



## Robert Nelson Rhodes

June 15, 1941 - August 23, 2021

Robert N. Rhodes, age 80, passed away on August 23, 2021, at his home in Tyler, Texas, in the loving care of his wife and three daughters. Robert was born in Dallas, Texas, on June 15, 1941. He was the son of Jesse and Jewel Rhodes, of Van, Texas. Robert grew up in Van, graduating from Van High School in 1959. He attended Tyler Junior College from 1959 to 1961, then continued his education at the University of Texas at Austin, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1963, followed by a master's degree in 1964.

Robert met the love of his life, Diane Vaughn, at Tyler Junior College. They were married June 20, 1964, in Tyler, Texas. They had three daughters: Ronna Morrison (Marc), of Tyler, Texas; Renna Embry (Jeff), of Tyler, Texas; and Reesa Miller (Tom), of Austin, Texas.

Upon his return to Tyler in 1964, Robert worked for a short time at Tyler Junior College and The Tyler Courier Times, before embarking on a long and distinguished career with General Electric/Trane/American Standard, covering a 38 year span that ended with his retirement in 2003. Most of his time at Trane was spent in human resources, where he was invaluable in negotiating and overseeing employee benefits, primarily health care and retirement plans. His door was always open to the Trane employees, and he worked tirelessly to ensure that their questions were answered and their problems solved.

When not working, Robert would likely be found on a tennis court. He was an outstanding tennis player for Van High School, where he and doubles partner, Ron Tankersly, made it to the state doubles finals in 1958. At Tyler Junior College, Robert was an early player of the Tyler Junior College tennis program. After returning to Tyler in 1964, Robert continued playing in (and often winning) tournaments in Tyler and the surrounding cities. When sore knees ended his playing career, Robert turned to officiating and directing tennis tournaments. This began a whole new chapter in his tennis life, one that he thoroughly loved. The relationships he developed over the next thirty years were dear to his heart. His final years have been spent following the lives of his three daughters and seven grandchildren. Nothing in this life meant more to him than his family, and he never missed a chance to watch them participate in a sport, a school play, a graduation, or any life event, and always with his trusty camera. Robert was a lifelong Christian who loved his savior and who's life embodied Christ's unconditional love.

Robert was preceded in death by his parents, and by his beloved sister, Carolyn Stagner. He is survived by his wife, Diane, and their three daughters; along with grandchildren Meg Pennell (Collin) of Tyler, Texas; Mason Embry, Dylan Embry, and Ella Rose Embry, all of Tyler, Texas; and Maya Miller, Miles Miller, and Audrey Miller, all of Austin, Texas. He's also survived by his two nephews and niece (Steve Stagner, Stuart Stagner and Suzanne Boyd), and several grand nephews and nieces whom he loved dearly.

The Celebration of Life memorial service has been rescheduled for Saturday, October 2, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at Green Acres Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas. Pastor Ron Moore will officiate under the direction of Stewart Family Funeral Home. Visitation will follow the service at the home of Jeff and Renna Embry (2626 S. Chilton Ave., Tyler). Parking assistance available.

The family understands the challenges to gathering safely during these times.

Whether you are able to join us in person or in spirit, we ask your continued prayers as we honor our beloved Robert. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Van ISD Education Foundation, P.O. Box 697, Van, TX, 75790.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

OCT 2. 10:00 AM (CT)

Green Acres Baptist Church  
1607 Troup Hwy  
Tyler, TX 75701

## Visitation

OCT 2 (CT)

Residence  
2626 S. Chilton  
Tyler, TX 75701

# Tribute Wall



“ *Stewart Family Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Robert Nelson Rhodes*



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**Stewart Family Funeral Home** - October 05, 2021 at 04:22 PM

CV

“ *To the Rhodes Family:  
Sending my condolences to you during this season of your life. My first job was at General Electric. I started the summer after my junior year in high school under the work program at Robert E. Lee High School 1980-1981 and worked there until my high school graduation. Mr. Rhodes was one of several I had the privilege of working around. He was such a sweet man, a true gentleman. Will lift your family up in prayer.*

*With love,  
Connie Vandergriff-Helms*

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**Connie Vandergriff-Helms** - August 31, 2021 at 08:29 AM

JJ

“ *Robert was a great person to be around. I was lucky to get to spend some time with him on the tennis court. Robert was always glad to see you and spend time with you. RIP my friend. Jeff Jones*

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**Jeff Jones** - August 30, 2021 at 03:14 PM

JJ

“ I knew Robert for six years in the National Guard in Tyler. Our first summer camp at Ft. Hood the company was marching down a dusty road and Robert was leading one of the columns. He kept saluting and finally Lt. Cluck hollered "Are you getting too much sun Rhodes?". He said "No sir, I'm just practicing. :) One of the good guys.  
RIP Sgt Rhodes

Jon D. Johnson - August 29, 2021 at 01:14 PM

PR

“ Robert was a wonderful person. His mom was our best friend — just like a mother to my dad we love the Rhodes family. Our prayers are with all of you. The Davidson family in Van, Texas We lost Daddy last night. He and Robert are in a beautiful place now.

patsy ramirez - August 26, 2021 at 08:23 PM



Robert and his family bought their home from us in 1980, and became our friends. Simply stated, He was a good man who lived a meaningful and worthwhile life. More should be like him .

Ken Barron - August 28, 2021 at 10:55 AM

DM

My husband and I worked at Trane. Many times we had to check with Robert about different benefits. We retired in 2005 and he helped us make our retirement plans. Robert was always never to busy to listen to the employees at Trane. My husband Larry (Lawrence) Mendez passed away in 2020. My prayer is that in God you will find peace.

Donna Mendez

Donna Mendez - August 28, 2021 at 07:19 PM

BB

*Robert truly cared about his fellow employees....as CFO of Trinity mother Frances, i worked with him to set up an onsite clinic and offer the first health maintenance insurance in east texas....I was honored to be among his many friends*

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**BILL Bellenfant** - October 02, 2021 at 10:06 AM