



Henry Bruce Ashcraft

July 24, 1941 - August 18, 2018

On July 24, 1941 Anna Azalee and Zeta Iota "Chunk" Ashcraft welcomed into the world their firstborn son, Henry Bruce Ashcraft in Big Spring, Texas. That's right, his first name was Henry after his uncle. But to the majority of the world his name was Bruce, or Mr. A; to two very special people his name was Daddy, and to one, Granddaddy.

The Ashcrafts moved to Iraan, Texas when Bruce was six months old, then four years later, his brother Bill was born and the family moved to Big Lake, Texas, where they spent the majority of their childhood. His mother, Azalee, was a school teacher and his father, Chunk, managed William-Cameron lumber yard. Bruce and Bill enjoyed a West Texas childhood in simpler times when children played, hunted, and roamed at will with little need for parental supervision, as the whole town was watching over them.

Anyone who knew Bruce, knew music consumed his life. His debut solo was at the age of 7 when he sang "Amazing Grace" at his church. Little did anyone know, this solo would be the beginning of 70 more years of solos, duets, cantatas, late night gigs with his bands, composing, and arranging. Bruce shared his passion for music in a way that many people have tried, but very few are able to do successfully. Teaching was a huge part of his life. He started his choral directing and teaching career in Brady, and from there moved to Midland/Odessa. After a few years, a soon to be close friend,

Tommy Williamson, met him and talked him into interviewing for the High School Choir for El Campo. Being a West Texas native, he was quite hesitant to make such a big change, but hopped on his motorcycle and headed to the interview in El Campo.

This was the defining moment in his life, for as many of you know, El Campo is where he would meet and marry the love of his life, Rhonda, have two daughters, Joanna and Shelley, welcome a daughter-in-law, Katie, son-in-law, Eric, and a sweet granddaughter, Alana, into the family. We also cannot forget the last ten years that he has spent with his loving dog and companion Roxie who has never left his side.

This small town is also the place where Bruce led his choirs to 21 sweepstakes and was the man who literally taught over half the town at one time or another. He retired from El Campo Independent School District in 1997 after directing and teaching for 33 years. Bruce continued to direct the First Presbyterian Church choir, which he did for a total of 32 years, retiring just three months ago in May.

Bruce's first passion as a young boy, was cars; he would lie on the couch in his living room and listen to the different cars going by and tried to guess the car by the sound of the engine. If you were to ask him, he usually got it right. This love of cars transformed into a need for speed. He would drag race anyone in his car as long as there was a long stretch of road in front of him. Bruce loved riding his motorcycle and made many memories traveling with Rhonda, and good friend, Ken, through Mexico and South America taking pictures and sightseeing. His love of speed never left, but just idled as he raised his family. At the age of 71 he got the Corvette that he had always wanted. Again, traveling with Rhonda, they sought out the top Corvette rides in America like "Devils Backbone" and "Tail of the Dragon." He even joined the Corvette Owners Club of Houston, participating in afternoon drives through

the countryside, and numerous events for charity, including car shows, and working with Texas Children's Hospital and military Veterans.

Other hobbies that Bruce enjoyed were golf, which he shared with his brother Bill, photography, reading, playing pool, and cheering at and attending any and all games/tournaments/concerts (believe me there were a lot) for his daughters, no matter the distance.

Bruce passed away surrounded by his loving family on August 18, 2018. His witty charm and dry sense of humor will be deeply missed, but we take comfort in knowing that he is breathing easy and finally able to sing every note with ease again.

See you on the other side; we love you.

Bruce is survived by his wife, Rhonda Allenson Ashcraft; daughters, Joanna Palavicini and wife Katie and Shelley Andreas and husband Eric; granddaughter, Alana Andreas; brother, William "Bill" Thomas Ashcraft and wife Nancy; nephews, David Ashcraft, Shane and David Longoria, Phillip Ross and wife Katie and Scott Ross; nieces, Ann Longoria, Allison and Jessica Kainer; aunt, Lois Ashcraft; cousins, Robert Ashcraft, Susan Davies, Dick Veazey and Helene Farell and in-laws, Ruby and Mike Gore, Ruth Kainer and Leola and Gerald Ross.

Visitation begins 2 p.m. Tuesday, August 21 at Triska Funeral Home with family receiving friends from 5-7 p.m. Funeral services begin at 2 p.m. Wednesday, August 22 at First Presbyterian Church in El Campo with Rev. Chuck Kimball and Rev. Wayne Clement officiating.

