



# Gerard "Jerry" Ballanco M.D.

FEB 22, 1943 - AUG 25, 2022



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## **Gerard "Jerry" Ballanco M.D.**

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**B**eloved father, grandfather, and friend, Gerard “Jerry” Ballanco, M.D. departed this life on August 25, 2022 at the age of 79. He grew up in Riverbend and attended Holy Name of Jesus, Jesuit High School, Loyola University, and LSU Medical School. He interned at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Denver then became an officer in the U.S. Army and served in Germany. He returned to New Orleans for a pediatric residency at Charity Hospital and then devoted his career to caring for children and their families. He was dedicated to all his patients, especially those with disabilities. Jerry believed everyone can achieve a life filled with meaning, purpose, and dignity. He was in the first class of board certified Behavioral and Developmental Pediatric specialists and, after thirty years with Rothschild Pediatrics and then Ochsner, opened a private practice on the Northshore treating exclusively children who needed special attention. After his retirement, he became a Master Gardener, grew vegetables and citrus, and he and his wife divided their time between their property in Folsom and a cabin on the edge of an Alaskan cliff. When he was first diagnosed with interstitial lung disease, he went to Knoxville and got outfitted with a special backpack in which he could carry two full sized oxygen tanks in order to continue hiking in Alaska and Canada. As his disease progressed, he transitioned to smaller tanks and a smaller pack. He continued to fish with his buddy Kenny, argue the nature of the universe with his lifelong friend CW, and build a greenhouse so he could grow tomatoes year round. He taught others how to graft citrus and grow vegetables and was particularly proud of his sesame seed plants. During the last months of his life, he planned a fall garden, listened alternately to Verdi and Creedence Clearwater Revival, and enjoyed a stream of visitors from near and far. “All in all,” he said of his illness, “this has been a positive experience, although I would have chosen a different positive experience.” Those he loved he loved without stint or qualification and devoted much time and effort attempting to save the world. Those



## Obituary

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who loved him will see him in the breeze rippling water, a speckled trout on the line, the sun rising over the marsh, wildflowers on the side of a mountain. Among those whose lives were changed by his bonhomie, bravery, persistence, and ability to overcome disappointment and loss are Jean, Gerard Jr., Katie, Travis, Laura, Jared, the two Amys, Steven, Lillie, Genevieve, William, Lucy, Caleb, Mason, Kai, Jackson, Liam, Addie, Grace, Reed, Elise, Jacob, and Woodrow.

A celebration of Jerry's life will be held at the New Orleans Botanical Garden on Sunday March 19, 2023 at a time to be announced. In the meantime, those wishing to commemorate his memory may donate to the New Orleans Botanical Garden and send thoughts and wishes to [remembering.gab.md@gmail.com](mailto:remembering.gab.md@gmail.com).

E. J. Fielding Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements. Please sign the online guestbook at [www.ejfieldingfh.com](http://www.ejfieldingfh.com).




## Events

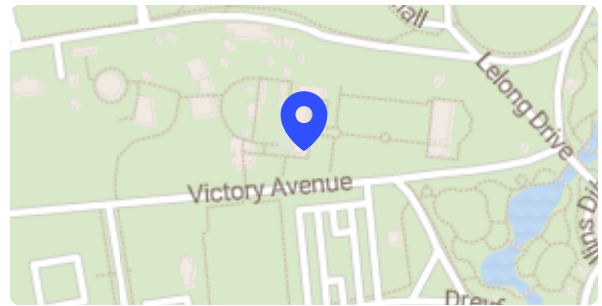
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### Celebration of Life

 **Sunday**, March 19, 2023

 **New Orleans Botanical Garden**  
5 Victory Avenue, New Orleans LA 70124





## Tribute Wall

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D

**David Speirer** posted:

This message is over 3 years since Jerry passed away but I think of him often. Many people knew him through his master gardening but I knew him via woodworking. I think of him every time I pull out one of my hand planes and hear it whisper across the wood. I will also miss our enlightening (for me anyway) conversations on a variety of topics. He was an awesome mentor and inspiration to me. I feel blessed to have met him and still carry cherished memories of him.

