



## Ronnie Horsley

December 30, 1943 - August 15, 2016

Ronnie Horsley passed away peacefully on Monday, August 15, 2016 in Tyler with family by his side. Graveside services will be held on Wednesday, August 17, 2016, at 11:00 AM at Rose Hill Cemetery with Rabbi Neal Katz officiating, under the direction of Stewart Family Funeral Home.

James Ronald Horsley was born December 30, 1943 in Tyler. He led a vibrant and joyful life, dedicated to his family, friends, profession, faith, and outdoor pursuits. Ronnie's humor, warmth, and congeniality—his infectious laugh in particular—will be deeply missed.

A proud Texan with a remarkable tolerance for the regional summer heat, Ronnie grew up in Tyler. He attended Hogg Middle School, Robert E. Lee High School, and Tyler Junior College before attaining a BA from University of Houston. He followed with a Juris Doctorate Cum Laude from South Texas College of Law. After practicing law in Houston at the Law Firm of Lapin, Totz & Mayer, Ronnie and his wife Janet moved their young family back to Tyler where he spent the next 38 years running his own law practice in general and civil litigation with an emphasis on commercial debt collection.

Ronnie was a proud member of the Commercial Law League of America, Smith County Bar Association, State Bar Association, and College of the State Bar of Texas. He was well known for his work in the Bar's Continuing Legal Education and Instructional Programs, Texas Justice Court Judges Association, District and County Clerks Association, and Sheriff and Constable Programs. Ronnie was well respected, not only in the State of

Texas, but all over the country for his field of expertise.

He was an active member of Congregation Beth El in Tyler, where he held a variety of leadership positions over the years. He served on the Board of the East Texas Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America and volunteered with the Scouts along with participating in other outdoor and conservation-related activities.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ruby and Bob Horsley.

He is survived by his loving family, including his wife of 50 years, Janet; children Michael of Denver, CO and Allison of Christchurch, NZ; siblings Joe Horsley, Kay McManus, and Judy Horsley; and beloved in-laws, nieces, nephews and extended family.

Following graveside services, family will receive friends at Congregation Beth El, 1010 Charleston Drive.

Honorary pallbearers will include Mike Ballew, Dennis Darryl, Mike Gross, Anwar Khalifa, James Lee, Tracy Lisner, Kurt Noell, Jim Reams, Robert Schwartz, and Bob Skorkowsky.

The family wishes to thank The Hospice of East Texas for their kind care in recent days.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Congregation Beth El, 1010 Charleston Dr., Tyler, TX 75703, The Hospice of East Texas Foundation, 4111 University Blvd., Tyler, TX 75701, Boy Scouts of America, 1331 E. 5th St., Tyler, TX 75701 or a charity of your choice.

# Previous Events

## Graveside Serv.

AUG 17. 11:00 AM (CT)

Rose Hill Cemetery  
2400 S. Donnybrook  
Tyler, TX 75702

## Visitation and reception after service

AUG 17. 12:00 PM (CT)

Congregation Beth El  
1010 Charleston Dr.  
Tyler, TX 75703

# Tribute Wall

PM

“ Joe, Kay, and Judy -  
*I am so sorry to read of Ronnie's passing. I have many fond memories of you all living across the street from Linda and I. My mother Grace passed away at age 97 on August 11th and I was checking to see if her service from August 15th was still on line with the funeral home when I read about Ronnie. And Janet - I remember the slumber party at your house when we were growing up. My thoughts and prayers are with you all at this difficult time.*

*- Patsy (Brett) Mitchell  
Niceville, Florida*

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**Patsy (Brett) Mitchell** - August 22, 2016 at 04:50 PM

JS

“ *What a tremendous loss for me and for so many others. I met Ronnie during my early days in Scouting in Tyler and continued to interact with him for many years after, including those great Beth El Sisterhood Art Auctions. He always had a friendly word, a big smile, and usually an amusing observation that helped brighten my day. My sincere condolences to the Horsley family -- and my appreciation for all the memories.*

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**John Sims** - August 20, 2016 at 06:07 PM

“Ronnie was my best friend. We became buddies in the 8th grade. Ronnie, Janet, and I did much of the crazy stuff kids typically do at that age. We sailed a sailboat in Lake Tyler and rode horseback among other things. Years later, we laughed about who got the wettest place on the boat or the most abrasive saddle.

