. His early military training and career taught him the discipline and fortitude that marked every endeavor he undertook. After losing his best friend to Viet Nam as a POW, Ron supported causes tied to military veterans throughout his life. Ron was a graduate of the Command and General Staff College in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, and held licenses from the military for nuclear weapons and security intelligence.

His friends from Coral Gables High School and his Ching Tang fraternity remained lifelong chums with reunions at Coral Gables that brought him great joy. After his injury, Ron took on his rehabilitation with the same drive and determination that marked his career and early life. He took great pride in the talented physicians, therapists and caregivers who helped him recover and made his last days more enjoyable. His family remains grateful to each physician, therapist and caregiver who advised, comforted and inspired him to live his life fully.

Ron was baptized as a youth at Central Christian Church in Miami, Florida, and again in 1985 with his wife at Park Cities Baptist Church when they joined the church. They both

served in the New Members Department under Dr. James Pleitz. He recently attended a Life Group at Hunter's Glen Baptist Church where he had many friends. His life verse was Proverbs 12:28.

Known as 'Gran' to his grandchildren, Ron loved to brag about their accomplishments. He was always encouraging his grandchildren to take advantage of the education they had been offered and to work hard to earn their way in life. Even in his last months, he regularly shared his pride in what his grandchildren were accomplishing and talked about their chosen life paths. He was always planning a special meal out or dinner on the grill for his family, the most recent being for the upcoming 4th of July weekend. He loved and insisted upon good food and was a food "connoisseur" long before it became popular.

Ron is predeceased by his wife of 61 years, Paula Kemp Stephenson; parents, Oakley and Hester Stephenson, of Miami, Florida; sisters, Audrey Ramsey of Dallas, Texas; Christine Norton of Miami, Florida; and Myrt Cumbie of Miami, Florida. He will be desperately missed by those he leaves behind: his son, Eric Carlton Stephenson of New York City; daughter, Michelle Bufkin of Dallas; son-in-law, Chuck Bufkin; grandchildren, Augusta, Carlton and Jonathan Stephenson, and their mother, Arden Stephenson; and Morgan and Chase Bufkin; sister, Doris Stewart of Atlanta, Georgia; brother, Douglas Stephenson of Hot Springs, Arkansas; numerous nieces and nephews; and friends too numerous to count.

A private burial will be followed by a Memorial Service and reception celebrating Ron's life on Friday, July 9, 2021, at 12 noon, in Ellis Chapel at Park Cities Baptist Church, 3933 Northwest Parkway, Dallas, Texas. Visitation will be on Thursday, July 8, from 4 pm – 6 pm at Restland Funeral Home, 13005 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, Texas.

To honor Ron's passion for life, patriotism and faith, his family requests in lieu of flowers that donations may be made in his memory to The Children's Organ Transplant Association in honor of Brandon Nolan (Children's Organ Transplant Association > COTA for Brandon N), The National Vietnam War Museum (Home | The National Vietnam War Museum (nationalvnwarmuseum.org), or The Lone Star State Endowed Scholarship at Hillsdale College (Support Hillsdale College | Hillsdale College). Ron's generous spirit, mischievous smile and twinkle in his eye will live on whenever his friends take time to read a good book, enjoy a fine meal or dance to Big Band music.

In the way of righteousness there is life; And in its pathway there is no death.  
Proverbs 12:28 NKJV

# Cemetery

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**Restland Memorial Park**  
13005 Greenville Avenue  
Dallas, TX, 75243

# Events

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**JUL 8 Visitation 04:00PM - 06:00PM**  

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**8**  
Restland Funeral Home  
13005 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX, US, 75243

**JUL 9 Celebration of Life 12:00PM**  

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**9**  
Park Cities Baptist Church -Ellis Chapel  
3933 Northwest Parkway, Dallas, TX, US, 75225

# Comments

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“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Oakley Ronald "Ron" Stephenson.



July 06 at 10:30 PM

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“ It is with great sadness for Michelle and Eric, and their families, that we say goodbye to their wonderful Father and friend. It was an honor to have known Ron and I will always remember him with love and joy. When I needed support and kindness the Stephenson family were there for me. Ron made me laugh and taught me a few things I needed to learn. I will forever remember his jokes and smile. Heaven just got an upgrade.

**Carla Guebert** - July 06 at 09:37 PM

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“ Ron and Paula were my second set of parents back in 1982 when I came to work for Ron. I learned so much from both of them. When Paula went to heaven, Ron was there to talk to and provide an encouraging word. I have much love and fond memories and will miss Mr. Ron terribly.

**Melinda Milner** - July 06 at 03:10 PM

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“ Ron and Paula were our neighbors and from the day we moved in they treated us like family they had known forever. I enjoyed seeing their smiling faces every morning and long visits in their home. Ron always had such interesting stories and a great sense of humor. Even in his darkest hours he was positive and forward thinking. My daughter Emma was spoiled by Ron with love, attention, sweets and treats! We will miss Ron dearly, our neighborhood won't be the same without him. As Emma says “I miss our best buddy Ron who is in heaven”



**Annie Reay** - July 06 at 10:44 AM

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“ We became closer when my buddy lost his sweetheart and my “second Momma” Paula. We sent each other little gifts often things that expressed our faith. I am so grateful for the short time I did have getting to know him a little better and though very sad he is gone (because I know his family and I will miss him dearly), I am thrilled he will be with the love of his life once again. One of the very best men you could ever know in your entire life and I was lucky enough to know him. Hugs Michelle and Eric and Chuck, my thoughts and prayers are with you.

**Tina Gravel** - June 29 at 11:21 AM

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“ The world has lost a kind and caring man. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.  
Susan

**Susan Barrett** - June 25 at 09:29 PM

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“ I am so sorry to hear about Ron. I met Ron through Baylor. I partnered with Ron to provide staffing for the large records move and it was history from there! We became very good friends! I loved hearing his stories, visiting with him at Baylor and looked up to him. I even surprised him with a collectible for his vintage model car collection! He was an amazing man and he will be someone that I will never forget in my lifetime.

**Deborah Davis** - June 25 at 08:18 PM

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“ I had the honor of working with Ron in his later years and was amazed at the recovery he made from an incredibly serious, frankly could have / should have been fatal, accident he suffered.

He moved one direction, "straight ahead, full speed ahead" and that took him a very long way.

I'm in health care and if I can't make the Memorial Service due to scheduling I'll down a dozen oysters at S & D or a BBQ plate at Big Al's in your memory Ron !

Ed Morzak

**Edward Morzak** - June 25 at 07:52 PM