September 4 at 10:21 PM

SD

**Sandee Denomme** posted:

Thank you for sharing your love story with me, Jean, and for living out your wedding vows. We need mentors like you to show us how to do and that it can be done! The world is richer and more beautiful place because of Jerry... and poorer without him. Peace be with you.Sandee Denomme

September 12 at 6:30 AM

JB

**Jim Bates** posted:

My bride Dee Dee and I met Gerry at the Covington plant sale in 2015 and after a short conversation I made the decision to go back to school and become a Master Gardener. Of course I continued my education and became a Vegicator the next year. Dee Dee and I visited Gerry at his home a few times and brought him some honey. His heart was so big one could not love him and his passion to teach how to become a better gardener. Our last encounter was this spring when we dropped off some Ping Tong eggplant plants and he gave us one of his favorite eggplant varieties. We are still picking eggplants from the plant he started from seed. I know the plant will wilt and die this fall but our memories of Gerry and his love of helping others will always be with us. Missed but not forgotten. Rest my fellow MG you have sowed the seeds and the harvest will continue for many years.Jim & Dee Dee BatesMG class of 2015Vegicator class of 2016

September 5 at 7:13 AM

SB

**Stephen Ballanco** posted:

Jerry had many qualities and high among them was humor, kindness and compassion. To his parents and friends, he was always there to assist in any way possible. I think of him often and miss him.

September 4 at 6:01 PM



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MP

**Mimi Padgett** posted:

Jerry was the "de facto" leader of our Vegucators group. He started the group and developed the curriculum and directed us in development as a group. He was so knowledgeable about growing vegetables and so generous in sharing that knowledge. He taught us how to propagate and use grow lights and fertilize and compost. He had a good sense of humor and a twinkle in his eyes when he humored us along. Like a good father, if we veered off into too much fluff, he would call me up and get me to focus on the science of gardening. We all appreciated him as a person and admired him for his skill and dedication. I want to plant a tree in his name but if I am really going to truly honor him, I would simply grow a good tomato from seed to table. He would be delighted. Mimi Padgett  
St. Tammany Master Gardener Vegucator chairperson

September 2 at 8:34 AM

DP

**Dianne Allen-Pierce** posted:

Dear Jean, I'm so very sorry to hear of the loss of your husband. He seems like he was incredible in many ways. You are in my thoughts and prayers through this very difficult time.

September 2 at 8:16 AM

JL

**June Luck** posted:

Jean, I am so sorry you lost this wonderful man. I grieve for you. But you have his spirit and so many beautiful memories to give you peace. With love, June Luck

August 31 at 7:54 AM

KB

**Katherine Coleman Babin** posted:

To try to adequately describe Jerry Ballanco, is a very difficult thing to do. The enormity of his goodness, his kindness, and compassion are beyond what most can imagine. The thought of not having him here on this earth, is very hard to accept. Jerry was blessed with the most wonderful and loving wife, family, and friends. He will be greatly missed by all. Our loss...heaven's gain. Katherine Coleman Babin

August 31 at 6:35 AM



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WA

**Will Afton** posted:

Jerry was a very inquisitive person when it came to growing plants. He would ask many questions and appreciated thought out responses. In most cases, his initial question led to long drawn-out discussions. And, he enjoyed growing food. Jerusalem artichokes, asparagus, Irish potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini, squash, and figs were some of the crops that Jerry and I would discuss. I think the foundation of our relationship was built on sharing our knowledge and experiences with other gardeners so that they could have success too. His work with the Vegucators is a bold statement that will be here for years to come. Now, as Jerry tends to the big garden in the sky, I'll remember what he did and all of the people who were able to switch their black thumbs to some shade of green. Thank you for everything, Jerry!

August 30 at 11:41 AM

PR

**Pamela Rowe** posted:

I had the distinct honor and pleasure to be in Jerry's Master Gardener classes. He was one of the bright spots in our association. He had an incredible desire to be scientific in learning everything about gardening and was always willing to share his knowledge and expertise. He inspired us all. My condolences to all of his family, I can only imagine how much he will be missed by you all. We all loved him dearly and will certainly miss his kind spirit and gentle nature. Pamela Rowe, St Tammany Master Gardener, Class of 2009

August 30 at 8:37 AM

GJ

**Gerard Jr.** shared 15 photos to the **Jerry Ballanco** album.



August 27 at 1:53 AM

JP

**Jan Pesses** posted:

I knew Jerry as a Master Gardener, not in his professional career. He was instrumental in developing educational programs for the Master Gardeners, and was our go-to expert on growing vegetables. We will miss him dearly. Jan Pesses, President, St. Tammany Master Gardeners.

