



Stephen Zimmerman

June 4, 1941 - November 3, 2025

Stephen “Steve” Neal Zimmerman—beloved husband, father, brother, uncle, and “Papa”—passed away peacefully of natural causes on Friday, October 31, 2025, in the comfort of his home, a space he loved and built with his own hands.

Born in Brooklyn in 1941 and raised in New Orleans, Steve carried the Big Easy’s warmth, creativity, and hospitality throughout every chapter of his life. A Tulane Law School graduate, he moved to Houston in 1964, where he practiced and taught law and political science. There, his legal acumen sparked an entrepreneurial spirit, drawing him toward real estate development in the then-overlooked Montrose neighborhood.

What began with acquiring small properties and pioneering townhome developments eventually led to beloved establishments that introduced a new convivial spirit to the city and shaped the area’s future— most notably Zimm’s, celebrated as Houston’s first sidewalk café and Texas’s first wine bar.

In 1979, Steve acquired the historic Fondren Mansion and then opened La Colombe d’Or, an intimate, art-filled boutique hotel that became a Houston icon and welcomed presidents, dignitaries, Nobel laureates, and celebrities. Over the years, he expanded the property to include the famed 18th-century Le Grand Salon Ballroom and later partnered with Gerald Hines to develop

The Residences at La Colombe d'Or, uniting the beloved historic hotel with a new symbol of modern Houston.

In 1982, Steve met and fell in love with Becky, who would become his wife and the mother of his two sons, Dan and Drew. Together they built a beautiful life, traveling the world while creating a legacy rooted in love, hospitality, and family.

Decades later, in 2020, Steve renovated La Colombe d'Or side by side with his son Dan—a shared labor of love that joined history and progress, father and son, tradition and vision. Today, his grandchildren play hide and seek in “Asher’s Garden,” named for his first-born grandson on the hotel grounds, whispering fantastical stories of superheroes. To them, Papa is the true superhero—the man who turned dreams into spaces and gatherings into memories.

A citizen of the world, Steve cherished his time in the South of France—its culture, cuisine, and slower rhythm of life. His family home there remains a cherished retreat, filled with laughter, food, and memories that reflect his generosity and joie de vivre. Charismatic and endlessly curious, Steve never met a stranger. From Houston to the South of France, Steve could strike up a conversation that left others laughing, thinking, and inspired. His humor, intellect, and warmth drew people in and made them feel seen and valued.

Steve was devoted to his family, his work, and his community, and brought the same enthusiasm to every pursuit. Deeply proud of his Jewish heritage, he lived a life guided by faith, family, generosity, and connection. He embraced traditions that celebrated love, learning, and service—values he carried forward through his children and grandchildren.

Above all, Steve was immensely proud of his sons. He encouraged them to

follow their passions—supporting Drew’s love of soccer and partnering with Dan to carry forward the family’s vision. To his daughter-in-law, he was “Dad” in every sense of the word—wise, caring, generous, and unwavering in guidance and love. He also adored his dogs— Timber, Lily, and Phoebe— whose companionship brought him constant joy.

Etz Chayim Hi—Our Tree of Life. Steve’s roots and values will continue to nourish his family for generations to come.

Steve is survived by his devoted wife, Becky Zimmerman; his son Dan Zimmerman and daughter-in-law Kirsten Seglem Zimmerman; his grandchildren Asher, Arielle, and Avi; and his sister and brother-in-law, Linda and Allen Rosenzweig. He was preceded in death by his cherished son, Drew Zimmerman and loving parents, Sylvia and Herman Zimmerman. His legacy of vision, hospitality, and heart lives on in them—and in all who were fortunate to know him.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made in Steve’s honor to Jack Segal Academy at Beth Yeshurun (<https://segalacademy.org/support-segal/>), supporting early childhood Jewish education, or to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, (<https://www.mfah.org/support>), celebrating his lifelong appreciation for art and beauty

A funeral service was held on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, in The Sophia and Jack Bender Memorial Chapel at Beth Yeshurun Post Oak Cemetery, 7445 Awty School Ln., Houston, Texas, 77055.

All who were touched by Steve’s warmth and wisdom are invited to honor a life lived with love, purpose, and devotion.

Cemetery Details

Beth Yeshurun Post Oak Cemetery

7445 Awty School Ln.
Houston, TX 77055

Previous Events

Cemetery Chapel Service

NOV 4. 11:00 AM (CT)

Sophia and Jack Bender Memorial Chapel
7445 Awty School Ln.
Houston, TX 77055

The service will be livestreamed at <https://venue.streamspot.com/f8d04b5b>

Tribute Wall



“ *My deceased husband Harry L. Hopkins was a Tulane Law School classmate of Stephen's. Stephen invited his classmates for a wonderful weekend of hospitality at Colombe D'Or a few years ago. Harry said nobody deserved success more than Steve, a good, kind soul. Steve was impressed by my sculpture, and had one of my works in his sculpture collection - WAVE, a curved tubular abstract piece.*

Martha Hopkins - March 06 at 09:03 PM

JF

“ *We met Steve in Beaune, France in 1976. He was driving through France collecting Cinzano umbrellas. It was over a bottle of scotch (never, ever been so drunk or subsequently so sick). We were sitting with a German couple at a very nice hotel restaurant having an after dinner conversation discussing (arguing) complicity and the holocaust. Steve masterfully lured the German fellow into a trap where the fellow left the table in a blubbering huff. Unforgettable. brilliant ! just found a two page letter he sent us the following year. Although we never followed up with our relationship I remember our evening together with total clarity. My heart goes out to his family and loved ones. Reading the obituary it appears to be a life well lived.*

*John fields and Katey golden.
John@golden-fields.net*

John R Fields - February 26 at 09:25 PM

EB

“ Steve was a wonderful, caring and generous man who I’ve loved since I was a little girl. He and my brother were always very close, he was also my dad’s favorite nephew they really adored each other. My son Brett was also very close with Steve and just spoke with him just a couple of days ago. My heart reaches out to his family with love, you will be greatly missed sweet man.

Ellen J Buckwald - November 14, 2025 at 10:37 AM

EB

Steve always said to me before we would say goodbye, love you ❤️

Ellen J Buckwald - November 14, 2025 at 10:47 AM

HM

“ I went to camp Bellaire with Steve. He’ll be missed. Howard

Howard Marblestone - November 03, 2025 at 03:53 PM

JP

Such a very sad loss for such a wonderful family! May his memory truly be for a blessing! A true Mensch! The Proler Family.

J L Proler - November 03, 2025 at 07:43 PM

CG

I will miss our conversations and his wise words. - C. Guyer

c guyer - November 04, 2025 at 01:02 PM

MR

We met Steve while staying at La Colombe d'Or many many times, while visiting our children and grandchildren who live in Houston. The statement that "he never met a stranger" was so true from our first encounter. His warmth, hospitality and generosity of heart made us always feel we were in his home, not a hotel. We chose to stay there multiple times a year because we felt like it WAS our home away from home. His staff mad it so. We could always find Steve in the main hotel visiting with friends and visitors, creating an atmosphere of warmth and love. We were fortunate to meet and visit with his wife, Becky, several times. Their mutual love and caring was obvious.

For an owner of a hotel, whose life was full of family and long time good friends of his own, to have touched my husband and my life as deeply as it did, speaks deeply to the special man who has now passed. May his memory always be a blessing to all who knew him, especially his family. And may the memory of the good man he was be reflected in the lives he touched, creating a kinder more generous world

*Michele & Fred Reynolds
Fort Worth*

Michele Reynolds - November 15, 2025 at 08:50 AM