



Chris Aaron Colyer

July 28, 1957 - December 12, 2015

CHRIS AARON COLYER

After years of suffering from Huntington's Disease, Chris Aaron Colyer ended his battle and claimed ultimate victory in the Lord in the early hours of December 12, 2015. He was born July 28, 1957 in Fort Worth, Texas, and moved to San Antonio in late 1970. He met his wife of 36 years at Churchill High School, and married Shirley Holman Colyer on June 14, 1979.

Chris was a structural steel welder by trade, and he received his initial training at Western Texas Junior College in Snyder, Texas. He perfected his skills as a Hull Technician in the US Navy, where he served on the USS Monticello and, after the Monticello was decommissioned, briefly on the USS Cape Cod. Stationed for most of his service out of San Diego, California, his ship spent time stationed in Korea and the Philippines. His naval career did allow opportunities for his wife to briefly join him, and they had wonderful adventures through Hawaii and Hong Kong.

Chris resigned from active duty in November of 1985, after missing the birth of his second child and in anticipation of the birth of his third. After a year and a half, he joined the Navy Reserve, from which he was medically retired in 2002. While in the Reserve, Chris earned his Enlisted Surface Warfare Certificate and insignia, difficult even for personnel on active duty and nearly

unheard of for a reservist.

In his civilian welding career, Chris earned multiple additional certifications, including passing a challenging welding stress test that enabled him to weld on "high risk" projects; one such notable project being the three-story parking garage at the San Antonio airport – sadly, now being torn down after all of these years.

Between welding jobs, in the early 1990's, Chris decided to activate his GI Bill and return to school to become a registered nurse. Unbeknown to any of us, the early symptoms of Huntington's Disease had begun their insidious attack on Chris' cognitive, psychological, and motor skills, and his new career was never successfully launched.

Chris returned to welding in 1992, found out he carried the Huntington's gene in 1996, but was able to continue working until an accident in 1997 ended his career. Chris then became "Mr. Mom" – and his wife never knew if she would arrive home from work to a Mohawk haircut, a mock rock concert, or a pretend battle fought from the tree house he built for his kids. At the house in town, the vacant lot next door had been the site of weekly neighborhood bonfires, with singing and stories and marshmallow roasts. After moving to acreage in Spring Branch, Chris became "Cowboy Chris" – roaming the property with his sidekick horse Ziggy and entertaining the neighborhood kids with tall tales and opportunities to feed Ziggy an apple or a few carrots.

When care at home became too much for his family, Chris resided in several nursing homes for the remainder of his life. Given less than six months to live back in December of 2010 and told he could no longer have anything but pureed food and thickened liquids by mouth, his family stepped up their research and advocacy for care – and he ate a lot of cheese soup, mock chicken fried steak, and mashed potatoes and gravy since then. He drank

gallons of soda and ice cream, danced at two weddings wheelchair and all, attended four rodeos, met five new grandchildren, and chased a lot of fire trucks on outings with his wife in the so-called "six months" that became nearly five years. The last eight months were difficult, as Chris lost what remained of his abilities to think, speak, swallow, or even move as Huntington's Disease progressed toward its inevitable end.

Chris is survived by his loving wife of over 36 years, Shirley Holman Colyer; daughter Cathy Lynn Colyer Harrell and her husband Curtis, son Aaron Thomas Colyer and his wife Krista, son Shane Matthew Colyer; five grandchildren; step-father Monty Adair; and siblings Brenda Colyer Vowell, Frank Adair, Judy Adair Elliott, Cathy Adair Grider, and their spouses and children.

Services will be held on Monday, December 21st at 3:00 P.M. at the large chapel at Mission Park – Dominion 20900 IH-10 West, San Antonio, with a short graveside service immediately following.

The family respectfully requests that, in lieu of flowers, a donation be made in Chris' honor to the Huntington's Disease Society of America, 505 Eighth Avenue Suite 902, New York, NY 10018, or to a charity of your choice.