



W. Ronald Lewis

April 30, 1939 - May 18, 2019

On Saturday, May 18, 2019, W. Ronald Lewis, of Mandeville, Louisiana, loving husband and father, died at age 80 of heart disease.

Ron was born April 30, 1939 in Houston, Texas to beloved parents Albert Eugene Lewis and Jessie Henry Lewis. Ron spent his early years in Kentucky and was a resident of Mandeville for 41 years.

An accomplished athlete, Ron played varsity football in high school in Kentucky and, upon graduation, was highly recruited by colleges and universities. He chose to play SEC football at Georgia Tech under Bobbie Dodd and scored the winning touchdown against rival Tennessee in 1958.

Ron pivoted from college sports to the military. An Army man, he was selected for the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center at Presidio of Monterey, CA on the basis of acumen. There, he studied German and rose to the rank of Sergeant in the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Corps. He served in Berlin at the height of the Cold War and was one of few Americans to see the razor wire being unfurled that would ultimately become the Berlin Wall. Among his many duties in Berlin was to intercept and relay enemy messages to headquarters and provide armed escort for American intelligence dispatches.

Following his discharge from the Army, Ron graduated from the University of Kentucky, and it was there he met the love of his life, Marilyn Harmon, a beautiful co-ed from Lexington, with whom he would share the next fifty-plus years of his life loving, being loved and building a family he cherished above all else.

Ron had a long and successful business career. He joined Caterpillar Tractor Company and was picked for an assignment in its worldwide marketing unit in Geneva, Switzerland where he lived with his young family. His next position was in management at Kentucky Fried Chicken Inc. and ultimately was promoted to Executive Vice President of Corporate

units at age 36. Taking notice of the rising star at the company with which he one day wanted to compete, Al Copeland, Sr. recruited Ron to join the formative team at Popeyes Famous Fried Chicken. Ron moved his family to Louisiana to share in the excitement of building Popeyes into a national and international success. Ron retired from corporate life as President of Al Copeland Enterprises in 1989.

Ron was a lifetime member of MENSA and a man dedicated to a voracious pursuit of knowledge and understanding human nature. Despite his many accomplishments, one of the things Ron's family and friends will always remember was his humility. In most cases, Ron was likely the "smartest guy in the room," but he'd never show it. He was always eager to hear others' ideas and thoughts – and, more often than not, share a hearty laugh. Ron loved a good joke, a better bourbon and had the ability to make whoever was lucky enough to be speaking with him feel like they were the most important person in the world.

He is predeceased by his mother and father; his brother, Gene Shelby Lewis and his sister Leslie Lewis Camboni. Ron leaves to mourn him his wife of 54 years, Marilyn Harmon Lewis; his sons, Ronald Gregory Lewis (Kaye) and Jeffrey Harmon Lewis (Robina); his two grandsons, William Henry Harmon Lewis and Jonathan Robert Ronald Lewis, and his step-grandchildren Alexander William Heider, Stephanie Heider Davis (Norman), and Kathy Lynn Heider. Ron also leaves his brother Roger Neil Lewis (Gay); his brother David Michael Lewis (Jane); his brother James Gregory Lewis (Sherry), and his brother Joe Henry Lewis (Rose Mary) and nephews and nieces.

Ron will be missed by anyone fortunate enough to have known him.

A memorial service will be scheduled.

Comments



“ So sorry to hear of Ron’s death. He will be missed by many. My love to Marylyn and her children. They will be in my prayers and thoughts.

Mary Stacy Dempsry - May 30, 2019 at 08:48 AM



“ PoPo lit a candle in memory of W. Ronald Lewis



PoPo - May 27, 2019 at 02:30 PM



“ We are so sad to hear of his passing. He was an exceptional man. Heartbroken for Marilyn and the boys. The world is a little dimmer without his light in it.

Jessica Lewis Pavillard - May 27, 2019 at 12:42 PM



“ I am so sorry to hear of his passing. He was an absolutely wonderful human being! I really enjoyed our chats in your living room. He exuded such positive energy all of the time; he always seemed so happy when I would come over to visit. The world just lost such a bright beautiful light but heaven has gained it. My kids and I will really miss him.

Tracy Callihan - May 26, 2019 at 05:19 PM



“ I was one of the lucky ones. I was able to have this incredible man enter my life in my preteen years when he met, fell in love and married my beautiful sister. There are so many accolades that can be mentioned. I can only say how he was my hero. I looked up to him in so many ways and truly loved him like a brother.....which he was. I remember saying at their 50th wedding anniv. not long ago how grateful I was to him. He gave my sister and his sons a special life. he was truly a loving husband and father. Those of us that were close and loved him can truly say how fortunate we were to have him in our lives.

Greg Harmon - May 22, 2019 at 10:58 PM



“ Ron was my brother, my mentor, and my friend. He loved a clever argument, a witty joke, and a good drink. He was a man for all seasons who could accommodate any person he met. He was a fierce competitor in football who would take on bigger opponents. Mother would despair at the number of times he would get knocked out in the games. After a brief rest, he would return to the fray. Now he is with Mom and Shelby and Ann. Rest In Peace my brother. Prayers and Love.

David Lewis - May 21, 2019 at 09:42 PM



“ "Good night Sweet Prince and flights of angels send thee to thy rest"...

PoPo - May 21, 2019 at 08:32 PM



“ I was honored and privileged to have known such a specular person. Ron was intelligent beyond words but so humble. His accomplishments are truly well worth noting. He loved his wife and treated her with kindness and respect I never saw in any man. He loved his sons beyond words. I will cherish the memories of our family times on Fall Vacations in Highlands NC. There was a red cardinal today perched on the window of my office today, staring at me. In all the 20 years of being at my desk I never had that happen. And he would stare at me. Until we meet again I will never forget you.

Jackie Harmon - May 21, 2019 at 06:54 PM



“ He was a beautiful human being who always had a smile on his face

Fiona Sigg - May 21, 2019 at 05:00 PM



“ 07/20/19-Just found out today about Mr. Ron's death & am very saddened by it. He was a very intelligent, well spoken person who displayed professionalism in all that he did. I will miss him greatly as I am sure Global Impact Ministries staff, members & friends will also. I pray for Ms. Cheryl that God will give her peace, strength and healing to her & the entire family! Love, Robbi Trammell

Robbi Trammell - June 20, 2019 at 10:41 PM