



Leo Berman

October 21, 1935 - May 23, 2015

Memorial services for former State Representative Leo Berman, 79, of Tyler, Texas, will be held on Friday, May 29, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church in Tyler. The Reverend David Luckenbach, the Reverend Matt Boulter, and the Reverend Keith Pozutto will officiate.

After a three-year battle with cancer, Mr. Berman passed away on Saturday, May 23, 2015. He was born in Brooklyn, New York to Rose and Abraham Berman on October 21, 1935. The U.S. Army stationed him to Texas in 1954 and the Lone Star State became his beloved adopted home.

Leo graduated with honors from Southern Methodist University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Sciences and from the United States Army Command & General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He served in the U.S. Army twenty-two years and retired as a lieutenant colonel. He completed two combat tours in Vietnam in Pleiku from 1965-66 and in Phu Loi from 1970-71. While serving as an advisor to the Vietnamese Montagnard Ja' Rai Tribe, located in the highlands of Southern Vietnam near Plei Me, he was inducted as a chieftain into their tribe. He served three years in Hanau and Bad Hersfeld, Germany during the Cuban Missile Crisis and three years as a liaison officer for the secretary of the Army to the U.S. House of Representatives during the Nixon and Ford administrations. His legislative liaison duties included escorting members of Congress on fact-finding tours

and required meetings throughout the world. Additionally, he served as an advisor to the Texas Army National Guard.

Leo's military decorations include: Bronze Star with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Meritorious Service Medal, nine Air Medals, Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Honor Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and Army General Staff Device.

In 1976, he retired from the military and began his political pursuit. He won the Republican nomination for Texas' 24th Congressional District in 1976 and 1978. Although he did not prevail, he was honored to have then-California Governor Ronald Reagan and wife, Nancy, participate in both campaigns.

His private sector roles included serving as the assistant to the chairman of the board for The Western Company of North America and as the director of public affairs for Sun Exploration & Production Company in Dallas 1980-1990. He was appointed by Governor Bill Clements to chair the Texas Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and to the Texas National Guard Armory Board.

Leo served as a Texas delegate to the 2008 Republican National Convention and as an alternate delegate to the 1976 Republican National Convention. He was elected to the Arlington City Council in 1979 remaining until 1985 and served as mayor pro-tem. After returning to East Texas, he was elected to the Texas House of Representatives representing Smith County in 1998 and served fourteen years. He was voted by the Freshman Legislative Class of 1999 to be the "Least Likely to Miss a Record Vote." Leadership roles included serving as chair of the House Committee on Elections; vice chair on the House Affairs Committee; the House Appropriations Committee; the Government Reform Committee; and the State, Federal and International

Relations Committee. Texas House Speaker Tom Craddick appointed him as a Texas representative to the National Conference of State Legislators and to the Energy Council. Speaker Craddick nominated him to the American Legislative Exchange Council as U.S. Legislator of the Year in 2008.

In 2008, he was inducted into the Fort Sill Field Artillery Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame for “his exceptional service to his community, state and nation at a level of responsibility in civilian government commensurate with that of a general officer in the military through his dedicated service in the Texas Legislature following a distinguished military career.”

In 2013, he retired from the Texas State Guard and was awarded the Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal, Medal of Merit, the Federal Service Medal, Texas State Guard Service Medal, and Outstanding Service Medal.

The U.S. Attorney’s Texas Eastern District recognized Leo for authoring and passing major legislation to combat methamphetamine labs in Texas. He worked with UT Tyler and was proud to have helped establish the PhD Nursing program. Throughout his legislative tenure, he received recognition from conservative organizations including the Heritage Alliance Top Ten Award representing the top 10% most conservative legislators each session, Texas Citizen’s for a Sound Economy Friend of Taxpayer Award, Texans for Fiscal Responsibility Texas Taxpayer Hero Award, 100% legislative rating by Young Conservatives of Texas, 100% rating by Texas Right to Life, Texas Association of Business Fighter for Free Enterprise Award, a 100% Conservative voting record by Capitol Inside 2005, Texas Association of Business Champion for Free Enterprise, Texas Eagle Forum, and Empower Texans. Additional legislative recognition from state and regional organizations included the 2001 Texas Dental Hygiene Educators Excellence in Education Award, 2003 Award of Excellence recipient from the Texas

Association for Symphony Orchestras (TASO), 2005 Pro-Life Person of the Year by the Right to Life of East Texas, and MADD East Texas in 2006. The Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas recognized him with the 'Best of the Texas House of Representatives' Award during the 80th Legislative Session. He was honored as the 2012 Recipient of the Smith County Republican Club President's Award, the 2012 Distinguished Patron of the Arts by the Women's Symphony League of Tyler and received the UT Tyler President's Award in 2013.

He was an active communicant at Christ Episcopal Church. His local service on nonprofit agency boards included East Texas Meals on Wheels, Association for Retarded Citizens of Tyler/Smith County (Emeritus), East Texas Council of Boy Scouts of America, Bethesda Health Clinic and Texas College. He was a life member of the Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce, a member of the Texas Conservative Coalition and on the Executive Committee of the Texas Veterans Coalition. Additionally, he served as an advisory committee member for the Occupational Medicine Program at UTHSC-NE. He held perpetual membership in The Military Order of the World Wars and was a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association and the Texas State Rifle Association.

