



Joel Phillip Kay

August 27, 1936 - May 16, 2024

Joel P. Kay passed away peacefully Thursday, May 16, 2024 at the age of 87.

Joel was born in Corsicana, TX to Milton and Helen Kay, and spent his childhood in Liberty, TX before moving to Houston in his early teens. He attended Johnston Jr High and San Jacinto High School, where he met many lifelong friends. He went on to attend the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, graduating with a BS in Economics.

After graduating from the University of Texas School of Law, he was admitted to the State Bar of Texas in 1961. He then served in the U.S. Army JAG Corps for eighteen months and achieved the rank of captain. Joel began his professional career as a lawyer in 1963 when he worked in Washington, D.C. with the Tax Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. From 1967 through 1969, Joel served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of Texas. During this time, he also graduated with a Master of Laws degree in Taxation from Georgetown University. From 1969 through July 2001, Joel was a partner with Sheinfeld, Maley and Kay, P.C., one of the nation's top-ranked bankruptcy firms for many years. SMK at one time employed 85 attorneys and operated offices in Austin, Dallas, and Houston. In 2001 Joel joined Hughes Watters Askanase as an Of Counsel and spent the remainder of his legal career there. He was also admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals - Fifth Circuit, U.S. District Courts (Southern

District of Texas, Western District of Texas, and Southern District of Alabama). Over his career, he received a number of awards and honors, including recognition in both Texas Monthly's Super Lawyers issue and Law and Politics magazine from 2003 to 2010 and the Texas State Bar's Bankruptcy Section's Banco Rotto "Legend" Award for 2007. Joel achieved positions of distinction as a member of numerous professional associations, including the State Bar of Texas (director, 1979-1981; chairman of the board, 1981-1982), the Houston Bar Foundation (director, 1995-1998), the American College of Bankruptcy (board of regents, Fifth Circuit, 1997-2003), and the American College of Bankruptcy Foundation (director, 2003-2008). Joel also served as a member of the boards of directors of various community non-profit organizations, including Congregation Beth Israel, the Jewish Community Center, and 7 Acres Jewish Senior Care Services.

Joel met the love of his life, Marilyn Soltz, at UT Austin when he was attending law school and she was an undergrad. They were married in Pine Bluff, AR in 1961 and were blessed with almost 63 years of wedded bliss. After a few years, along came Arthur, Sarah, and then Leslie. Spending time with his family was his greatest joy and highest priority, and over the years there were Sunday night steak dinners, several fun family travels, lots of memorable times at the Galveston beach house, and many joyous life events. He had many passions outside of family and practicing law, including genealogy, stamp collecting, and getting together with lifelong friends.

Joel was an extremely empathetic person and would give "the shirt off his back" to anyone in need. Although he spent the last years of his life with Alzheimers, he was always wanting to give a helping hand. Even in the past few years in his decline, Joel still had joy and a smile on his face. He showed gratitude for us, and we felt his love to the end. He lived a great life, he brought joy to many people, and he will be missed by those who knew him and loved him. He was the kindest, sweetest, most loving person to the end.

Joel is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Marilyn, and three children: Arthur Kay, Sarah De Lachica, and Leslie Strug. He always treated his children-in-law, Rebecca Mellon Kay, Ernie De Lachica, and Paul Strug, with the warmth and closeness that he showed his three children. Paw Paw was also a loving grandfather to Howard and Hannah Kay and Madeline and Brandon Strug. He is also survived by his brother and sister-in-law Stanley & Joanne Kay, and nephew Andy & Morgan Kay. He was preceded in death by his parents, Milton Kay and Helen Goldman Kay, and his in-laws Hyman and Miriam Soltz, sister-in-law Rosalie Eisenkramer, and brother and sister-in-law Maurice & Gerry Soltz.

Funeral services were held on Sunday, May 19, 2024, in the Proler Chapel at Congregation Beth Israel Memorial Garden, 1101 Antoine Dr., Houston, Texas, 77055. The service was recorded and can be viewed at: <https://view.oneroomstreaming.com/index.php?data=MTcxNTk3MTIwMzMwOTY4NCZvbmVyb29tLWFKbWluJmNvcHlfbGluaw==>

Memorial contributions can be made to Congregation Beth Israel (<https://www.beth-israel.org/giving/>), Seven Acres Jewish Senior Care Services (<https://www.sevenacres.org/donate/>), or a charity of your choice.

Cemetery Details

Beth Israel Memorial Garden

1101 Antoine Dr.
Houston, TX 77055

Previous Events

Cemetery Chapel Service

MAY **19**. 3:30 PM (CT)

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

Tribute Wall

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“Marilyn and family, so sorry to just learn of Joel's passing. He and my Jay had a special bond sealed in the love of law. May God grant you peace in your grief and smiles in your many happy memories. Susan Hirsch and family. 🙏🕊️🇺🇸

Susan Hirsch - July 02, 2024 at 06:24 PM