Pallbearers will be George Matthews, Bill Hoffman, Mack Stringfield, John

Richter, Arthur Arrambide, Brad Bennetsen and Shane Longoria. Honorary pallbearers will be Bill Ashcraft, Gerry Ross, David Ashcraft, Stanley Petrisky, Ken Kennemer, Robert Ashcraft, Arthur Haller, members of the Reagan County High School Class of 1959 and the Corvette Owners Club of Houston.

Memorials in memory of Bruce may be made to the Bruce Ashcraft Memorial Choral Scholarship Fund.

Triska Funeral Home, El Campo, 979-543-3681

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **21**. 2:00 PM (CT)

Triska Funeral Home
612 Merchant Street
El Campo, TX 77437-3440
(979) 543-3681
triskafh@sbcglobal.net

Family Will Receive Visitors

AUG **21**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Triska Funeral Home
612 Merchant Street
El Campo, TX 77437-3440
(979) 543-3681
triskafh@sbcglobal.net

Funeral Service

AUG **22**. 2:00 PM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church
312 Depot Street
El Campo, TX 77437

Tribute Wall

DS

“ I took a ride with Bruce when he got his Vette. We rode around the country just visiting. He stopped at the bottom of the On-ramp from Louise on to 59, and said "watch this", then he hit the gas. One second we were sitting still, the next VROOM we were racing down the highway.

duane scvhroedter - August 23, 2018 at 07:55 AM

AS

“ Mr. Ashcraft was a great teacher and mentor to his students. He influenced lots of lives as he taught what he loved. God bless his family now and in the days to come. Doyle & Ann

Ann Schaer - August 22, 2018 at 01:36 PM

VB

“ Mr. Ashcraft was an excellent teacher, who I will miss. In my own teaching, I strive to use the values he taught.

Vickey Brooks - August 22, 2018 at 12:50 PM

DA

“ Rhonda and family. We are so sorry to learn of Bruce's passing. In reading the beautiful obituary we learned of Bruce's ties with West Texas. We spent nearly 25 years out that way and some of our very best friends were from Iraan Texas. We visited them numerous times. Small world.

Our prayers and thoughts are ALL with you and family. We love you. "Absent from the body is to be present with the LORD!"

PS: You were actually on our list to make calls too, because daddy passed away due to a heart attack Friday morning. Love you!

David Allenson Family

David Allenson - August 22, 2018 at 12:20 PM

JC

“ Jan Charbula lit a candle in memory of Henry Bruce Ashcraft



Jan Charbula - August 22, 2018 at 11:50 AM

BJ

“ Deepest sympathy for your family.

Bonnie Gloeckner Johnson

B G Johnson - August 21, 2018 at 08:37 PM

JH

“ *My heartfelt sympathies to Bruce’s family. I can still see him standing by the record player at our RCHS dances and singing along with the record; eyes closed and lost in his beloved music. Sending little brother, Bill, a hug from a fellow RCHS Class of ‘63 classmate.*



Judy Green Henson

Judy Green Henson - August 21, 2018 at 03:51 PM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Henry Bruce Ashcraft.*



August 21, 2018 at 03:48 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Henry Bruce Ashcraft.*



August 20, 2018 at 11:18 PM

DH

“ DIANA AND PHIL HUVAR lit a candle in memory of Henry Bruce Ashcraft



DIANA AND PHIL HUVAR - August 20, 2018 at 10:31 PM

DS

“ Bruce was a good friend and taught me so very much about singing with passion, not just notes but FEELING. Thanks Bruce Rest in Peace

Duane Schroedter - August 20, 2018 at 08:30 PM

LK

“ Linda Kram sent a virtual gift in memory of Henry Bruce Ashcraft



Linda Kram - August 20, 2018 at 05:56 PM

LK

Sorry for the family's loss ! Prayers sent to family & friends.

Linda Kram - August 20, 2018 at 05:58 PM

RG

Under the direction of Bruce Ashcraft, I learned about getting every note, every phrase, and every expression marking exactly right every time. This became invaluable in my quest as a singer and later as a choral director. His teaching and love of music influenced my complete career and to each student I taught, I gave them some of the lessons he gave me. I will forever hold him dear and like all his other students, miss him terribly. Prayers to his family who feel this loss deeply.

Ramona C Griffiths - August 20, 2018 at 07:29 PM

R1

“ *RCHS Class of 1959 purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Henry Bruce Ashcraft.*



RCHS Class of 1959 - August 19, 2018 at 05:32 PM