



Jerry Aulds

July 28, 1940 - July 25, 2023

Jerry Aulds, the “Voice of El Campo” for four decades, passed July 25, 2023, after a multi-year, brave battle with Dementia/Alzheimer’s Disease.

He was just shy of his 83rd birthday.

Jerry was born July 28, 1940, in Amarillo, Texas, to Talbert Elgin Aulds and Marie Estelle Aulds.

Jerry was preceded in death by his father, Talbert Elgin Aulds, his mother, Marie Estelle Hill, and stepfather John Benton Hill.

Jerry is survived by his sister Dr. Darlene “Cheyenne” Aulds Martin of Galveston; son T.J. Aulds and wife, Dr. Beth Lewis-Aulds of Nassau Bay, TX; daughter Shannon Edith Matus and her husband, Jay Matus of Tomball, TX; nephew Darin Fennel and wife Tonya of Arlington and their children Savannah, Schuyler and Sinclair; his close friend Dorothy Johnson of El Campo; his 4 grand-furkids; dozens of extended family in Texas and Louisiana and friends across the country.

Jerry’s true-life story begins in the Texas Panhandle Town of Borger, where his father worked for Phillips Oil.

Jerry attended Borger schools until he graduated from Borger High School in 1958.

It was at Borger High School where Jerry got his start in journalism. He wrote a golf column, "From the Tee," and covered local sports for the Borger News Herald.

Jerry was also a caddy at the Borger Country Club, where he was known to "take a few dollars off" a few members who would challenge him to a few rounds of golf.

After high school, Jerry enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving aboard the Aggressive-Class minesweeper USS Pivot in the Sea of Japan.

After his service, Jerry returned to Borger, where he owned and operated the folk music coffee house "Homer," which drew significant folk artists of the time.

To save money, the singers and songwriters would often spend the night at the Aulds home, where they were well-fed and pampered by Jerry's mother.

Jerry attended Frank Phillips College in Borger, earning an Associates of Arts Degree.

Jerry then moved to the Texas Gulf Coast, working as an insurance underwriter at Prudential Insurance Company, working for his eventual father-in-law James E. Kelly.

On July 29, 1967, Jerry married Laura Lynn Kelly in a furniture store in Hitchcock, TX, as part of a promotion to get free furniture for their new home.

Within two years, Jerry and Laura welcomed two children and moved to

Austin, where Jerry enrolled at the University of Texas as a journalism major.

It was at the University of Texas where Jerry was named the sports columnist for The Daily Texan.

As a columnist, Jerry covered the Texas Longhorns coaching legend Darrell K. Royal and all things Longhorns athletics.

He often recalled interviews with Coach Royal while Willie Nelson strummed a guitar nearby at the famed Driscoll Hotel in downtown Austin.

At the University of Texas, Jerry learned from some of the brightest journalism minds, including Mike Quinn, S. Griffin “Griff” Singer, and Dick Elam.

Soon after finishing at the University of Texas, Jerry took on the role of editor and advertising director for the Quanah Tribune Chief in the Texas Panhandle town of Quanah.

He was also the news director for the local radio station.

The newspaper and radio stations were co-owned by famed Texas book publisher and author Edwin “Ed” Eakin.

Like Eakin, Jerry was fascinated with telling the stories of Texans and the rich history of the state through the eyes of those who lived through that history.

While in Quanah, Jerry went from reporting to making the news because of the great Quanah Piano Mishap or, as he often put it, “The Day the Piano Music Died.”

Chronicled by Aulds in many columns, the story is of the day driving a borrowed pickup that Jerry attempted to deliver an upright piano to his house on Hughes Street in Quanah.

While going through downtown Quanah, the unsecured piano flipped from the truck bed onto the streets in the middle of the town.

While that incident precipitated the end of his first marriage, it opened the door to a new opportunity and a move to the city that, until his death, he considered his true hometown, El Campo.

Eakin and Elam were admirers of Jerry and were good friends and business partners with El Campo media legend Fred Barbee.

In 1976, Barbee, then owner of the El Campo Leader-News and KULP-AM, hired Jerry to be the radio station's general manager and write a weekly column for the newspaper.

It was those roles that Jerry would always say were his calling in life.

Jerry embraced the community as it reminded him in many ways of his early years in Borger. A community of hard-working, good-hearted people who, for the most part, looked out for their neighbors and - in his case - welcomed newcomers.

There was the learning curve of learning the pronounce the Czech names and, of course, knowing the difference between a kolache and klobasnikies.

Thankfully, KULP News Director Al Kozel taught him the secret to saying Czech names on the radio. Through Kozel, Jerry learned that Polka music was sacred to the community.

So much so that Jerry went on to create Polka-fest, one of the region's biggest draws of heritage music and Czech culture.

