



Joel Bloom

June 23, 1941 - March 30, 2026

Joel Bloom, adored husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, professor, and friend to many, died Monday, March 30, 2026. He was 84 years old.

Joel was born and raised in Chicago, the son of Ruth and Morris Bloom. He was a swimming and tennis athlete at Von Steuben High School and went on to play varsity tennis at Northern Illinois University. It was there that he began coaching and working as an athletic trainer - experiences that sparked a lifelong commitment to the health, performance, and well-being of others.

That passion became the foundation of his career. Joel earned his doctorate at the University of Wisconsin before moving his family to Houston, where he spent more than four decades as a professor at the University of Houston. He taught sports medicine, human anatomy, and biomechanics, authored numerous professional publications, and mentored generations of students.

Affectionately known as “Doc” by his students and colleagues, Joel was a beloved teacher and advisor who also supported the university’s track and field, baseball, swimming, and football programs with biomechanical guidance and consulting. He earned numerous awards for his excellence in teaching, mentorship, and service over the course of his career. His work in the classroom reflected not only his expertise, but his genuine interest in helping others grow stronger, healthier, and more confident - a legacy he furthered by

establishing the Joel Bloom Endowed Scholarship for undergraduate students in the University of Houston College of Education.

He brought that same commitment into clinical settings, working at Koala Health and Wellness Centers, where he administered strength and post-operative testing for spine, knee, hip, and back conditions, and conducted running gait and cycling mechanics assessments. He was invited to contribute his expertise to an Olympic committee, helping swimmers improve performance and speed. He also contributed to pioneering work in fitness, developing Water Exercise Therapy (W.E.T.) for arthritic patients, and co-founding Cyclistics, an indoor cycling certification program for fitness professionals.

His tenor voice could be heard above all others at his temple, Congregation Beth Israel, and his curiosity spanned from Civil War history to model trains. He was an avid reader, rode a bicycle well into his 70s, and was a devoted, and proudly insufferable, fan of the Chicago Bears. Most of all, he was fiercely loyal to every University of Houston athletic team and deeply valued the relationships he built with Cougar athletes over many decades.

Above all else, Joel loved his wife, Risa, and enjoyed participating in the lives of his children and grandchildren. He was an unmatched punster, a reluctant adopter of the “magic phone,” and began every birthday, starting in childhood, with ice cream and Wheaties. His family will always try to emulate his voice as the “Angel of Death” at Passover seders.

In addition to his wife, Risa, Joel is survived by his sons, Jonathan (Patty) and Douglas (Lisa); brother-in-law, David Mangurten (sister, Brucene z”l); stepchildren, Samantha (Steve) Szeszycki, Brandon (Penny) Moore, and Rachel Baskett; grandchildren, Rebecca (Jacob Letwat), Matthew, and Sara Bloom, Taylor Moore, Cheryl Bedsole (Micah), Riggin Baskett, Keegan

Baskett, Rebecca Bartley, and Nicole Snyder; and several nieces, nephews, and step-great-grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held at 10:00 am on Friday, April 3, 2026, in the Herman and Elaine Proler Chapel at Beth Israel Memorial Garden, 1101 Antoine Drive, Houston, TX 77055. The service will be livestreamed and can be viewed at

<https://www.youtube.com/live/MkHJ0yNTjrY?si=iq-q2KJXyfwPCOV1>

Memorial contributions may be made to the Dr. Joel Bloom Endowed Scholarship Fund at the University of Houston, PO Box 867, Houston TX 77001-0867, or to the organization of your choice.