August 29 at 6:58 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Jared Meaux** shared 52 photos to the **Jerry Ballanco** album.



August 27 at 1:53 AM



**Kenny Weber** posted:

Jerry had a kind soul, gentle demeanor and intellect to share great compassionate wisdom. We enjoyed many days fishing and enjoying life. I will forever miss our friendship but I will forever have his kind spirit with me.

August 27 at 12:20 PM



**C. W. Lartigue Iv** posted:

Jerry was my closest friend, my children's doctor, my expert gardener, and my fishing buddy. He continues to enrich my life. He will be missed by many.

August 27 at 7:37 AM



**Kirk Lee** posted:

I was one of Charlie Wassermans first patients and remember when Jerry joined the group. Right behind Dr Kern... great guy I'll be there on the 19th. That Pediatric group was legendary

August 27 at 1:53 AM



# Media

**Gerard "Jerry" Ballanco M.D.**

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Gerard Jr. shared 15 photos to the **Jerry Ballanco** album.

August 29 at 4:24 PM

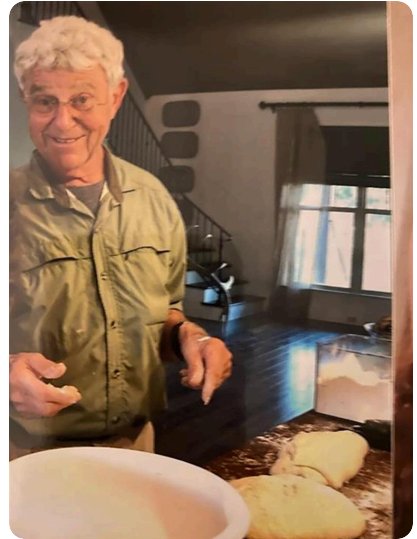




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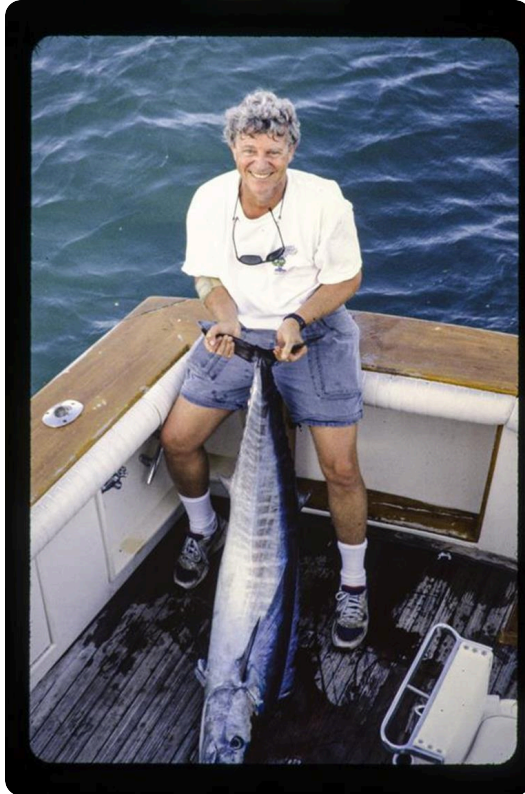
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Jared Meaux shared 52 photos to the **Jerry Ballanco** album.