Ronnie and I were college roommates. He was a history major. One semester, Ronnie showed up with a stack of books higher than all the books I had ever read. During the year, I had a hard time focusing on my math / science studies. About every 10 minutes, Ronnie would bust into my room and say “you won’t believe this!”. The historical tales were riveting.

Ronnie and Janet married about graduation time. I went into the Air Force and Ronnie went to law school. Ronnie was my best man when I married Sharryn. When I separated from the Air Force Ronnie was instrumental in guiding me to law school.

After graduation, I moved to Tyler and later became city attorney. Ronnie and Janet were living in Houston. Sharryn and I and Ronnie and Janet are small town people at heart. I put out a siren call to Ronnie that he ought to move back to paradise. It did not take much persuasion. He was ready to come back without my prompting.

When Ronnie moved to Tyler, he soon had all the business he could handle. However, there was a brief interlude when he had free time and Ronnie agreed to prosecute cases in municipal court. He totally endeared himself to the entire police department. Ronnie was an outstanding lawyer and prosecutor. His practice soon demanded all his time. The chief of police was whining: “can’t you keep him”. I told him: “do you expect me to keep Clarence Darrow on what we are paying him?”

During the next few years, we both had jobs that demanded most of our time and the rest of it was spent with our nuclear families. My son Will became active in scouting as did Michael. They were in

*different troupes but their paths crossed and they became friends. Then one day my daughter Ann brought home a friend who was her good buddy: Allison. Allison who? Allison Horsley. I thought, no way. Allison and Ann were not even aware of the close friendship of their respective parents. In time, Allison served as Ann's maid of honor at her wedding. It seems quite amazing. It is as if the Horsley genes and the Schwartz genes have some kind of magnetic attraction.*

*After I left city employment, I shared office space with Ronnie. It was a throw-back to our college roommate days, except now, it was not history, it was legal cases. Lawyers like to do mock battle with each other. (better to lose in your office than in court. We had many spirited mock trials and each of gained much strength bouncing ideas off one another. It was a very fun time in life.*

*Eventually, Sharryn and I moved to Temple, TX. Besides Ronnie, my very best friend is Bob Skorkowsky. Tyler is a small town, and good people seem to get acquainted. Also, Bob and Ronnie were very active in promoting Boy Scouting activity in the East Texas area and both were avid fishermen. So, my two best friends who did not know each other became best friends.*

*After moving, I did not see Ronnie except every few years, mostly at Bob Skorkowsky's annual Caddo fishing trip. Our families visited with him when he was first diagnosed, and I visited with him 2 days before he lapsed into the comma from which he never emerged.*

*During that last visit, he was weak and had been in pain. However, his spirits were bright and sparkling as they had been for the entire duration of our relationship. He had the same unbridled enthusiasm for life as he had as a college history major. Bob Skorkowsky brilliantly summarized Ronnie's character his funeral eulogy – He exemplified all the ideals that we attempt to inspire in our youth in the Boy Scout Program.*

*All who knew Ronnie are blessed. We are all better people because we knew him.*

**Bob Schwartz** - August 18, 2016 at 10:59 PM

SU

“ I met Mr. Horsley when I needed legal representation. He was the only attorney that agreed to take my case. When Brandy contacted me to come in to go over my case, I met a man like no other. He spent a good amount of time sharing Texas history and his love for trees. Turned out he was also a neighbor of mine. He represented me in court and won me a judgement and then was able to get that judgement realized. He was a man of incredible integrity and I know he will be missed in the legal community. and most especially by his family. May God bless you all  
Susie Sibbing

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**susie** - August 18, 2016 at 10:26 AM

JH

“ Ronnie was my big brother. We will go on with life, but our lives will not be the same without him. Whenever the four of us were together we would spend most of our time laughing! Ronnie was that rare person who had intelligence, compassion, humor, toughness and was a man of his word. He was a truly unique human being. He loved his wife, children, parents and siblings. He loved people and loved life. His laughter, joy and light will be missed immeasurably. I won't say goodbye, but only farewell. One day we will be together again. I love you, Ronnie.

