



Mervin "Merv" Rosenbaum

February 4, 1929 - July 16, 2019

Mervin (Merv) Rosenbaum passed away on July 16, 2019 in Houston Texas at the age of 90.

He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Jean Peterman Rosenbaum. Also surviving are his three children: Susan (Eric Schoen), Steven (Hae-Soon Hahn) and Barry (Eriko Matsumoto). In addition, he leaves behind six beloved grandchildren: Benjamin Schoen, Lauren Schoen, Elizabeth Rosenbaum, Julia Rosenbaum, Hana Rosenbaum and Yoko Rosenbaum.

Other survivors include his sister-in-law and brother-in-law Marian and Arthur Daum and his brother-in-law and sister-in-law Henry and Betsy Peterman plus nephews and nieces Daniel Peterman, Debbie and David Gersh, Ann and Chris Fisher, and Steven and Suzie Daum. He was predeceased by his niece Emily Peterman.

Mervin was born in New Rochelle, NY on February 4, 1929, the only child of Eva Rubin and Harry Rosenbaum, who had emigrated from Russia in the early 1900s. His father learned the auto mechanic trade in the US Army during WWI, and owned an auto repair shop. As the Depression deepened his father had to give up the shop and go to work for someone else. Merv read a lot and also participated in many sports, playing mainly with neighborhood kids since there was no Little League available. He was very good in school,

skipping half of kindergarten and all of seventh grade.

He remembered three things from New Rochelle. In 1938, several French naval ships docked at New Rochelle and led a big parade celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the city by Huguenots from La Rochelle, France. Second was Pearl Harbor Day on Dec. 7, 1941. He and a friend had just attended a performance of "They Died with Their Boots On" starring Errol Flynn. When the movie was over, the news was everywhere. Merv was sent to the principal's office a few days later for cutting up during a meaningless air raid drill. Third was the accident which broke his mother's wrists when the ropes in the apartment dumbwaiter broke. Although she recovered in a reasonable time, arthritis set in. This precipitated a move to the dry climate in El Paso at the age of 13 where an aunt and family lived.

His experience at El Paso High was mixed. Although he finished in the top ten he did not make the National Honor Society, because of failing ROTC by doing such things as singing "Marching through Georgia" when out marching. His father operated a Mobil station and repair shop and Merv used to work there on weekends. He also worked at a grocery store when his father went to work at Fort Bliss in the motor vehicle dept. where he ended up a general foreman. Merv graduated at the age of 16 in May, 1945 and began school that fall at Texas College of Mines (now UTEP). At that time it had 950 students, mainly WWII veterans. Now it has over 25,000. He had originally planned to take civil engineering (a goal of his parents), but shortly before enrolling switched to chemical engineering, although never having taken a chemistry course.

He had a major accident in summer, 1946, when he pushed his hand through a plate glass window while horsing around. He was rushed to the hospital, but the surgery was somewhat botched. His parents decided he should go to NYC to get some low cost assistance from relatives in the medical profession. He

spent about 8 months there and it became a magical time. After a few weeks, his mother returned to El Paso and he spent the rest of the time living with an aunt on W. 20th St. in Manhattan. He got a day job delivering advertising copy for Women's Wear Daily by subway throughout the city and going to City College at night. He went to 20-25 plays on Broadway usually by himself. He used to walk the 20--25 blocks at night through largely deserted streets without a care. After all, he was 17.

When the semester was over, he returned to El Paso and resumed college there. He worked summers and holidays at the post office unloading parcel post in a non-air conditioned basement and occasionally delivering mail. The outside temperature got to 107 degrees. It was the best summer job one could get averaging 99¢ per hour. In early 1948 he transferred to UT in Austin, having gone as far as he could in El Paso.

He started out in a student boarding house and then moved to the Campus Guild Coop. There a friend introduced him to the lovely and talented Jean Peterman who became his wife in 1950. Honorary Societies to which he was elected included Tau Beta Pi, Omega Chi Epsilon and Phi Lambda Upsilon. After graduating with a MS in ChE, he went to work in Elizabeth, NJ with Standard Oil Development Co. Mervin (accompanied by Jean and six-week old Susan) went on a 1 year startup assignment in 1953 in Antwerp, Belgium. Upon returning, he was able to get a transfer to Humble Oil (Exxon) in Baytown where he worked for 30 years, mainly in process design but also spent time in operations, and computer control.

He also spent most of a year at Florham Park, NJ, working on the planning of the Benicia refinery in California. Following this assignment, he worked for 2 years in Houston HQ as Energy Coordinator for all the domestic refineries. He was then transferred back to Baytown to manage a major portion of a large

project. This project was finished on schedule and operated successfully. The project team was offered an early retirement package which was too good to refuse and essentially the whole team accepted it. He retired at the age of 57.

He was active in Baytown civic affairs and had a role in many bond elections there. He was chairman of the Goose Creek Stream committee. He and Jean were finalists for the Baytown Citizen of the Year in 2006. He worked for 21 years as a tax consultant for AARP Tax Aid and had the longest tenure of anyone in the Houston area when he left this job. He was also active in K'Nesseth Israel synagogue where he held every office at least once. He was instrumental in obtaining Texas Historical Marker status for the synagogue. He was also active in national politics and took a week of vacation to volunteer for JFK's race, worked hard for Bill Clinton's election, attending Clinton's first inauguration.

Jean and Merv had always loved traveling and after retirement took off. They started off with a 30 day trip to California, taking 15 days to meander through Texas. They timed their trip to coincide with the landing of the Voyager at Edwards Air Force base as it completed its historical circuit of the world without refueling. They ended this trip at Los Angeles where Barry and family lived, went to the Rose Parade and then headed back to Texas. Don Giovanni by Mozart was Merv's favorite opera. He assumed there should be a 200th anniversary celebration of the Prague premier in 1787. Since Czechoslovakia was still under communist rule, it took almost a year to find out there would be such a performance and make preparations to attend. They returned to Prague in 1991, now free of the communists, to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death. They lucked out in attending another big celebration which is held every 100 years and had been last held in 1891.

Much of their traveling was under the Elderhostel (now Roads Scholar) program where they attended 75 sessions in the USA and overseas. It was

mainly through this program that Merv achieved his goal of visiting all 50 states. Some countries visited included Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Hungary, Yugoslavia, France, Ireland, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, and Israel.

Jean and Merv loved music from Country and Western to Classical. They attended the Houston Symphony for over 40 years and visited the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland in 2010.

Merv was known for his sense of humor, poetry writing skill and trivia expertise.

In lieu of flowers, contributions are encouraged to the Southern Poverty Law Center, 400 Washington Ave, Montgomery, AL 36104, or The James Dick Foundation for the Performing Arts, Box 89, Round Top, TX, 78954, or a charity of your choice.