



Ronald "Ron" W. Lay

April 15, 1947 - June 3, 2023

After a long life of impact and a short battle with cancer, Ronald Wayne Lay, 76, died in the early morning hours of June 3, 2023. He passed away while at his home on Grand Lake in Grove, Oklahoma, surrounded by several generations of adoring family and his best friend, Kenny.

Ron was born to Earl & Bess Lay in the small town of Morrilton, Arkansas. After graduating from Will Rogers High School in Tulsa in 1965, he enrolled at Oklahoma State University but withdrew before obtaining his degree in order to enlist in the U.S. Army. Because he loved dogs, Ron volunteered to serve as a scout dog handler. Over the course of his two tours of duty in Vietnam, Ron was a member of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), serving as a Specialist Fourth Class in both the 34th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon of 5th Cavalry Regiment and the 49th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon of 199th Light Infantry Brigade. Ron worked with his canine partner to scout ahead of the infantry's front line for enemy positions, booby traps, and land mines. During one such patrol, Ron suddenly found himself face-to-face with an enemy combatant. After subduing the enemy soldier, Ron found maps on the enemy's person that revealed several key enemy troop and material locations. For this act of bravery and intelligence recovery, Ron was awarded the Bronze Star.

After his service in the war, Ron returned to Stillwater and re-enrolled in

college at OSU. After graduating in 1973 and armed with a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering degree, Ron entered the workforce within the aerospace industry: first at aircraft manufacturer McDonald Douglas, then at aviation metal finisher Southwest United Industries in Tulsa. During his time at McDonald Douglas, Ron was an avid member of his division's softball team. Ever the fierce competitor, Ron spied a fellow employee named Kenny Bippus who was great on the diamond but part of a terrible team from a different division of the company. Ron introduced himself to Kenny, recruited him to transfer jobs and join Ron's department, thus making Kenny eligible to join Ron's team. The pairing not only resulted in softball domination for years after; Kenny and Ron forged a deep bond of mutual friendship that never waned through the decades and remained strong until the very end.

In 1990, Ron transitioned from employee to entrepreneur with his purchase of Pride Plating, Inc., a tiny metal finishing shop in Grove. Over the course of the next quarter century, Ron grew Pride Plating from a 9,000 sq ft facility with nine employees finishing pizza pans to a 140,000 sq ft manufacturing campus with 140 employees serving as a key piece of the manufacturing supply chain for the F-35 Lightning II stealth multi-role fighter aircraft.

In 2014, Ron retired from running Pride Plating and turned his attention and professional efforts toward the goal of revitalizing the vitality of Grove's downtown area. Through his vision, investment, and work, 3rd Street between Main and Broadway has become a bustling hub of economic activity benefiting residents and visitors alike. Over the last five years, if you have celebrated over a steak, enjoyed a slice of pizza or a dish of homemade ice cream, ordered a bouquet of flowers, or bought a thoughtful gift for the home of a friend, you have experienced a piece of Ron's vision for his beloved Grove come to life. People who have worked for or with Ron all saw the same thing: a person whose focus and passion was on empowering others to live their best lives. Ron truly got more satisfaction out of seeing others succeed,

and never tired of putting his time and money to work towards that end, in ways great and small, both publicly and anonymously. He was known to provide funds to buy a vehicle for an employee working hard to escape addiction as easily as he did the same for his own grandchildren.

Ron was a devoted man of a faith. He served as an elder and taught Sunday School at Delaware Baptist Church in Grove, where he was a member for 25 years. For the past 20 years, Ron also was a faithful member of his weekly Bible Study Fellowship group in Tulsa.

In death, Ron is reunited with his parents Earl & Bess Lay, his mother-in-law Marquita Hogue, and two of his faithful dog friends, Barkley and Charlie. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Teresa; son Chris (Jessie); daughter Amber (Lance); son Randy; grandchildren Austin (Rozi), Taylor (Hunni), Ella, & Ethan; great-grandchildren Jase & Juli; sister Phyllis (Jim); niece Tracy, and his last two furry companions, Lucy & Maggie.

Throughout his life, Ron taught his family the virtues of generosity, hard work, and resilient strength. He taught his daughter to always sacrifice her body to catch the ball on the softball diamond. He taught his son the key to being a successful supply chain partner: always be willing to do whatever is necessary to make things easier for the partners above and below you in the chain for the good of the project overall.

