



Stanley Gerald Alexander

November 24, 1928 - March 29, 2017

Stanley Gerald Alexander, 88, of Austin, Texas, died peacefully at home the morning of March 29, 2017, following a lifelong aversion to mortality. He was preceded in death by his parents, William Jasper and Johnnie Lee Alexander, and younger brother, Darwin Dean Alexander. Stan leaves behind his wife, Nancy, son Alex and wife Brigid, daughter Emily and husband John Henry, and two grandchildren, Maura and Bonner.

Born Nov. 24, 1928 to a farming family in Roscoe, Texas, Stan developed a love of hillbilly music listening to his parents' 78s of Milton Brown, Wiley Walker, and Jimmie Rodgers, and practiced his singing riding a tractor plowing cotton fields. His love of reading and learning were fostered by rare rainy days and parents who helped him become the first in his family to attend college. After serving as an Army medic in Germany during the Korean Conflict, Stan earned his Ph.D. in English from UT Austin. He probably spent less time studying than at Scholtz's Beer Garden or at Kenneth Threadgill's bar north of town, where he and other folk music lovers jammed over beers to see whose version of Blue Yodel #1 was the most faithful to Jimmie Rodgers'. Stan's soulful country blues belting often took the prize, but Janis Joplin's (another Threadgill's regular) version was quite good, as well.

Stan married Betty Jean Immel in 1956 and welcomed son Alex in 1959. He took his first teaching position at North Texas State College in Denton in 1962, where he also started a folk music club attended by Michael Murphey, Steve Fromholtz, and Ray Wylie Hubbard. Stan joined the faculty at Stephen F. Austin St. University in Nacogdoches in 1968, where he remained until retirement. He fell in with fellow country music loving professors at SFA to form the East Texas String Ensemble (pronounced, "In-Simble"). The ETSE was Francis "Ab" Abernethy (bass), Stan (guitar), Charles Gardner (fiddle and mandolin), and Tom Nall, (banjo). The band played weddings, county fairs, private gatherings, and represented Texas hillbilly music at the annual Texas Folklife Festival in San Antonio for more than 25 years.

Stan was active in local Nacogdoches politics and led civil rights marches and demonstrations alongside good friend and local activist Arthur Weaver. Stan often lent his time and money to causes he felt would help make his community and country better ones.

Stan married Nancy Jim Wilmeth in 1977 and welcomed daughter Emily in 1978. He and Nancy restored an early 20th century home in Chireno, Texas before moving back into town. Stan loved spending time with his family and they took several wonderful vacations together. He loved spending time at the family ranch in Central Texas and spent many summers working alongside son Alex farming, ranching, and playing music. After retirement, Stan enjoyed frequent trips to the farm and loved teaching his grandkids to fish and hunt for arrowheads. In the last few years, Stan relished quiet days at home with Nancy, following politics, working crossword puzzles, and spending time with family during visits.

A memorial to celebrate Stan's life will be held at Threadgill's (6416 N. Lamar, in Austin) on Saturday, May 13 from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Comments



“ Dr. Alexander was one of my English professors. He always took a personal interest in all of his students. I remember how we all enjoyed his classes on Faulkner. I will never forget the wonderful music he and his colleagues played. I always took him homemade cookies for his birthday, which was one day before mine. Good memories. My condolences to the family. Martha Nell Modisette, Collins, Ms.

Martha Nell Modisette - October 01, 2018 at 11:31 PM