



Joel Levy

January 2, 1930 - November 2, 2016

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Joel Morton Levy, husband, father, grandfather, brother, son, uncle, business and community leader, friend to so many, and the biggest Longhorn fan of all time, passed away peacefully on November 2, 2016, surrounded by his loving family. Joel was born on January 2, 1930, in Houston, Texas, the son of William and Edna Meyerhoff Levy, of blessed memory. He was a proud provider to seven children and a loyal husband who bled burnt orange. Joel was full of energy and even as his health declined these past few years, he got up and dressed every day ready for whatever adventure he could find.

Joel attended military school at Allen Academy, and always spoke fondly of his days there. His college years were spent at the University of Texas and University of Houston. After graduating from UH, he served two years in the US Air Force, and then moved to Chicago to work for his Uncle Arthur Meyerhoff. He loved working for his Uncle Art, and often told stories about his adventures during that time. Joel returned to Houston to join his father,

William, in the family grocery business. He met and married Tudy Miller Levy, of blessed memory, and they had three children, Ellen, Bruce and Julie. Joel and Tudy enjoyed life and traveling together, even through her battle with breast cancer. Joel loved Tudy's parents, Mae and Maury Miller of blessed memory, and they were a close part of his family for the rest of their lives. Following Tudy's death, Joel's family expanded further. He was blessed with his son Billy, a source of great joy and happiness. Joel then met and married Kay Bergel Bregman, who was the love of the rest of his long life. He loved and was a devoted father to her three young children, Kim, Kirk, and Kris, who completed his brood. For almost 40 years with Kay, Joel lived a full life, squeezing as much living as he could out of every moment.

Joel and Kay loved fishing, golfing, traveling, and entertaining family and friends together. They especially loved spending time at their home in Rockport, Texas, and their annual 4th of July party in Rockport was a coveted invite. Above all, Joel lived, breathed and loved Longhorns Football, and was an unwavering supporter of the University of Texas. He went to all the games he could (even as his health made it harder), was close friends with coaches and staff, and was always ready to help and entertain. He was a regular at the Thursday Longhorn lunch group, where his insights and inside information were revered by all. Joel served as President of the Houston Texas Exes, helped found the Longhorn Foundation, and was Chairman of the Longhorn Foundation Advisory Council. He served on numerous development boards and department councils for the University, including University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston. Joel also served the Houston community as President of the Jewish Community Center, and on the boards of Jewish Family Service, Jewish Federation of Houston, Congregation Beth Israel, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and several bank boards.

Joel's proudest business accomplishment was joining his father William Levy, and his brother in law Alfred Friedlander in the grocery business. From one store, together they built Rice Food Markets to a leader in the Houston grocery market. Following his father's death, Joel and Alfred continued to build the grocery and real estate business, and later welcomed the next generation of the family to run the business. The family business that started with one store was transformed into the very successful Rice Epicurean Markets and Rice Properties, where Joel served as Co-Chairman Emeritus.

Joel was a true patriarch, and loved being a big part of the lives of his large extended family. Joel was preceded in death by his son, Kirk Bregman. We are sure Joel is telling Kirk what to do, and Kirk is smiling and glad they are together again. Joel is survived by his wife Kay Levy, and his children Ellen Levy, Bruce & Joanne Levy, Julie & Scott Silverman, Kim Levy, Kris Johnston and her fiancé Cameron Smith, and William "Billy" & Whitley Levy, and his grandchildren, Dr. Shauna Levy, Meredith (and Chris) Mackenzie, Zachary (and Jackelyn) Silverman, Carly Levy (and her fiancé Nathan Sessions), Megan (and Stephen) Uzick, Andrew (and Ariel) Levy, Lexie Silverman, Spencer Johnston, Avery Johnston, Palmer Levy, Margot Levy, and Kate Lundy, and his sister and brother in law, Paula & Alfred Friedlander, and their children Gary Friedlander, Tommy Friedlander, Lori Cohen, and their spouses, and sisters & brothers in law Martha & Jack Rips, Sandra & Sammy Chaskin, and Linda & Michael Braude, and many nieces and nephews.

For more than thirty years, Teresa Rodriguez has been a part of the family, and has lovingly cared for Joel throughout the later years of his life. We are thankful for the care Joel received for many years from Jose Ramirez, Frank Gutierrez, Miguel Ramirez, and Gerardo (Gerry) Cuevas Mendoza. He loved his workouts with David Taylor and rehab with Nino Iannello. A special thanks to Dr. Jim Willerson and Mae Thomas, and all the wonderful doctors, nurses and caregivers at Texas Heart Institute. Above all others, Kay never wavered in her devoted and loving care over the many up and down years of Joel's health. His life was full because of Kay's constant care and support allowing him to do everything he could with gusto.

In lieu of flowers or food, the family gratefully requests that donations be made to Texas Heart Institute Cardiac Regenerative Center, Congregation Beth Israel, or to a charity of your choice.