Some of the things that made Ron smile in life: fishing with his grandkids Austin and Taylor; letting his granddaughter Ella drive the golf cart; losing at poker to his grandson Ethan; making his fish look bigger than Randy's by holding it closer to the camera; crushing Amber at Words With Friends by mastering the entire catalogue of words beginning with Q, X, and Z.

Ron loved bass fishing, once catching 85 in a single day on Lake Guerrero in Mexico. He loved to golf, and aced the No. 8 at Shangri-La in 2021 (152 yds, Par 3, 6-iron). He was known for failing spectacularly in his attempt to slide head first into home plate, but Ron was a gamer. He loves to put on firework shows for the 4th of July, even if it meant doing so with a t-shirt tied around his bleeding forehead after catching a golf ball with it (his forehead, not the shirt). He was an active poster of answers on the website Quora, where he fielded questions about the capabilities of the F-35 ("the best, most lethal jet fighter ever built") and cooking spices starting with the letter Q ("Quince").

A celebration of the impact of Ron's life will be held at Delaware Baptist Church on Thursday, June 8, at 1:00 PM followed by burial at Olympus Cemetery North. Friends and community members who wish to visit with Ron's family and share their memories of him may do so at Nicholas-Stephens funeral home on Wednesday, June 7, from 5:00-7:00 PM.

Donations in his memory should be directed to the folks doing God's work at Second Chance Pet Rescue.

Cemetery Details

Olympus Cemetery North

Grove, OK 74344

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 7. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Nichols-Stephens Funeral and Cremation Service
10201 U.S. Highway 59
Grove, OK 74344
(918) 786-6761
nicholsfunerals@yahoo.com

Funeral Service

JUN 8. 1:00 PM (CT)

Delaware Baptist Church
35551 S. 620 Rd
Grove, OK 74344

Tribute Wall



“ *Ronald "Ron" W. Lay*

October 04, 2023 at 03:23 PM



“ *Monica Faynola Mills lit a candle in memory of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay*



Monica Faynola Mills - June 12, 2023 at 03:11 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.*



June 09, 2023 at 12:17 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.*

June 09, 2023 at 12:17 AM

LF

“ Ron and Theresa have both touched the lives of many in this community. Giving in many ways, kindness and gifts to make life better for others. Two of my family members have been blessed with their generosity. What a role model for those of us lucky enough to call them friends. I will forever strive to pay this goodness forward in some small way.

Linda Fisher - June 08, 2023 at 07:51 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.



June 07, 2023 at 11:16 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.



June 07, 2023 at 05:34 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.

June 06, 2023 at 03:41 PM

LM

“ Originally, I got to know Ron through the Men's Golf Association at Shangri-La Golf Club. He was a fun but focused competitor in every event. Later on my son moved to Grove from Tulsa, became part of the company that Ron started, Pride-Plating, and through their acquaintance, I came to know more about the business and family side of Ron. He got A's in all categories. Ron was good for his family, Good for his business and employees, and an overall Good Man! He will be missed. Larry Mlnarik

Larry Mlnarik - June 06, 2023 at 08:22 AM

PS

Ron Lay- A gentleman , an ethical businessman, a leader by example, a man of God , a respecter of all persons, a lover of family , a generous provider for many , a genuine role model for all who knew him.

Pam and Howard Sitton - June 06, 2023 at 09:43 PM



“ Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.



June 05, 2023 at 12:32 PM

JC

“ Teresa my prayers are with you and family through this time of loss and memories of Ron. Joyce Collins/Baptist Village Honey Creek

Joyce Collins - June 05, 2023 at 12:30 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.*



June 05, 2023 at 12:10 PM



“ *Dave and Dianne Brelo purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.*



Dave and Dianne Brelo - June 05, 2023 at 11:40 AM



“ *Dave and Dianne Brelo planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.*

Dave and Dianne Brelo - June 05, 2023 at 11:40 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.*



June 05, 2023 at 11:10 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ronald "Ron" W. Lay.

June 05, 2023 at 11:10 AM



“ Precious Ron made every Brown-Bloyed party tolerable for me. He and I always ended up talking, while the craziness insued around us!
Suzanne Bloyed

suzanne Bloyed - June 05, 2023 at 10:53 AM



“ I was fortunate to have known Ron. He was a savvy businessman, but his love of Grove, and specifically, downtown Grove was immense. Without Ron, it would not be what it is today.

Larry Stout - June 05, 2023 at 08:55 AM