Cemetery Details

Beth Israel Memorial Garden

1101 Antoine Dr.
Houston, TX 77055

Previous Events

Funeral Service

APR 3. 10:00 AM (CT)

Beth Israel Memorial Garden
1101 Antoine Dr.
Houston, TX 77055

The service will be livestreamed and can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/live/MkHJ0yNTjrY?si=iq-q2KJXyfwPCOV1>

Tribute Wall

RW

“ I'm so sorry that I missed the ceremony for Joel on Friday and missed conveying my condolences to Risa. Joel was a wonderful colleague at the University of Houston, beloved by his students and fellow faculty, and a true friend and indomitable spirit. I'll always carry the fondest memories of Joel.
Bob Wimpelberg

Robert Wimpelberg - April 05 at 10:36 AM

LW

“ I am sorry to have missed the gathering Friday in memory of this wonderful man, my friend and co-conspirator of many efforts to make the University of Houston a better place for our students. Joel and I worked together for many years on the Health Professions Advisory Committee and Undergraduate Council as well as some personal, subversive activities to promote undergraduate education. He was a joy to know and was always full of joy and wonder. He was the eternal optimist...a source of enthusiasm and support. My condolences to his family and loved ones. He will be remembered fondly.

Larry Williams - April 03 at 11:24 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joel Bloom.

April 03 at 03:38 PM

MN

“ Michael Nelson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joel Bloom.

Michael Nelson - April 03 at 09:28 AM

MN

“ *Michael Nelson purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Joel Bloom.*



Michael Nelson - April 03 at 09:28 AM

AT

“ *Amanda T. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joel Bloom.*

Amanda T. - April 03 at 09:12 AM

AS

“ *In Loving Memory of an Extraordinary Professor, Mentor, and Friend
Dr. Joel Bloom* ❤️

There are some people who enter your life and change its course forever. Doc was one of those rare souls for me.

Doc was so much more than an incredible professor—he was my mentor, my friend, and truly became family. I was blessed to serve as his TA my senior year at UH and was his assistant in WET, and in doing so, I witnessed firsthand his passion for teaching, his generosity, and the deep care he had for every student and patient he encountered. He didn't just teach content—he taught confidence, purpose, and heart.

When I was lost 26 years ago, he helped guide me toward becoming a teacher and showed me what it truly means to believe in someone before they believe in themselves. He instilled in me a lifelong love for the University of Houston and helped shape the educator and person that I am today.

I am incredibly grateful that I was able to be by his side for over three hours this past Sunday before he passed. That time, those moments, and that presence are gifts I will treasure forever. Along with that, I will always hold close the memories of standing beside him in his wedding to his love, Risa, and the honor of having him be a part of our wedding as well. Those moments reflect the depth of the bond we shared—one built on trust, love, and chosen family.

There is a huge hole in my heart knowing he is gone. I will miss him dearly and deeply. His wisdom, laughter, and compassion will continue to live on through all of us who were lucky enough to know him.

To honor his legacy, I will always celebrate his birthday with a bowl of Wheaties and ice cream—a small but meaningful tribute to a man who gave so much of himself to others.

*Thank you, Doc, for everything. Your impact will never fade.
Until we meet again, Alycia*

Alycia (Batla) Stewart - April 02 at 04:01 PM

SS

“ Sharon Sterchy planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joel Bloom.

Sharon Sterchy - April 02 at 03:00 PM

MU

“ Marty Urand planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joel Bloom.

Marty Urand - April 02 at 11:56 AM

MU

“ Marty Urand purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Joel Bloom.



Marty Urand - April 02 at 11:56 AM

TF

“ The J.Jill Family purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Joel Bloom.



The J.Jill Family - April 01 at 10:50 PM

KA

“ I am so sorry to hear of Dr. Bloom's passing. I took two of his classes in the early 90's and learned so much from him. He was tough but always fair.

I remember an assignment he had where we had to come up with a game that was fitness related. Dr. Bloom always wore his sweatsuit labeled with the planes of the body on the first day to class. I decided to make a Dr. Bloom doll and put it in the same outfit. Most students worked in groups but when I shared my idea no one wanted to work with me. They seriously thought he would fail me. Well, the doll was a hit and when I saw him years later at Koala he said he still had it! So grateful to have known him.

