



Merle Arnold

June 3, 1945 - July 11, 2009

Merle R. Arnold, 64, former Executive Director of the Texas Water Development Board, died late Saturday, July 11.

Arnold chose water law for his career and worked 16 years as a state employee, adjudicating water rights for the Texas Water Rights Commission and later moving to the Water Development Board which oversees construction of dams and other water projects and is responsible for bonds sold to finance the work.

He was involved in numerous legislative revisions of Texas water law and initiated the bill that passed into law to help the Colonias in South Texas during the administration of Gov. Ann Richards.

He left the Water Board after suffering a massive brain injury in a car accident.

A 1972 graduate of the University of Texas Law School, Arnold worked for his first year as an attorney handling tax law for Ernst & Ernst.

He served for 20 years as an officer in the Texas Army National Guard.

Arnold suffered a debilitating head injury in a car wreck in 1989 on his way to his older son's high school basketball game. He was in a coma for three

months.

Friends and family organized teams to visit and do physical therapy with Arnold five times a day for most of the nine months he was hospitalized. Members of the Water Development Board, other associates and friends made tapes for Reg to be stimulated by conversation.

Eventually he regained his consciousness and began a difficult effort to learn to sit, stand up, walk, feed himself, and perform other ordinary activities of daily living. Despite remarkable early progress, Arnold eventually quit the rehabilitation program and regressed over the years.

Arnold was able to walk with a cane and drive his bright red pickup until 2005 when complications from his original brain injury forced him to be hospitalized.

He was bedridden for the past four years. The staffs of Hospice Odyssey and Southern Hospitality Personal Care Home helped his sons and wife care for him at home for six of his last days.

Arnold is survived by his wife, Ann Arnold, who is president of the Texas Association of Broadcasters and former press secretary to Gov. Mark White. Previously she was chief of the Fort Worth Star Telegram's Capitol Bureau and a longtime Capitol correspondent for UPI.

He has two sons, M.R. "Bill" Arnold, an attorney with the U.S. Defense Dept. in Washington, D. C. involved in prosecuting Guantánamo prisoners, and Jonathan Daniel Arnold, a student at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA.

Other survivors include his mother, Imogene Arnold of Webster, TX, his brother Bruce Arnold and his wife Mary Beth of Houston; three nieces, Becky Bushyhead and her husband Ian of Manford, Okla., and Carey Weaver and

her husband Jonathan of Boulder, Colo., Ellen March and her fiancé Jack Kleinhouse of Nassau Bay, TX; one nephew, Ryan March of Friendswood, TX; his mother-in-law Mildred Watson of Hurst, TX, and his sister-in-law, Sue March and her husband Paul of Friendswood, TX..

Arnold was born June 3, 1945, in Hugo, Oklahoma. He moved as a teenager to Bedford, Texas, where his father was a school principal and his mother a second grade teacher for the HEB School District. He graduated from L. D. Bell High School in 1963.

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He was a star basketball player in high school and later coached his older son and dozens of other boy in basketball, baseball and soccer before his accident.

Tribute Wall



“ *Merle Arnold*

October 05, 2023 at 10:58 AM



“ *Merle Arnold*

October 04, 2023 at 06:25 PM



“ *Merle Arnold*

September 26, 2023 at 10:57 PM



“ *AnnOur prayers are with you in the coming days and months.
I am sure God blesses those that have cared and loved so much,*

Leon Humphreys - July 29, 2009 at 12:00 AM