



Ronald Cleveland

August 25, 2020

Ronald Cleveland, 73, of San Antonio, was called home on August 25, 2020, as he had to get to heaven before America goes to hell. He joins the love of his life, wife Betty, his parents Roy and Cleo (Lillie) Cleveland, and his brother Robert (Bobby) Cleveland. Ron is remembered by sisters Joyce Schindler of Hockessin, DE, Judy Blakeman (husband Bob) of Fort Worth, son, Michael Cleveland, daughter, Tracey Sursa (husband John), and grandson, Ryan Dalby, whom PawPaw loved more than golf and Texas combined. Through them, many dear aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, in-laws, and countless friends, all with stories of antics, achievements, and generosity, he lives on.

Born on August 23, 1947, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, in Fort Worth, TX, young Ronnie gave his parents a run for their money. Legend has it that he ran away from home as a toddler to see a movie. Luckily, the little scoundrel developed a love of sports as a young man that gave him structure and his parents respite. His fascination with sports lasted a lifetime. He played football, basketball, and baseball through high school and maintained the friendships built throughout his life. His highlight reel included winning the baseball State Championship for 16 and under with Ron Landes and the rest of the River Oaks Bulldogs, making the Star-Telegram mid-jump shot, and blocking a punt on Halloween night, 1967, which he ran back for a touchdown. Those unfortunate enough to be trapped in a car with him anywhere near Birdville Stadium were regaled with tales of that Halloween touchdown every

darn time. Ron found golf at seventeen, and his life (and the fate of disappointing irons, woods, wedges, putters, etc.) was forever changed. Later, he was allegedly the only golfer smoking when the obtrusive Pampas grass on 15 at Sonterra caught fire, but he swore it was a lucky coincidence. (He was a man of many virtues, but patience is not among them.)

Ron graduated from Castleberry High School in 1965 by the skin of his teeth and married his high school sweetheart on September 16, 1967, at the ripe old age of 20. He worked two jobs and Betty one, to pay his way through TCU (Go Frogs!) debt-free. Upon earning his degree in 1971, Ron went to work for GE in sales. General Electric sent him to Oklahoma, back to Fort Worth, then to Shreveport and New Orleans before he high-tailed it back to Texas. They tried to steer him into management, but there were at least two dealbreakers. He'd have to spend considerable time in Cleveland, Ohio (not Texas adjacent), and he'd likely have to wear a tie, so he chose sales for the long haul. Though a top salesman in the company, he never "sold" anything. More precisely, the master salesman made life-long friends who happened to develop a preference for GE lightbulbs. The ability to remember the face and name of every soul the old bulldog encountered might have helped. Also an entrepreneur, in the 1980s, Ron and Betty opened Lone Star Video, where she worked days, he worked nights, and customers became friends.

From birth, Ronnie never met a stranger, was the life of every party, and, more than once, gave the shirt off his back. The way some people collect coins, he collected friends. Ron thought Betty hung the moon, and that belief helped shape him as a spectacular husband and father. He and Betty had daughter Tracey in 1972 and son Michael in 1976. Life was never dull. They enjoyed family vacations, sing-along road trips, family nights, and minor mischief led by the man who taught us not to take ourselves too seriously and that we could only embarrass ourselves by trying his best to embarrass us. Those endeavors only occasionally succeeded. Doing the alligator in Joske's when he saw Tracey hiding so her friends wouldn't see her with her parents was definitely in Ron's win column. Thanks to impulse purchases, Ronnie ensured

Tracey and Michael always drove cool cars, yet he and Betty managed to save plenty. They paid for both kids' college degrees, so they wouldn't have to work as hard as he did to make it through. All of life's great lessons were imparted to their children through Betty's patient teaching and Ron's earnest desire to raise decent human beings. When Ryan came along in 2002, his PawPaw with a heart bigger than Dallas lavished him with love like only a PawPaw can. Ryan became his little redheaded sidekick, tagging along while PawPaw played bluegrass, tracked down new gear for one his many hobbies, or found a spot to sit down and enjoy a sweet treat. Ronnie spoiled his family rotten, bringing home surprises daily, and never leaving "I love you," unspoken. After 36 years of marriage, when angels carried Betty home, Ron sat by her side, holding her hand as she took her last breath. A few years later, Ron began his struggle with illness. Even when words no longer came easy, Ronnie was still quick with a winning smile, a sincere "Thank you," an enthusiastic "Hi!" or a heartfelt "I love you."

Ron loved God, hunting, fishing, dogs, people, golf, guitars, guns, great friends, and good music, and spent his life collecting many treasures from every category. Ronnie despised waiting, crowds, wearing a suit and tie, and wasting daylight. In the Land of Uncloudy Days, he is at last golfing where there's no Pampas grass or slow players, singing gospel music with George Jones, strumming guitars, petting dogs, hugging those who arrived before him and keeping his Lord and Savior in stitches. Surely, a heavenly crowd surrounds the funniest and most openhearted man we have ever known, waiting for the next belly laugh. He carved out a Ron-sized space in many hearts and will be dearly missed by all.

Ronnie's wish to be cremated (to prevent his having to wear a tie) has been fulfilled. A graveside service to inter his ashes with Betty is planned for a date TBD, thanks to Covid-19, and this horror show we know as 2020. Those wishing to pay tribute on Ron's behalf can contribute to Mercury One, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, or Operation

Underground Railroad. In honor of Ron, the family requests of all who knew him, gather with friends and family, trade inappropriate jokes, tell tall tales, and raise a glass to the beloved old bulldog.

Tribute Wall



“ Ron and Betty owned a video rental store near our house in NW Crossing. Our two kids grew up going to the store and were greeted by Ron and Betty as part of the family (or so the kids thought). My daughter at 18 months would yell Ron's name if we passed by the store without stopping. Ron and Betty were the sweetest souls. I think about them often.

Jann Wooldridge - July 30, 2023 at 04:09 PM



“ Ronnie - Like so Many of our CHS65 Winning Team Members -on and off the Field- was one of my Hero's - Ronnie's Passing is Heaven's Gain and Our Loss.

Roger Dare Blocker - September 24, 2020 at 03:30 AM



“ So sorry to hear of Uncle Ronnie's passing. Now he can share golf stories And play a few rounds with his brother.

BJ Cleveland - September 23, 2020 at 02:18 PM



“ Ronnie was not only my cousin but a true friend who never met a stranger. What I remember most about Ronnie was his passion for life and love for his family. I will forever cherish the memories of my time with this special man.

Byrd Baggett - September 23, 2020 at 12:30 PM



Ronnie was a wonderful person who always had a smile on his face and was loved by all! Love and prayers for healing your broken hearts!

sandra and david fuller - September 24, 2020 at 06:51 AM



“ *He is now in heaven looking down on his beautiful daughter and family. He is still with you!* ”

Karla Rodriguez - September 17, 2020 at 01:21 PM

JH

“ *Mr. Cleveland raised a beautiful, smart, strong daughter, Tracey Sursa. He will be missed.* ”

Jennifer Hammond - September 17, 2020 at 01:19 PM