It was in El Campo where the Longhorn turned ins his burnt orange for Ricebird Red and was for many years the play-by-play, color-commentator, and sideline reporter for El Campo High School Ricebird sports.

He also broadcast athletic games for Louise, Wharton, and East Bernard.

Jerry was also the voice of El Campo Little League, All-Star baseball, and youth sports of all forms.

Jerry also became the voice of the Wharton County Youth Fair. The annual event represented the best of the county and supported the communities youth.

It was KULP's community-based programming, local news and eclectic music mix of country, Polka and Tejano music and the regular agriculture market updates that drew the attention of Texas Monthly author Joe Nick Patoski, who in 1999 named the station one of the best in the state.

Jerry's local-first approach wasn't isolated to the AM radio dial.

He served as the emcee for thousands of banquets, chamber galas, sports banquets, Wharton County Electric Cooperative dinners, Wharton County Junior College events and gatherings big and small.

There wasn't a Christmas or Fair parade that Jerry wasn't the emcee.

KULP also became the training ground for many high school students, whose

first jobs were as board operators at night for the radio station. While not all remained in the broadcast field, the alums of KULP staffers are a long list of people who have gone on to great success in other industries.

As part of the job, Jerry wrote a weekly column for The Leader News.

Each Saturday, he'd tell the story of El Campo through the perspective of the people who made it special.

He chronicled the heroism of close friend and Medal of Honor recipient Roy P. Benavides. He told the stories of church ladies who ensured everyone was fed at potluck dinners and post-funeral gatherings.

Through his weekly column, the community's unsung heroes got the recognition they deserved.

His columns were recognized as some of the best writing in Texas, winning numerous Texas Press Association and Gulf Coast Press Association awards throughout his 44-year career.

Often those columns were edited by then Leader-News Editor and now El Campo Mayor Chris Barbee.

While 12 years his junior, Jerry considered Chris Barbee his younger and noted "wiser" brother.

Jerry was also active in First Baptist Church, which was the core of his faith.

He volunteered to run the audio mixer for the weekly broadcasts on KULP and eventually joined the choir, where his dear friend Joe Tom Davis would keep

Jerry on key.

Those activities and more is what led the community to name him Citizen of the Year in 2001.

Jerry Aulds stories and memories would fill the pages of several editions of the Leader-News, Wharton Journal Spectator and Victoria Advocate.

So, if you have a story or memory of Jerry, his family invites you to a special celebration of a life well lived Sunday, August 13, at First Baptist Church of El Campo, 206 Depot, at 2 P.M.

A brief service led by Pastor Rick DuBroc will be held in the church sanctuary, followed by a gathering of family, friends, and memories in the church fellowship hall.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in memory of Jerry may be made to First Baptist Church, 206 Depot, El Campo, TX 77437 or Everyday Heroes, P.O. Box 348, El Campo, TX 77437.

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

Tribute to My Dad, Jerry Aulds by Shannon Matus

On July 28, 2023, my dad Jerry Aulds, (known to my brother and me as Daddy) celebrated his 83rd birthday in HEAVEN. On Tuesday July 25th, after bravely battling Dementia/Alzheimer's for nearly a decade, Daddy peacefully journeyed from Earth to join God and a host of precious family and friends that have gone before us, including others from our Texas Mile Family. I know he heard these words: Matthew 25:21 - His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Though we miss Daddy and have plenty of tears, our family is gifted with peace, joy, humble pride, and tons of love and laughter because of the amazing impact our dad has made on the lives of others. Daddy lived out his life with a servant's and grateful heart. He has a beautiful legacy through the lives of his family that remains and through his home community of El Campo, Wharton County, Texas.

Included are two pictures of Daddy at our Texas Mile events.

For our Texas Mile Family and fans from 2003 to 2017, Daddy was part of our staff's "Bring your Dad to The Mile Club!". For many years, Daddy was The Voice of the Texas Mile highlighting the top speeds of our participants, doing color-commentary, and ensuring our sponsors were recognized. Though Daddy was not a car or motorcycle enthusiast, he loved competition sports, he loved color-commentating, he loved a community of people encouraging each other. Moreover, he loved Jay and me, so he used all his professional talents and skills to support our motorsports endeavors. I love his smile, his laughter, and the values he instilled in me in supporting family, community and Honoring God and Country, which is what I proclaim at the start of every Texas Mile's initial drivers' meeting.

The singular photo of Daddy is at a Citizen of the Year Banquet.

To El Campo, Wharton County Texas, Jerry Aulds, was a treasured and honored citizen. To me, he is "THE MOST AWESOME DADDY OF MY ENTIRE LIFE!" I have also included a photo that Jay took on Father's Day this year (June 2023) at The Meridian in Galveston, Texas where we celebrated with the biggest Father's Day card I could find. Daddy was able to read every word on the card and identify Snoopy and Woodstock. For someone with ALZ in its final stages, that is a very amazing feat! That is why I began with how he bravely lived out his final days here. We also sang AMAZING GRACE

together the first weekend in July 2023.