August 28 at 7:55 AM



1999 BLUEWATER TRIP



FISHING WITH OXYGEN

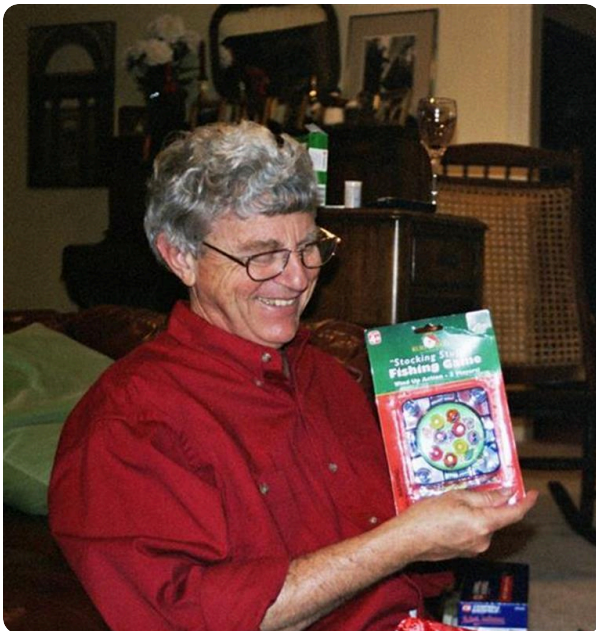




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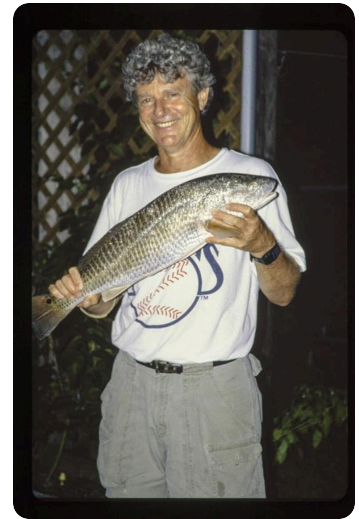
1979 SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY



1983 CAMPING TRIP



1999 LABOR DAY IN BOOTHVILLE



1999 LABOR DAY CATCH

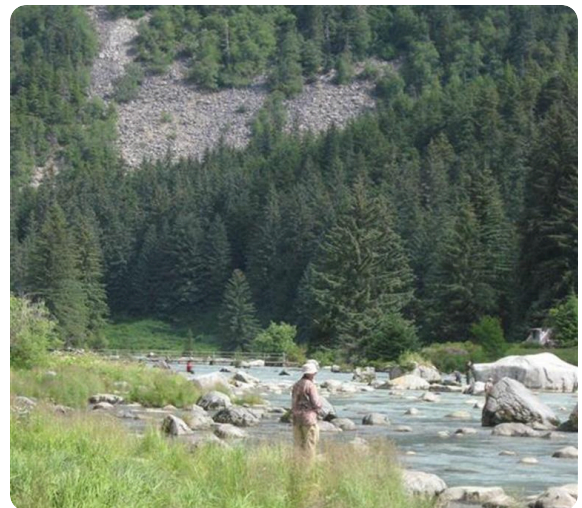
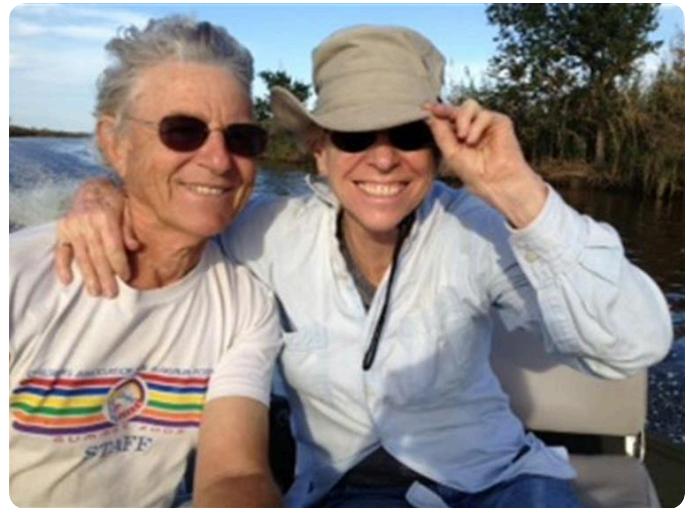




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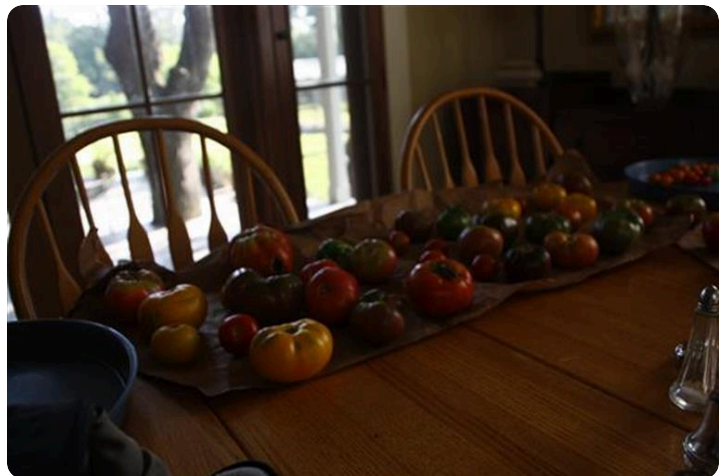




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# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Gerard by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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