Leo was preceded in death by his wife, Cara Sue Hughey Berman; brother, Milton Berman; and son, Robby Jennings. He is survived by his loving family including wife, Lou Ann Berman; sister, Lee Nemiroff, and her husband, Jerry; brother, Stan Berman, and his wife, Diane; brother, Saul Berman, and his wife, Ann; brother-in-law, Bill Hughey, and his wife, Janet; brother-in-law, Frank Hughey, and his wife, Cathy; daughter, Susan Bourbonnais, and her husband, David; son, David Berman; son, Dean Berman, and his wife, Tina; son, Trey Jennings; step-daughter Lauren Lusk; and seven grandchildren; five great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

If desired, memorials may be made to the Christ Episcopal Church Foundation, the Choir School of East Texas, All Saints Episcopal School, or to the Smith County charity of choice.

“As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” Joshua 24:15

Previous Events

Mem. Service

MAY **29**. 2:00 PM (CT)

Christ Episcopal Church
118 South Bois d' Arc
Tyler, TX 75702

Visitation

MAY **29**. 3:00 PM (CT)

Christ Episcopal Church
118 South Bois d' Arc
Tyler, TX 75702

Tribute Wall

AA

“ Our precious Leo, what a gift from God you have been to all of us and we love our beautiful Lou so much. I remember going through "Leadership Tyler" and your beautiful courtship and our time together at U.T. Health Center". The years have gone by so fast for us and I finally got back to Tyler working for J. B. Smith and Larry Smith, our great Sheriff's. I just love you and Leo just like you were like my family. So sorry that I did not get to attend the Leo's special funeral. My sweet husband, John had back surgery and I am just getting the chance to write you. I wanted to send you a card but could not locate your address. You are both so in my heart forever and I thank God for Leo and what he did for our nation, state and town. We had a gift from Heaven and we all look forward to seeing him there.

Much love and our prayers are with you always,

Alicia and John Armstrong

Alicia and John Armstrong - June 09, 2015 at 02:05 PM

BF

“ Bulldog Wireline Family purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of Leo Berman.



Bulldog Wireline Family - May 28, 2015 at 04:30 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Leo Berman.



May 28, 2015 at 11:35 AM



“ Lou Ann, I am so sorry to hear of Leo's passing. May God grant you strength to endure this difficult time. Your Sister in Christ.

Linda Johnson - May 27, 2015 at 03:24 PM



“ Lou Ann I am so sorry to hear of Leo's passing. My prayers are with you during this difficult time. May our Lord bless and comfort you and your family.

Kristi C. Roberts - May 27, 2015 at 02:34 PM



“ We will miss Uncle Leo... his smile and positive attitude. He battled harder than anyone I've ever seen through lymphoma. We are so thankful for the additional years we had to celebrate life with you. Lou Ann, I can't imagine what you are going through, but the Hugheys are here for you and love you. Dana and Trey Hughey

Dana - May 27, 2015 at 08:42 AM

MM

“ Leo was a friend...and he loved...God, country, family, those he served, people everywhere. When he lost his first, sweet wife, his Lord lovingly sent you, Lou Ann. What a priceless treasure! And now, at the end of this life, the patriot departed at the Memorial Holiday. Somehow that seems fitting. God is good! Dale & Marjorie Moran

Marjorie Moran - May 27, 2015 at 06:08 AM

WC

“ Serving along side Leo, for more than a decade and a half in the Texas House, he NEVER turned down the opportunity to stand for issues of faith, family and freedom. He always took the lead. When he found himself physically drained, we would stop at his desk and say, "Colonel, we need you!" His answer was never "no." He was the finest and most honorable man I have ever met and have the pleasure to work with. If there is any ranking in Heaven, I'll still be honored to call you "Sir." God rest you my friend, until we meet again. --Wayne Christian

Wayne Christian - May 26, 2015 at 08:57 PM

PW

“ Lou,
My heart goes out to you in this time of loss. I know you will miss Leo so much. He was a great patriot & served the citizens of Texas & Tyler with all his heart. My God grant you peace.
Pam Wade

Pam Wade - May 26, 2015 at 10:32 AM

KP

“ Thinking of you today and praying for peace and healing in your precious heart. Prayers for you and your family.

Kay Pleasant

Kay Pleasant - May 26, 2015 at 09:58 AM

JK

“ James and I are so sad to hear this news. Leo was a good friend that will be missed.
Leo ate with us on one occasion and as we talked Leo said "oh I've got a date with this really beautiful blonde, I think she might be the one". Leo went on to tell us about Lou Ann, and as it turned out, She was the one. Lou Ann James and I are praying for you and the family. We know how much Leo was loved and will be missed.
Much love

James and Joyce Evelyn Kelley

Joyce Evelyn Kelley - May 25, 2015 at 10:31 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Leo Berman.



May 25, 2015 at 12:38 PM

JB

“ *The alumni of TeenPact Leadership Schools remember Representative Berman as a hero for his service to our country and for his support of our organization. Through his Capitol sponsorship of our leadership program, he made a difference in the lives of hundreds of young Texans. TeenPact offers our sincere condolences to his wife, Dr. Berman, and his family. We thank God for the life of this great man who inspired so many young people to engage their culture as responsible and informed citizens and make a difference in our world.*

Janet Baber - May 25, 2015 at 10:04 AM