Karen - April 01 at 08:33 PM

DD

Dwight.Davis

Dr Bloom was an extraordinary human being. In the early '70 I was a student athlete at UH and first met him in the halls of the HPE building. As a Science major I only saw him infrequently but was always impressed by his high energy and huge smile. I learned that he had a reputation as smart, energetic and very direct professor. A professor who brought out the best in his students. Because he was such a strong supporter of UH athletics I began to feel that we had a special connection even though I never taken a class from him. In my junior year I changed majors to Kinesiology and found myself taken a class from the famous Dr Bloom. He was as I had heard a hard driving professor who would not let you give up or give in if you really wanted it. He ushered me and many other students to our greatest and best selves as students which would leave to graduation and even a post graduate degree. He was a god father to so many of us. I am and will always be eternally grateful for what he did for me and so many many others.

Dwight Davis - April 02 at 04:47 PM

FR

“ I am one of those relics who first met Joel back in Von Steuben High School in Chicago. Although he was in the class behind mine, I remember that he was a tennis player and that was very unusual back in those days. Most athletes concentrated on basketball—which was the main sport for Chicago high school boys back then (because we didn’t have football!). When I moved to Texas, I bumped into him during one of the many state-wide conventions put on by the Texas Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. It was a lot of fun to reminisce with him about the “good old days.” He was very proud of his career and his clinics. My condolences to his family and friends.
Fran Rush

Fran Rush - April 01 at 06:41 PM

MF

“ Mabry family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joel Bloom.

Mabry family - April 01 at 06:35 PM

MF

“ Mabry family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Joel Bloom.



Mabry family - April 01 at 06:35 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Joel Bloom.*



April 01 at 06:28 PM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Richard Almstedt - April 01 at 04:30 PM



“ *My time at the College of Education briefly overlapped with Dr. Bloom's and I'm so glad I had the chance to get to know him. His enthusiasm for teaching was clear for all to see, as were the friendships he fostered with faculty and staff. My heart goes out to his family and friends. May his memory be a blessing.*

Jaime Questell - April 01 at 03:37 PM

JA

“ 18 files added to the album *Teaching*



Jaime - April 01 at 03:18 PM



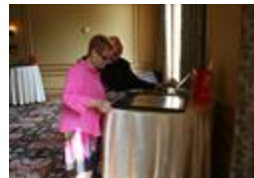
“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Joel Bloom.



April 01 at 03:17 PM

JA

“ 13 files added to the album *2012 Career Celebration*



Jaime - April 01 at 03:12 PM

LL

“ I worked with Dr. Bloom for many years. He was always so sweet and would always be willing to help when I needed some extra time for students. He was ready to help by giving extensions on assignments or exams if a student was having a life issue. A truly extraordinary professor and a wonderful person! Laura Lee

Laura Lee - April 01 at 11:41 AM

EB

“ Dr. Bloom was not only a great teacher (I took two of his classes) and advisor to those he taught and worked with. He was also an advocate for all the Jewish students on campus. He was there when times were tough for Jews on campus (as it seems never ends). When I was the lead student, and President of Hillel, he was there with us when we were fighting to not allow Louis Farrakhan to have an audience on campus. He and Dr. Irv Rothman were two strong advocates who helped me lead this cause. In addition, he helped me when I took a class called Teaching PE to elementary students, which I used knowing I wanted to be a camp director at the JCC after graduation (my past career for 18 years). He also helped me in his lifeguarding class to become a stronger swimmer and learn how to save lives in a swimming pool environment. May his memory always be for a blessing.

Eric Bishop - April 01 at 11:07 AM

TF

“ The Matranga Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Joel Bloom.



The Matranga Family - April 01 at 10:59 AM



“ *My favorite thing about going to Houston was going to the museums with Joel. No one else wanted to ever go, so it was always just us. We would walk around forever looking at everything and he would talk about the things that he knew and listen to the odds and ends that I knew. We would always end it with a trip to Barnaby's. Once my daughter was able to enjoy it she came on trips with us, much to her dismay a lot of the time, but she did pick up his love for trains. We will miss him dearly and cherish the memories made as the precious jewels they are.*

Rebecca Bartley - April 01 at 10:46 AM

ZU

Joel and I were high school classmates, the two loudest tenors in the high school choir, and friends forever. He was simply a mensch.

Zalman Usiskin

Zalman Usiskin - April 03 at 05:45 AM