



Ronald Charles Lieber

June 16, 1922 - February 5, 2019

Ronald Charles Lieber, beloved father, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle, cousin and friend, unexpectedly passed from this life on February 5, 2019. He took his wonderfully recognizable laugh, radiant smile and gleaming twinkle in his eye with him as he rejoined Helga, the love of his life and wife of 62 years, who had passed nine years earlier. Although he had been biding his time until he and Helga could be together forever, he remained active for over 96 years, living his life to the fullest extent possible. Surrounded by family and friends on February 10, 2019, he was laid to his final resting place next to Helga at Congregation Beth Israel Memorial Gardens in Houston, Texas, with Rabbi David Lyon and Cantor Star Trompeter officiating.

Born in New York City, NY in 1922, Ronald experienced a world that changed dramatically during his lifetime. He played stickball with other children in streets filled with vendors, pushcarts, horses and cars. As a child during the Great Depression, he worked as a soda jerk in his father's candy store and defended his honor as a Jew against unwarranted anti-Semitic bully attacks.

He lost his mom too early when he was only 17 years old and graduated from DeWitt Clinton High School.

On December 8, 1941, the morning after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Ronald stood in a long line of men to enlist. But Ronald was too young to serve and his father had to sign a permission slip. The Army sent Ronald to the South

West Pacific Theater without any weapons or ammunition initially, but with plenty of cigarettes, forcing soldiers to bury any remnants in the ground to hide their presence from the enemy. He obtained the rank of Sergeant and served as a field radio station operator and technician in the Signal Corps, handling Tokyo Rose propaganda. He fought in four island invasions and was slated to be in the first wave into Japan, which was the only time he was concerned he would never see home again. Ronald lived to almost 97 years of age because the atomic bomb canceled that invasion into Japan.

After World War II, Ronald applied to colleges on the GI bill. Unfortunately, the small Jewish college quotas filled quickly and he was only accepted into Cal Tech and Oklahoma A & M (now OSU). When he went to the New York City Public Library to research those colleges further, the reference librarian introduced him to Helga, a pretty librarian from Oklahoma, and his decision became much easier. That encounter led to a deep love that lasted a lifetime and beyond, creating four children.

Ronald and Helga were married in the rabbi's chambers in Oklahoma City on December 25, 1947. Although they had initially chosen another date, Helga's uncle was the only person they knew who had a car to transport them and Helga's parents to the wedding, and Christmas was the only day that Helga's uncle would close his clothing store in Anadarko, OK, where they all were living. By that time, both Ronald and Helga were students at the University of Oklahoma, where Ronald ultimately got his BS in Chemical Engineering, Helga got her Masters degree, and their first child was born. They moved to Ponca City, Oklahoma in 1950 after Ronald got a job with Cities Service Oil Company (now Citgo), where he designed and helped build the refinery with only a slide rule and a compass. He worked in various capacities during his 20 years in Ponca City at that refinery, ultimately becoming the operations superintendent, responsible for coordination and direction of all process operations in the refinery. During those 20 years, he and Helga had three

more children and enjoyed their life in that small but vibrant and well-educated community.

Ponca City had a small Jewish community of about 25 families from the surrounding 40-mile radius. Wanting to ensure that their four children received a quality Jewish education, Ronald and Helga both became highly involved in the close-knit Jewish community. Ronald helped lead the Friday night services and taught Sunday school classes for years, instilling a deep love and understanding of Judaism in his students and his children. At Ronald's suggestion, the Jewish community eventually built its own building. Temple Emanuel was dedicated on Chanukah in 1964 and a couple of years later at the community Seder, Ronald ceremoniously burned the mortgage, which the entire Jewish community, including all the children, had worked together to pay off in record time.

Although Ronald absolutely loved their life in Ponca City, OK, the refinery was sold and he was offered three alternative jobs in the fall of 1970. He accepted the job with Gulf Oil in New Orleans, LA, where he helped design the Alliance Refinery, which was Gulf's largest grassroots refinery built in the US. Nine years later, Ronald accepted a position with Gulf Oil/Chevron in Houston, TX, where he became head of Environmental Affairs. Ronald decided to take an early retirement at age 61 and kept so busy with various activities, groups and interests that he often wondered how he ever had any time to work in earlier years.

Ronald and Helga enjoyed taking many cruises to various ports around the world and often took their children and grandchildren on family cruises. On their 50th wedding anniversary cruise in 1997, their children and grandchildren surprised them by officiating at a candle-lit wedding on the ship and remarrying Ronald and Helga under a chuppah. Helga's college

roommate and her husband stood in as the unrelated witnesses, and all present signed an ornate Ketubah.

In 2016, Ronald decided to move to Eagle's Trace, a beautiful, sprawling retirement community with so many amenities and activities that he felt like he was living on a landlocked cruise ship. Ronald thoroughly enjoyed interacting with his many friends at Eagle's Trace and was active until the day his life abruptly and unexpectedly ended.

Preceded in death by his wife Helga, his parents, his oldest son Raymond, his brother Leon and sister-in-law Estelle, his great-nephew Alex and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins, Ronald leaves behind his daughter Loretta; son Richard and his wife Roxanne; son Terry; daughter-in-law and Raymond's widow Gail; six grandchildren, including Aaron and his wife Ashleigh; Sarah and her husband Alberto; Michael and his wife Caryn; Benjamin, Daniel and Nathan; four great-grandchildren, including Ayden, Ethan, Adianna and Sebastian; two nephews, Bill and Jim, and their respective wives, children and grandchildren; and numerous cousins and friends.

While we will all miss Ronald's boisterous laugh, sense of humor, wise guidance and warm, loving hugs, we can find comfort in knowing that he and Helga are happily together again and are spreading their deep love to us all.

Donations may be made in Ronald's memory by giving to the charity of your choice or by donating blood.

Tribute Wall



“ *My condolences to the family, Terry, Richard, and Loretta, and the many others I never met. Your dad led an amazing life and experienced so much more than most people ever will. The Alliance Refinery alone is quite a legacy. I'm glad he and your mom got to experience such a nice retirement together. Again, my condolences.*

Phillip Percy - February 10, 2019 at 10:25 PM