



Arthur Louis Schechter

December 6, 1939 - April 13, 2026

Born on December 6, 1939, in Rosenberg, Texas, to Morris and Helen Schechter — storeowners and civic leaders — Arthur came from a family shaped by two distinct legacies. His father was an immigrant, and his mother was a fourth-generation Texan from one of the state's oldest Jewish families. Arthur was the youngest of three brothers; Robert and Joe, both older, were figures he deeply admired for their brilliance, wit, and values.

At Lamar Consolidated High School, Arthur distinguished himself in many ways. He served as a class officer and Student Council officer, presided over several organizations, and was voted "Most Popular Boy" by his peers.

Arthur went on to attend the University of Texas, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree through the prestigious Plan II Honors Program and a J.D. in 1964. He took to university life wholeheartedly. A proud and devoted Longhorn, he was recognized as the outstanding member of his social fraternity, Phi Sigma Delta (Zeta Beta Tau), at the national level. He chaired numerous campus initiatives, participated actively in the Student Assembly and the Texas Union Board, served as an officer in the Silver Spurs honor society, and was a member of the Friar Society. He was also named a Cactus Outstanding Student.

After graduating, Arthur moved to Houston and embarked on a legal career

that spanned nearly half a century. He became a litigator specializing in admiralty law, representing clients from around the world — work that required both national and international travel. Many of those clients had little power or resources of their own, and it was through serving them that Arthur came to embody, in practice, his lifelong belief in the equal worth and dignity of every person.

Many of these clients lacked power or resources, and it was through representing them that the principle of treating all people equally — and striving to help those in need — became central to the practice. This commitment was recognized through numerous legal honors and awards.

That same dedication to helping others extended beyond the courtroom into charitable and philanthropic life. Arthur championed a wide range of causes, receiving many awards and being celebrated at events held to raise funds and awareness for the communities he served.

Politically, Arthur was a staunch Democrat who considered himself a progressive, though he occasionally crossed party lines to support Republican candidates he believed in. He helped organize the 21st Century Democrats and served as National Chairman of the National Jewish Democratic Council. He co-chaired the Clinton-Gore campaign in 1996 and received numerous honors in recognition of his contributions to Democratic causes.

In 1998, Arthur was appointed United States Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, a post he held until 2001. He was deeply proud of this chapter of his life — and of his wife Joyce, who served alongside him with equal dedication and grace. The Governor General of the Bahamas described Arthur as the finest ambassador ever posted to the country, while Bahamian newspapers celebrated Joyce as "an angel from Texas" for her outreach work in local communities. Arthur received many honors and

accolades for this distinguished service.

Upon returning to Houston, Mayor Lee P. Brown asked Arthur to chair the Metropolitan Transit Authority. In that role, Arthur worked alongside an outstanding board to guide METRO through the completion of a twenty-year transit plan, bring it to a public referendum, and launch construction. On his final day in office, Arthur joined Mayor Brown, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison — a steadfast supporter of METRO — and members of Congress, including Sheila Jackson Lee, Gene Green, Chris Bell, and Nick Lampson, to open the original Main Street Line. He took particular pride in riding with his grandchildren in the very first light rail car on the very first light rail journey in Houston's history. Arthur's contributions have been acknowledged in numerous publications.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Joyce; his daughters and sons-in-law, Jennifer and Alan Rosen, and Leslie and Hedley Karpas; and five adored grandchildren: Alyssa and Harlow Karpas, and Kacy, Sam, and Lillie Rosen; as well as numerous beloved nieces and nephews and friends.

The Arthur Louis Schechter family would like to say thank you to:

Physicians: Dr. James Muntz, Dr. Kelty Baker, Dr. James Lisman, Dr. Barry Trachtenberg, Dr. Melvyn Anhalt, Dr. Sarah Dabbas, Dr. George Taffett, Dr. Michael Campbell, Dr. Paul Tien, Dr. Paul Stoddard, as well as the staff of the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit and the 21st at Methodist Hospital.

Caregivers: Aristotle Del Pilar, Rei Alinsung, Antonio Gelvezon II, Angelo Infante, Keans Laderas, Joelix Pison, Marilyn Quinn, Kayla Casey, and Annie Marie Ridao.

Executive Assistant to Arthur Schechter: Cindy Reynolds

Private nurse: Mike Gichana

Funeral services will be held on Wednesday, April 15 at 11:00 am in the Sanctuary at Congregation Beth Israel, 5600 N. Braeswood Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77096. Following services, there will be a private family burial. In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to a charity of your choice in memory of Arthur L. Schechter.

The funeral service will be livestreamed at the following link: <https://www.beth-israel.org/about-us/news-events-upcoming-events/livestreaming/>.

A Minyan will be held on Wednesday, April 15 at 6:00 pm at The Post Oak Hotel, 2nd Floor Ballroom, 1600 W. Loop South, Houston, TX 77027.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

APR **15**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Congregation Beth Israel
5600 N. Braeswood Blvd.
Houston, TX 77096

The service will be located in the Sanctuary. <https://www.beth-israel.org/about-us/news-events-upcoming-events/livestreaming/>

Tribute Wall

MS

“ It was an honor to meet and spend a number of events with Ambassador Schechter. He always spoke highly of Joyce and his family. I was very proud of his presence at and contributions to Congregation Beth Israel. He introduced me to my friend Fred Zeidman. I appreciate getting to know the Ambassador. May his memory be a blessing!!

Michael Sultanik - April 19 at 05:07 PM

EC

“ Very beautiful obituary of my Classmate, Arthur , who many of us remember him as Butch. What an amazing life he led! We, at Lamar Consolidated, considered him as our special friend. He always had a kind word for each of us expressing that he cared . Arthur enjoyed joining us at Olive Garden in Rosenberg for our class of '58 luncheon and sharing life's adventures. We will miss our friend. RIP Butch.

Evelyn Welborn Cherry - April 16 at 03:40 PM

JR

I also went to high school with Butch. We were there when rock and roll was just becoming popular. You better hold because Butch could dance. He made it a lot of fun with his bigger than life laugh. I moved to Houston two weeks after graduation so I haven't seen him since then but you couldn't forget Butch. So nice to have known him.

Judy Wheeler Ransom - April 16 at 07:32 PM

AP

“ Amb Schechter was a great man. The world a lesser place with this loss.

Art Pronin - April 15 at 01:32 AM

JG

AMB Schechter was the best Ambassador I ever worked with. His smile and sense of humor was infectious! His wisdom and guidance was a blessing. It was an honor to serve with him. Arthur, thank you for you Friendship! You will be sorely missed!

Jon Goldberg - April 15 at 09:53 PM