



George Jay Engelhart

May 2, 1940 - April 7, 2026

George Jay Engelhart, 85, our beloved Dad and Grandfather, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, in Houston, Texas. He was born on May 2, 1940 at Jewish Hospital of Brooklyn in New York to the late Joseph and Celia Eidelman Engelhart. He was a giant of a man, literally six-foot-six, with a booming voice, but he was, at the same time, a very kind and generous man.

George grew up in Brooklyn and Long Island. He attended PS1 64, then Montauk Junior High, and George W. Hewlett High School. He graduated high school at 17. In his yearbook he was labeled a wizard at science and math. He was. He won the Bausch & Lomb Honorary Science Award and had a perfect math SAT score. George enrolled at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn and earned a B.S. in Physics in 1961. He then obtained his M.S. in industrial administration at Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon) in Pittsburgh in 1963. George then went to work for Western Electric's Engineering Research Center (part of AT&T) where he performed varied R&D work in the areas of forecasting and production planning. We have a wonderful memento: A 1971 copy of Western Electric's, "The Engineer" magazine which contains his scholarly technical article, "Multiplant Loading and Scheduling for Exchange Cable Area."

George met Sheila Avrutin (of blessed memory) in the early 1960s and they

fell in love. They married on July 4, 1965 on Long Island. The couple settled in central New Jersey. They had their first child, Elizabeth Sue “Betsy” Engelhart (Johnson), in September 1967, and George’s job moved them to Phoenix, Arizona for a year. They had no luck finding a decent bagel during that time and promptly decamped back to north Jersey. Then they had their son, Michael Charles Engelhart, in July 1970, and George continued with Western Electric in New York City and then Newark, New Jersey.

After a number of outsourcing job changes, George finally retired from Nokia in 2005. George and Sheila, and Betsy and her family moved to Houston, Texas in 2006 to join Michael and his family who had come to Texas for law school and never left. The whole family joined Congregation Brith Shalom in Houston when they arrived. George and Sheila took every opportunity to spend time with their four grandchildren who were the center of their world.

Sheila died on July 2, 2020 after a lengthy illness. It was just two days before they would have celebrated their 55th anniversary. George heroically cared for Sheila during her illness, and never left her side.

George was a terrific father. He orchestrated many trips to Florida to bring the family to see his parents who had retired to Fort Lauderdale. The family went to Hawaii in 1989, to celebrate Betsy’s college graduation. He and Sheila took the kids on myriad day and weekend outings the family fondly called “adventures” to colonial villages, recreated western towns, an unforgettable trip to Cranberry World in Plymouth, Mass., and Disney World (twice!). There are too many inside family jokes to list here (and you wouldn’t appreciate them anyway) but we will always honor George’s plaid eating shorts from the 1970s. George also coached Betsy’s softball teams and was the president of Michael’s high school marching band parents’ organization.

He always headed up the synagogue directory projects, breaking advertising

revenue records, and served for over a decade as the Brith Shalom Synagogue Men's Club's treasurer and won their Man of the Year award.

George is preceded in death by his beautiful wife of 54 years, Sheila, his father, Joseph Engelhart, and his mother, Celia Eidelman Engelhart, as well as by his younger sister, Debra Engelhart. He is survived by his children, Betsy Johnson and her husband, Keith Johnson, his son, Michael Engelhart and his wife, Eva Shafir Engelhart. He is also survived by his brother, Eugene Engelhart of Florida, as well as by George's beloved grandchildren, on whom he doted, Joseph Engelhart, Haley Johnson, Zachary Engelhart, and Noah Johnson; his sister-in-law Alice Avrutin Yellin, and brother-in-law Bruce Yellin, and his niece, Allison Engelhart Spielman (Matt), as well as nephews, David Yellin (Cassie) and Stephen Yellin (Dana), in addition to numerous great-nieces and nephews, and cousins in the United States, Mexico and Israel.

The family wants to say a special thank you to the staff of Garden Terrace at Houston nursing home for caring for George for the past year and a half, and thank you to his private care-givers, Yvonne Campbell and Sheila Kimble for their love and dedication to George over the past several months.

The family will hold a chapel service at the Kagan-Rudy Chapel at Emanu El Memorial Park, at 8431 Bissonnet Street, Houston, Texas 77074 on Monday, April 13, 2026 at 12:00 pm. In lieu of flowers please make any donations to The Emma and Bruce Willis Fund for frontotemporal dementia (FTD) at eifoundation.org.

Cemetery Details

Emanu El Memorial Park

8341 Bissonnet St
Houston, TX 77074

Previous Events

Cemetery Chapel Service

APR **13**. 12:00 PM (CT)

Emanu El Memorial Park
8341 Bissonnet St
Houston, TX 77074

The Kagan-Rudy Chapel

Tribute Wall

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“ *It was a great honor and pleasure to serve as Mr. George private caretaker. He was a very kind man, and I truly enjoyed seeing the big smile he would give me whenever I greeted him it always melted my heart. He will be deeply missed. May he rest in peace 🙏*

-Sheila Kimble

Sheila Kimble - April 11 at 12:10 PM