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**Judy Horsley** - August 18, 2016 at 09:18 AM

LW

One of my favorite Attorney's in all of East Texas! Always put a smile on my face when I saw him coming. I was ready to hear a story. He was a true person at heart. I'm very sorry for your loss. Liz Whipkey  
Harrison County Clerk's Office

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**Liz Whipkey** - August 18, 2017 at 05:33 PM

TB

“ Got to know Ronnie, thru my work at Velvin Oil Company. He was always a nice man that always seem to have a smile on his face. Even talking to him over the phone. I could tell he was smiling. I know he will be truly missed by the gang at Velvin Oil. Thanks Mr. Horsley for all the work you did for us here.

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**Tess Benavides** - August 17, 2016 at 02:07 PM

SC

“ Ronnie was truly a good human being, which is hard to find these days. He will be missed, but I was glad I was blessed to know him.

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**Shawn Cook.** - August 17, 2016 at 07:29 AM

GT

“ It was really sad to hear that Ronnie passed away and ive been thinking about him for the last two days and just how much i'll miss our visits to the barbershop.....Ronnie and I would always engage in what i called productive conversations! I will miss those visits very much.....When i read Ronnie's obituary i don't know what i could add to that but that i respected him and thought Ronnie to have wonderful value's in his life.....I will miss him a lot and offer my deepest sympathies for the family and pray for them to be comforted and have peace during this time....

*Gene Tannery*

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**Gene Tannery** - August 17, 2016 at 05:36 AM

MI

“ *RIP Mr. Horsley. You've touched so many lives with your kindness, wisdom, lengthy stories, quotes "babies in bath water", road trips, and chivalrous ways. Because of you I strive to never put my happiness in somebody else's pocket. I'm thankful for the time I knew you. I hope you know that. PS. Thank you for making a non-smoking office. I kicked my bad habit many years ago. #neverhesitatetoreachouttothoseyoulove*

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**misty** - August 16, 2016 at 10:37 PM

BG

“ *To the best boss I have ever had! Mr. Horsley gave me a chance almost 12 years ago when others would not. I grew to love his history lessons, his poems he would just walk into my office reading or quoting from memory, his fishing stories, his Monty Python reenactments, his love and knowledge of nature, his excitement about his kids newest endeavors and simply his compassion and smile. I will miss our coffee breaks. He was like a father to me when I lost mines. I loved him dearly. I know I will never encounter a humble sweet man like him. Janet, Michael, Allison, thank you for sharing Mr. Horsley with us. With love, Brandy Glover.*

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**Brandy Glover** - August 16, 2016 at 07:42 PM

BG

“ To the best boss I have ever had! Mr. Horsley gave me a chance almost 12 years ago when others would not. I grew to love his history lessons, his poems he would just walk into my office reading or quoting from memory, his fishing stories, his Monty Python reenactments, his love and knowledge of nature, his excitement about his kids newest endeavors and simply his compassion and smile. I will miss our coffee breaks. He was like a father to me when I lost mines. I loved him dearly. I know I will never encounter a humble sweet man like him. Janet, Michael, Allison, thank you for sharing Mr. Horsley with us. With love, Brandy Glover.

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**Brandy Glover** - August 16, 2016 at 07:18 PM

SM

“ After graduating UT, I decided to take a year to gain some legal experience before applying to law school just to make sure it was really what I wanted to do with my life. I can still remember how anxious I was for my first "real" job interview, but those nerves quickly subsided when I met Mr. Horsley. What was supposed to be a job to look good on my application turned into so much more than that. I gained a boss who truly cared about his employees, a mentor who had a passion for the law, and a friend who treated me like his own child. I have no doubt the letter of recommendation he wrote for me played a crucial part in my acceptance to SMU, but the example he set as an attorney who genuinely cared about doing the right thing is one that will stay with me forever. My thoughts and prayers go out to his friends, co-workers, and family, all of whom I know he loved dearly. I'm so thankful a bankruptcy question a few weeks ago allowed me to talk to him one last time. Mr. H, I know you are giving them a history lesson in Heaven! The world without your laugh is a little darker. Always and forever, your Say-ra.

