



# Ronnie Kenneth Bailey

MAR 7, 1941 - DEC 11, 2024



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# Ronnie Kenneth Bailey

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## Ronnie Kenneth Bailey March 7, 1941 – December 11, 2024

Ron Bailey died peacefully in bed at Tampa General Hospital in the morning hours of Wednesday, December 11, 2024. The specter of death had been trying to take Ron for decades, placing in his path, first, two separate bouts with the deadly illness Gullain Barre syndrome, and then a cancer diagnosis, but Ron stubbornly refused to quit living. His children and grandchildren were in need of a great deal more bossing around and directing here on earth. It took the piling on of a worsening heart condition as well as liver and kidney failure and, finally, an internal infection before he agreed that death had made a convincing argument for his departure.

Ron was born to Versie Bailey in Princeton, West Virginia March 7th of 1941. He grew up poor in a coal mining town and attended a one room country schoolhouse which taught kids of all ages. When he wanted a sip of water he had to go outside and hand pump well water from the spigot, then catch the water in a cone of paper, which he would have to borrow from a friend because he rarely had any paper of his own. Later, he attended and graduated from Princeton High School where he remembered being one of the worst students in school, once earning points with his friends for sneaking out the window during class, getting a haircut and then sneaking back in before the teacher noticed he was gone.

After High School Ron joined the army and was selected to work on a new technology called computers. His aptitude for computers meant he spent most of his years in the army working at the pentagon instead of the jungles of Vietnam. During this time, he went to buy a bracelet for a girl he had a crush on, but he fell in love with the salesgirl at the jewelry store and started dating her instead. Ron and Beverly Welsh Bailey married in 1962 and remained married for 56 years until her passing in 2018.

After the army Ron completed his studies in computer information systems, earning a Master's degree from American University in Washington, DC. He then went on to teach computer



## Obituary

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information systems at Strayer University. When the owner of Strayer University wanted to retire Ron scraped together his savings, borrowed all the money he could, and bought the company. He turned it around and made it profitable, and then later sold it on Wall Street through a public offering. With the proceeds of this sale, he moved to Tampa and started the Bailey Family Foundation where he has given away tens of millions of dollars in scholarship money to deserving students in the Tampa area and supported countless Tampa charities.

In addition to his professional and philanthropic achievements he was also an accomplished athlete. He was the self-proclaimed “Horse” basketball champion of Loisdale estates in Springfield, Virginia throughout the 70’s and 80’s and the perennial “Bailey Cup” tennis champion of Harbour Island, Tampa, Florida in the Two Bounce Division in the early 2000’s.

His greatest success, however, was as a Dad to Kyle Bailey, Kent Bailey, and Piroj Piboolnuruk, as a father-in-law to Michele Bailey, Stephanie Bailey, and Tina Piboolnuruk, and as a Poppo to Brandon, Justin, Cameron, Megan, Lily, Sofia, Taryn, Finley, Hazel, Bailey and Isabella.

His sons remember him shirtless on the front porch drinking Stroh’s and watching them play in the front yard. As soon as they were old enough to hang on to the handlebars, he put them both on dirt bikes. Ron and sons could be found most Sundays riding the trails through the acres of undeveloped woods behind their home in Virginia. When approaching any particularly rough and steep hills he was sure to stop at the base and make his eldest son, Kyle, go first to test it out. He once set himself on fire trying to exterminate an ant hill with gasoline which resulted in a visually spectacular run across the backyard to jump in the pool while engulfed in flame. He once ate butter wrapped in tinfoil while traveling because he thought it was cheese. It took him far longer than one would expect to realize he was chewing on tinfoil. He was always pointing his fingers and telling his kids, grandkids and spouses where to go and what to do. He was physically incapable of watching a family member enter a parking lot without telling them where to park. In short, his sons remember him as the best Dad ever. And they don’t know what they’re going to do now without him pointing his fingers.

Rest easy Ron. Enjoy that cold Stroh’s in your hand and Beverly by your side again. You’ve earned it.

The family invites friends to gather at Sunset Funeral Home of Thonotosassa, FL starting at 9am on Wednesday December 18th. With the Celebration of Life to begin at 10am. In lieu of flowers



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please donate to a local charity or help someone near you as that's what Ron was passionate about.