I have also included photos of our wedding and Daddy and me during our Father and Daughter Dance on July 22, 1989 (34-years ago). I chose the song: "Wind Beneath my Wings" because of the words in the chorus:

"Did you ever know that you're my hero,

And everything I would like to be?

I can fly higher than an eagle

For you are the wind beneath my wings"

Though Daddy has gone on to heaven, he remains the "Wind Beneath My Wings" because of the values and skills he has installed in me. He ensured I was surrounded by people of Faith in God. He was the original Mister Mom. He taught me that love does truly conquer All. He showed me how to look for the best in people and to show people they are valued. He showed me how to support and build community. He equipped me with the skills and tools to learn and be resourceful and so much more that it would take me a novel to write. So, for now, I will sign off with his personal tag line: "That's Aulds Folks!"

Love you Daddio! Your Shannio!

Pictures listed in album 'Shannon's Tribute'

Tribute to My Dad, Jerry Aulds by TJ Aulds

After a long fight with Dementia/Alzheimer's my father Jerry Aulds died Tuesday, three days shy of his 83rd birthday.

We knew this was coming. Planned for it. Was ready for it until of course when he passed away.

There however is no sorrow for me.

Sure I hurt. I miss him.

But it's moments like these pictured in the album I remember.

- My dad talking to me after Beth and I got married. My dad telling Beth the same story he told her the first time they met at our wedding.

- My father with my Paw Paw Jim Kelly behind him before our wedding. No doubt my dad arrived at the gates of Heaven and Paw Paw took him straight to the secret poker room.

- My dad with his sister my aunt Dr Darlene "Cheyenne" Martin at one of the dozens of brunches on the island after he retired to Galveston in 2020.

- Then a shot from right field of Fenway Park for Boston vs Yankees. (The game tickets cost more than our flight to Boston).

After my dad was diagnosed with cancer several years ago we made it a point to travel to MLB baseball parks he had never been to. Nationals, Wrigley (for a day and a night game), Camden, Busch, Fenway, the other Arlington (rangers) and while no game also toured Milwaukee.

My dad kept score on a score sheet from the program. When he missed something I'd look it up on my MLB app. That bothered him because that's not how to track baseball.

Baseball, Longhorns (my dad was the sports columnist for The Daily Texan at UT) and broadcast were the things that connected us.

Most of all journalistic standards, hyper local focus and knowing what made a good story also tied us together.

All the years in broadcast we had NEVER done a game together.

Until one year after El Campo and East Bernard lost early in playoffs - usually and he would join me and Pete Rygaard in the booth for La Marque Cougars games.

It started a tradition since La Marque kept going to state every year. My dad was the best color commentator (sorry Pete, Nate Griffin, Jack Ewing and Mike Lockwood).

I always thought we disagreed on a lot of stuff.

I was wrong.

We agreed on a lot, just had different approaches.

People often praise me for coming up with i45NOW.

Truth is, my dad came up with the concept first, he just called it KULP 106.7 FM & 1390 AM The Texas Legend back then.

I insist i45NOW is the Jerry Aulds vision of KULP, just on steroids. Steve and Mike have kept that vision alive.

My dad also displayed the best in understanding with thoughtful weekly columns in the Saturday edition of the El Campo Leader-News and at times used me and my sister as subjects.

He was a guy who hustled rich golfers in Borger Texas, served aboard a Navy minesweeper in the Sea of Japan, interviewed Darrel Royal while Willie Nelson strummed a guitar nearby, learned from and eventually work with the best journalism minds to ever grace the J-school at UT, called Earl Campbell a friend, played poker against Amarillo Slim and Doyle "The Texas Dolly" Brunson, took stands against racism when it was a taboo subject in some communities, and who could recite lines from Homer's Odyssey while at the same time come up with the idea for Polka Fest and talk about soybean futures as if he was a farmer.

That's just the surface.

I always said I just wanted to be as good as my daddy at what he did. Fact is I can't, and won't be able to, but will always strive.

We are fortunate too that my father's death will contribute to UTMB Health's Alzheimer's research through a brain donation (thanks Dr. Giulio Tagliatela) and who thanks to Carnes Funeral Home Willed Body program will aid medical students.

That means all that's left is in a few weeks to hold a celebration of his life and contributions in El Campo, a place he always considered his home.

Until then, as my daddy would sign off his column for the El Campo Country Club, That's Aulds Folks.