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**Sara Myers** - August 16, 2016 at 07:13 PM

BS

“ Ronnie had a lot of positive character traits. One of the really big ones was compassion. He had compassion and he knew how to help others discover theirs as well. On one of our fishing trips to Kickapoo Creek, Ronnie spotted a donkey stuck in the muddy lake bottom. It had clearly struggled for hours if not days and was in real danger. After an hour of trying to free the animal and with the sun going down Ronnie said, "I just can not leave it here. We are in Henderson County, I'll call the sheriff." When the person answering the phone explained that the sheriff was not in the business of unsticking stuck animals Ronnie explained it a little more clearly, "I understand but you might want to check with the sheriff because he is in the middle of a heated election and my next call will be to the television station...I suspect they may have a different opinion." Deputies with 4wheelers had the animal out shortly thereafter. Bob Skorkowsky

Bob Skorkowsky - August 16, 2016 at 05:51 PM



“ Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Ronnie Horsley.



August 16, 2016 at 04:27 PM

MT

“ My fondest memory of Ronnie was when he showered me with mums outside my office window for my birthday. It's always been a favorite of mine and I think of him every time i water them! Ronnie you were the best boss I EVER had. Will miss you dearly. Myra Turrentine



myra turrentine - August 16, 2016 at 04:09 PM

JW

*We had some good times. He was the best. ❤️❤️*

**Jan Webb** - August 16, 2016 at 08:03 PM

MT

“ *My fondest memory of Ronnie was when he showered me with mums outside my office window for my birthday. It's always been a favorite of mine and I think of him every time i water them! Ronnie you were the best boss I EVER had. Will miss you dearly. Myra Turrentine*

**myra turrentine** - August 16, 2016 at 04:07 PM



“ *Mr Horsley was a inspiration to so many people in the Scouting program, myself included. His leadership and influence will be carried on and truly missed.*  
*"The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law."*  
*Condolences from Venture Crew 369,*  
*Tyler Texas.*

**Bruce Pessink** - August 16, 2016 at 04:02 PM

ME

“ I am deeply sorry for your loss. Ronnie was a wonderful person; so friendly and always smiling. He was a great lawyer, as anyone who ever dealt with him can attest- proficient, yet always a gentleman. He helped me many times without ever asking for anything in return. Seeing him at seminars or CLLA Conventions was a treat, as we always sought to see each other and catch up on the state of the League and the practice of law. His infectious smile and his quick wit will be missed by me, and I am sure by all those who knew Ronnie.  
May his memory be a blessing.

Marc Ellison

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**Marc Ellison** - August 16, 2016 at 02:55 PM

AA

“ Ashley Anderson lit a candle in memory of Ronnie Horsley



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**Ashley Anderson** - August 16, 2016 at 01:49 PM

KN

I shared office space with Ronnie for nearly 30 years. More than space ,we shared our lives. He was never to busy to help with whatever I need , personal or professional. We fished together many times and those were the best of times. Ronnie was old school, meaning a Rule !! was not need because his word was his bond. He will be missed .

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**Kurt Noell** - August 16, 2016 at 03:32 PM

DC

*Janet, I am so sorry for your loss. I remember all the good times we had growing up as kids and how he was like a member of our family. He shared the Lehmann good times and the bad. My condolences to you and the children. God bless you and RIP Ronnie. You will be missed.*

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**Dusty Lehmann Campbell** - August 16, 2016 at 05:24 PM

TL

*Ronnie and I spend many an hour riding his motorcycle when we were young. It did the greatest impression of Jonathan Winters and entertained my father so much. He will be so sadly missed. RIP Ronnie.*

*Tom Lehmann, Summerville, SC*

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**Tom Lehmann** - August 17, 2016 at 03:00 PM

MB

*Attending the service today for Ronnie, I celebrated the words consistently used to describe him...compassionate, caring, respected, involved, loyal, a man committed to character. Ronnie and I shared hundreds of days fishing and with that much time together in a little boat you get to know each other rather well! His values did not waver. He knew who he was and what was important. Over time I came to understand he made a choice to be that kind of man. He kept a joy in his heart that shined through to others. When his strength of body weakened, Ronnie's determined strength to find and share joy grew even stronger. My wonderful friend left a legacy of inspiration on how to truly live a good life. I will forever treasure that gift and the special memories of my fishing buddy.*

*Mike Ballew*

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**Mike Ballew** - August 17, 2016 at 07:55 PM