# Events

**Ronnie Kenneth Bailey**

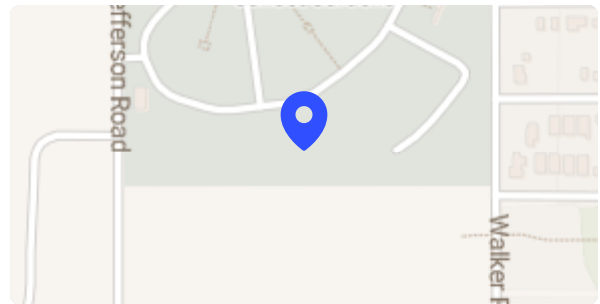
MAR 7, 1941 - DEC 11, 2024

## Gathering of family and friends

**Wednesday**, December 18, 2024

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM ET

**Sunset Funeral Home**  
11005 N US Highway 301, Thonotosassa FL 33592

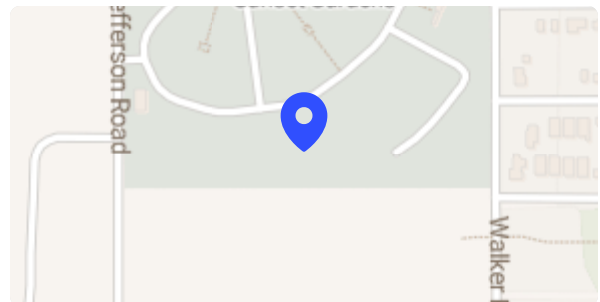


## Celebration of Life

**Wednesday**, December 18, 2024

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM ET

**Sunset Funeral Home**  
11005 N US Highway 301, Thonotosassa FL 33592

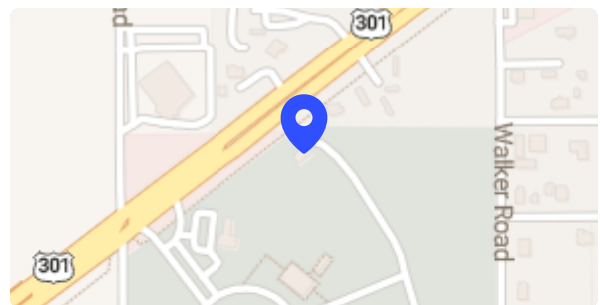


## Interment service with Military Honors

**Wednesday**, December 18, 2024

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM ET

**Sunset Memory Gardens**  
11005 US-301, Thonotosassa FL 33592





# Tribute Wall

**Ronnie Kenneth Bailey**

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**Sunset Funeral Home & Memory Gardens** shared a **Video**.



December 17 at 6:13 AM



**Laura Faraone** December 24 at 12:17 PM

So many beautiful memories captured in this video ❤️

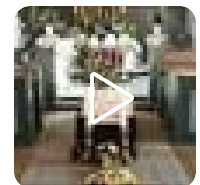


**Karen Glisson** December 17 at 10:08 AM

Lovely video. Thanks for sharing. Everything he loved most. His family



**Sunset Funeral Home & Memory Gardens** shared a **Webcast Video**.



December 18 at 10:13 AM



**Michael Glisson** posted:

Karen & I knew Ron & Bev and considered them our dearest friends. We met them after returning to Florida in 2000. Ron was a very unique man. As a humanitarian & philanthropist, he touched the lives of hundreds, even thousands of people. He was one who will leave a void in our life because of his absence. We thank God for putting him in our path. RIP friend...until we meet again.  
—Michael Glisson

December 19 at 7:12 AM



**Stacie Hughes** posted:

I have been doing Mr. Bailey's hair for over 19 years and every time he called me for his appointment he would say "Hi Stacie this is Ron Bailey" until I started answering the phone with "Hi Mr. Bailey" we had a routine and many years of conversations, some about my crazy life that he would just shake his head and laugh at me and some just him telling me about his life and his grandchildren because I had 2 boys that are the same age as 2 of his grandsons. I'm going to miss those days and I felt like we had many more conversations left to be had but I'm just grateful for all the years he followed me to the few salons that I moved to and then eventually to the house in plant city! Condolences to all of the family and what a great and caring man he was! Stacie Hughes

December 18 at 4:46 AM



# Tribute Wall

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**Janet Jalloul** posted:

Ron Bailey was a crusader for education - Strayer College, Strayer University, and then the Bailey Foundation. Twenty seven years ago he helped me to build a small free elementary school in the bush in Kenya for children who never went to school. It is still prospering today and thousands of Kenyan children have been educated. He never went to Africa, but that was not important. The goal was education and he met that goal every time. There are also a group of "Bailey Scholars" in Kenya who benefited from scholarships to go on with their education. Mr. Bailey never knew those students but they knew him. His name will be remembered in N. Kenya for a long time. The children used to call him "the good man who lives in a place called Florida". And he was just that - a good man. May he rest in peace. His legacy on earth is a rich one. Janet Jalloul, Kenya, East Africa

December 17 at 1:36 AM



**Laura F.** planted a grove of 5 Memorial Trees in honor of Ronnie.



December 16 at 7:49 AM



**All Of Us At Ed Taylor Construction** sent a Beautiful Dreams to the Bailey family.



December 16 at 6:55 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Divine Peace Bouquet to the Bailey family.



December 16 at 5:27 AM



**Carol J M.** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Ronnie.



December 14 at 2:30 AM



## Tribute Wall

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GC

**Gypsie Calvi** posted:

Ronnie was one of my best friends, we went to school together. He was precious and a very humble man. I will remember him always. My prayers are for Kyle, Kent and all the family. Thanks Ronnie for your friendship all these many years. Gypsie Calvi

December 13 at 4:46 PM

TC

**Terry Clapp** posted:

I started teaching at Strayer College in 1992 when we had 8 campuses in the Washington, DC area and watched him grow the college into a university with many more campuses. Years later we connected over Facebook after he moved to Florida. It was fabulous to be able to keep in touch. He will be missed.

December 13 at 11:53 AM

KB

**Karen Bailey** lit a candle in honor of Ronnie.



December 13 at 10:06 AM

MC

**Mike And Wanda Corrigan** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Ronnie.



December 13 at 8:57 AM

MC

**Mike And Wanda Corrigan** sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Bailey family.



December 13 at 8:57 AM

SE

**Stan And Jean Elmore** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Ronnie.



December 13 at 5:52 AM



# Tribute Wall

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**Stan And Jean Elmore** sent an Enchanted Cottage to the Bailey family.



December 13 at 5:52 AM



**Donald T Benson** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Ronnie.



December 13 at 5:38 AM



**Donald T Benson** sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Bailey family.



December 13 at 5:38 AM



**Love, Eric & Amy Kersey** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Bailey family.



December 13 at 1:19 AM



**Andy Hirsch** posted:

So sad to learn this news. I had just reached to Ron last Tuesday via email to say hello. What an incredible man, generous, thoughtful and a true believer in the best of humanity. His legacy will live on for generations to come. May his memory be blessing always! ❤️🙏

December 12 at 8:10 PM



**Amber Hixson** posted:

Ron was my grandmother, Patricia Spicer Smith, cousin. I heard countless stories about their West Virginia roots growing up and she spoke so highly of him. Because of the Bailey family foundation I was able to go to college and am now a registered nurse. I'll forever be grateful for the doors his foundation opened for me. You leave behind an amazing legacy. Thank you Ron, rest in peace and I know my grandmother will be happy to see you again up there ❤️

December 12 at 4:27 PM



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**Sean Hebior** sent a virtual gift in honor of Ronnie.

Rest in Peace Mr. Bailey. My deepest condolences go out to the Bailey family. Sincerely Sean & Jacque

December 12 at 3:59 PM



**Polly Houchins** posted:

Ron Bailey was an incredibly generous human being who came from humble beginnings. Mr Bailey is the reason my sons received an education and I/we are forever grateful. His life was well lived and well done. Polly Houchins

December 12 at 3:43 PM



**Anonymous** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Ronnie.

December 12 at 3:41 PM



**Paula And Todd** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Ronnie.

December 12 at 10:06 AM



**Paula And Todd** sent a Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet to the Bailey family.

December 12 at 10:06 AM





# Media

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Sunset Funeral Home & Memory Gardens shared a Video.

December 17 at 6:13 AM



**Laura Faraone** December 24 at 12:17 PM

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**Media**

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December 18 at 10:13 AM





# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Ronnie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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