Pictures listed in album 'TJ's Tribute'

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

AUG 13. 2:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church
210 Depot Street
El Campo, TX 77437

Tribute Wall

SS

“ *Sharon Stehno lit a candle in memory of Jerry Aulds*



Sharon Stehno - August 14, 2023 at 03:37 PM



Thank you for thing about our Dad. Shannon

Shannon Matus - August 14, 2023 at 10:01 PM

JA

“ *Jerry was my first boss ever. He gave me a job in 1977 at KULP. I was 16. He was more of a father figure than a boss really. He helped raise me and taught me life lessons that I still hold near and dear to my heart. Jerry, I will miss you always. My sincere condolences for TJ, Shannon and the rest of his family, as well as the KULP family he created. I will love you always.*

Jean Andersen - August 12, 2023 at 08:55 PM

TA

Thank you Jean. It was a joy to be able to work with you years later as we both deployed his lessons in Houston - TJ

TJ Aulds - August 14, 2023 at 07:18 AM



Jean, thank you for sharing your experiences with Daddy. It means so much that he touched the lives of so many people in such significant ways. :-) Shannon

Shannon Matus - August 14, 2023 at 10:00 PM

BA

“ *Brenda Adams-Williams lit a candle in memory of Jerry Aulds*



Brenda Adams-Williams - August 10, 2023 at 09:10 PM



Thank you for thinking about my Dad. This is his daughter.

Shannon Matus - August 11, 2023 at 09:32 PM

GV

“ *Gary Voelkel lit a candle in memory of Jerry Aulds*



Gary Voelkel - August 09, 2023 at 02:01 PM



Thank you Gary for remembering my Dad and lighting a candle for him. It is heart warming seeing how much others cared for him. Jerry's daughter: Shannon Matus

Shannon Matus - August 10, 2023 at 01:02 AM

GC

“ *Jerry was an asset to the El Campo community....he will be deeply missed!
Prayers go out to the family!*

Gerry Couey - August 09, 2023 at 10:57 AM



Thank you Gerry for recognizing how much my Dad cared for community. He loved everything to do with El Campo, Wharton County, Texas. Thank you for writing. Jerry's daughter - Shannon Matus

Shannon Matus - August 10, 2023 at 01:06 AM

PT

“ *Praying for your family, the KULP family and for the entire El Campo Community.*



Pam Turner - August 09, 2023 at 10:13 AM



Thank you Pam. Daddy truly loved his family, his community and serving with his talents and heart through KULP and The El Campo LeaderNews. This story s Jerry's daughter Shannon.

Shannon Matus - August 10, 2023 at 01:10 AM

CT

“ *Carol Tomlinson lit a candle in memory of Jerry Aulds*



Carol Tomlinson - August 09, 2023 at 10:05 AM



Thank you for lighting a candle in memory of my Dad. This is Shannon Matus, his daughter.

Shannon Matus - August 10, 2023 at 06:36 PM

MS

“ *Martin Strarup lit a candle in memory of Jerry Aulds*



Martin Strarup - August 09, 2023 at 09:12 AM



Thank you for lighting a candle in memory of my Dad. This is Shannon Matus, his daughter.

Shannon Matus - August 10, 2023 at 06:36 PM

DP

“ *Jerry was so proud of his autographed GI Joe - Roy P. Benavidez “doll” that we kids and Lala (Mom), had signed. I’m sure he is telling Dad (Roy) all about it. My condolences to you all.*

Denise Prochazka - August 09, 2023 at 09:11 AM



Hello Denise. Thank you so much for sharing this wonderful memory with us. Daddy loved Roy and I am at peace that they are friends again in heaven. This is Shannon Matus, his daughter.

Shannon Matus - August 10, 2023 at 06:38 PM

TA

Denise. Your dad was so special to our father. We need to find that GI Joe.

TJ Aulds - August 14, 2023 at 07:21 AM

LS

“ *Liz Staff lit a candle in memory of Jerry Aulds*



Liz Staff - August 09, 2023 at 07:05 AM



Thank you for lighting a candle in memory of my Dad. This is Shannon Matus, his daughter.

Shannon Matus - August 10, 2023 at 06:39 PM

CR

“ *Cindy Riha lit a candle in memory of Jerry Aulds*



Cindy Riha - August 08, 2023 at 10:18 PM



Thank you for lighting a candle in memory of my Dad. This is Shannon Matus, his daughter.

Shannon Matus - August 10, 2023 at 06:39 PM

SP

“ *Shirley Popp lit a candle in memory of Jerry Aulds*



Shirley Popp - August 08, 2023 at 04:54 PM



Thank you Shirley for honoring our Dad.

Shannon Matus - August 08, 2023 at 09:25 PM



“ 5 files added to the album *TJ's Tribute*



Triska Funeral Home - August 08, 2023 at 04:04 PM



“ 7 files added to the album *Shannon's Tribute*



Triska Funeral Home - August 08, 2023 at 02:55 PM

AM

“ *My condolences to the family at this difficult time.* ”



Andrea McCann - August 08, 2023 at 02:54 PM