



Byron E. Wilkenfeld

March 14, 1942 - March 1, 2023

Byron E. Wilkenfeld, M.D., Ph.D., and all-around nice human, passed away peacefully in Austin on Wednesday, March 1 surrounded by the love of his life, wife Carla, and family. He was just a few weeks shy of his 81st birthday.

Byron was born on March 14, 1942, in Goose Creek, Texas (now known as Baytown) to Morris and Beatrice Wilkenfeld. Byron was the youngest of four children.

Byron married Carla Jacobi on Aug. 2, 1970, and they celebrated 52 sweet years together. Along the way came two beautiful children and four beautiful grandchildren. Byron is survived by Carla of Austin; son Seth Wilkenfeld and wife Nan of Santa Barbara, Calif.; daughter Katherine Adelman and husband David of St. Louis, Mo.; and grandchildren Jacob and Margaret Wilkenfeld, and Eli and Ethan Adelman. He is also survived by brother and sister-in-law Dr. Jerry and Sylvia Wilkenfeld of Houston; sister Sharon Wilkenfeld of Silver Spring, Md.; brother-in-law and sister-in-law Jeffrey and Carol Jacobi of Katy, Texas; brother-in-law and sister-in-law Van and Gina Jacobi of Lakeland, Fla.; and numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews who loved him (and called him Uncle Butch).

Byron is preceded in death by his parents and brother Herschell Wilkenfeld. Byron loved nothing more than his family – and isn't that the best legacy of

all?

Byron was a respected and accomplished psychiatrist and psychotherapist who believed passionately in group therapy. He also had a Ph.D. in pharmacology – knowledge that was critical to his life's work in psychiatry. He was funny, humble, and the smartest guy in the room, all at the same time.

Byron never tired of learning. He graduated from the University of Houston in 1965 with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics. He received a Master of Arts degree in pharmacology and a Doctor of Pharmacology degree from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. As if that wasn't challenging enough, Byron entered medical school at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston and graduated in 1973. He finished his residency in psychiatry at Medical University of South Carolina in 1976.

The end of his formal schooling hardly meant the end of his learning. Byron loved to read and loved for Carla to read to him, even as far back as when they first married. Byron enjoyed a good story while on long driving trips with the children. Carla might read two of his favorites, such as any Sigmund Freud book or the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, which is described as a Russian theological and philosophical mystery involving murder and erotic rivalry. We told you Byron was smart!

Side note ... one can imagine that those stories helped young Seth and Katherine sleep well during long drives. Always by his side, Carla read to Byron all through his final days.

Byron would tell you that, as a psychiatrist, he heard it all and loved it all. He credited Carla for pushing him to medical school – he always thanked her for encouraging him to become a psychiatrist. He would say, the more complicated the brain, the more interesting and fun was his work. He relished

in a professional challenge.

Byron always believed that patients came first – and when politics and money got in the way, he fought the good fight for his patients. If Byron wasn't satisfied, he would move on and practice elsewhere. Ethical and fair patient care was Byron's highest priority.

Byron spent the last decade of work serving patients in Austin and Travis County, where he specialized in medication group therapy. Before then, he served as a psychiatrist in Palestine, Texas; Pampa, Texas; Charlotte, N.C.; and Houston. Byron treated adults and adolescents; as is necessary for a good therapist, he was a great listener! Only after listening could Byron give the right advice

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Byron had an engaging personality and sense-of-humor. Byron and Carla had their married squabbles like any happy couple. More often than not, they ended in laughter because Byron had a knack for taking one single word of the “debate” and turning that word into a Funny Bomb – as they called it. Laughter was always their best medicine.

Carla shared a text from a friend. She said it uniquely summarized what she would say about her beloved Byron:

“Byron was an extraordinary person. He had this constant joy in his heart and loved his life. I felt it every time I was in his presence. My days were always just a bit better when I got to see him. He had that rare combination of brilliance and humility, and I will miss him. He will live on in the hearts of all of us as an example of the best of humankind.”

Graveside services for Byron will be at 10 a.m. on Sunday, March 5th at Adath

Israel Cemetery, 4714 Airline Drive in Houston, TX 77022. Rabbi Brian Strauss from Congregation Beth Yeshurun will officiate.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in Byron's memory to the University of Houston.

Cemetery Details

Adath Israel Cemetery

4714 Airline Dr,
Houston, TX 77022

Previous Events

Graveside Service

MAR 5. 10:00 AM (CT)

Adath Israel Cemetery
4714 Airline Dr,
Houston, TX 77022