



Jack R. Hays

November 4, 1933 - April 27, 2026

The final gun sounded on the extraordinary life of Coach Jack R. Hays on April 27, 2026. He was 92 years old. Born on November 4th, 1933, in Prosper, Texas, Jack grew up in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas and attended Sunset High School. He excelled at baseball and football and was an integral member of the Bison's 1950 state championship football team. He earned a football scholarship to North Texas State, and it was there he met and married a beauty queen, Ellen Mae Sikora, who would be the love of his life for over 73 years.

Jack initially pursued a business career with Firestone, but the call of coaching was too strong. He secured his first coaching job at Grapevine, then quickly moved to the new South Oak Cliff High School. Jack was eager and ambitious, and he soon became the head football coach and athletics director at El Campo in 1962. He quickly turned that program around, regularly beating arch rivals Bay City and Wharton, winning numerous district championships, and taking his 1967 Ricebirds to the state finals. He also started the school's golf program and led them to regionals.

In 1969, Jack took his talents to West Columbia, where he became the most successful coach in school history. In an exchange that exemplified Jack's confidence and quick wit, his predecessor warned him, "Jack, they're not going to settle for 9-1," to which he replied, "I don't plan on going 9-1!" True to form, he led his initial Columbia squad to the state finals and followed that team with more district championships and playoff appearances. His career

record of 130 wins, 60 losses, and five ties reflect his innovation and work ethic, but more important than wins and losses, Jack invested himself in the development and growth of his coaches, his players, and in athletes across all programs under his direction. He was as proud of those who applied his lessons as successful employees, business owners, and family men as he was of his protégés who had playing success in college and the NFL.

Jack's gridiron excellence was recognized by his peers: he was named Head Coach and led his South squad to victory in the 1972 Texas High School Coaches Association all-star game. His leadership and integrity were recognized in his election to the Association's board of directors, and he was their President 1975–76. He is also a member of the THSCA Hall of Honor and the Greater Houston Area Coaches Hall of Fame. Columbia High School honored him by naming their athletic field house after him, and he is a Columbia High Athletics Hall of Honor inductee.

Jack didn't limit his influence to the gridiron; he was a dedicated civics teacher, taught Sunday School in El Campo, served as a board member of the Columbia United Methodist Church, and was an important member of the team that founded what is now the Coastal Conservation Association. A lifelong Rotarian, Jack served as West Columbia chapter President and was the undisputed world champion ticket salesman and dedicated auction supporter in their annual Shrimp Boil.

Jack retired from coaching in 1980 and began a successful insurance career. After a brief partnership, he struck out on his own, formed Hays Insurance Agency, and continued serving the community he loved with his typical devotion and excellence. Jack was a lifelong athlete who was rarely happier than when he was golfing, playing racquetball, or hunting and fishing with dear friends and family. As important as his work and civic activities were, Jack's family gave him the most joy. Preceded in death by his parents, Marvin R. and Vada Grace (Elrod) Hays, and his beloved wife of 73 years, Ellen Mae (Sikora) Hays, Jack is survived by his three grateful and loving children: Jack Hays (Andrea), Jenna McEachern (Randy), and Jeff Hays (Gina); eight

grandchildren; and eleven great-grandchildren.

There's an old football adage that at some point, players have to "overcome their coaching." Those of us who knew and loved Jack Hays were usually striving to equal his coaching, and that's the measure of the man.

The family will receive visitors on Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at Triska Funeral Home, 612 Merchant Street, El Campo, Texas. Funeral services will be on Sunday, May 17 at 1:00 pm, at Columbia Methodist Church, 315 S. 16th St., West Columbia, Texas.

Memorial donations may be made to the Jack and Ellen Hays Scholarship Fund, 3100 Kramer Lane, # 217, Austin, Texas, 78758.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY **16**. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

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

Funeral Service

MAY **17** (CT)

Columbia Methodist Church
315 S 16th St
West Columbia, TX 77486

Tribute Wall



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Jack R. Hays.



May 14 at 06:16 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Jack R. Hays.

May 14 at 06:16 PM



“ Pat and Terrysa Roy purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Jack R. Hays.



Pat and Terrysa Roy - May 13 at 09:24 AM



“ Jack and Jenna ,I am so sorry for your loss.I will keep you and your family in my prayers.🙏 May Your Father Rest In Peace.🙏 Your Classmate, Larry Carriere.

Larry Carriere - May 12 at 10:34 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Jack R. Hays.*



May 12 at 06:03 PM



“ *Gloria Krpec lit a candle in memory of Jack R. Hays*



Gloria Krpec - May 02 at 11:38 PM



“ *Martin Strarup sent a virtual gift in memory of Jack R. Hays*



Martin Strarup - May 02 at 05:06 PM



Condolences to the family (Jeff) of this awesome Coach, mentor, and leader. So many life lessons from Coach Hays, he will be missed. Roughnecks forever!

Gerald Smith - May 04 at 10:19 AM

EL

“ My most deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Family I've known Mr Hays for many years My husband and I had our Insurances with his place of business Mr Hays was always pleasant and polite He n my husband Leon Lewis would always (You guessed it)talk Sports I hadn't seen Mr Hays and always wondered how he was doing Thanks for the Memories Mr Hays You're all paid up Rest until Our Saviour Comes

Evelyn Lewis - May 02 at 12:42 PM

KH

“ KarenSheldon Holub lit a candle in memory of Jack R. Hays



KarenSheldon Holub - May 02 at 10:24 AM

SD

“ Sandra Diehl lit a candle in memory of Jack R. Hays



Sandra Diehl - May 02 at 09:55 AM

E1

“ ECHS Class 1968 lit a candle in memory of Jack R. Hays



ECHS Class 1968 - May 01 at 05:30 PM