

George Houston Parker | 1936-2014

Published Wednesday, August 6, 2014



George Houston Parker

George Houston Parker, 77, of Runaway Bay died Friday, Aug. 1, 2014, at Baylor Hospital in Grapevine, surrounded by his loved ones, after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Memorial service is 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 9, at The Bay, a Community Church in Runaway Bay. There will be no graveside service since his body was donated to UT-Southwestern for medical research.

George was born Sept. 25, 1936, in Oklahoma City to Stella (Gaddy) Parker and Merl A. Parker. He graduated from Texas Tech University and went to work for IBM in Texas in 1961, moving to California. He retired from IBM in 1995.

He and Bettye Ferguson, who had been high school sweethearts, had lost touch with each other and had both divorced in 1974. George remarried, but his wife died in 2000.

After that, they got back in touch with each other and on May 29, 2001, they were married in Parker County. In 2003, they moved from California to Runaway Bay to be closer to their grandchildren, all of whom live in Texas. George enjoyed golf and fishing, and they did a lot of traveling, including visiting every national park over about a six-month trip. They were active in numerous causes.

“He was my first love, and I was his first love,” Bettye said. “We had a wonderful 13-plus years together. We just connected like there had not been a break. We were still high school sweethearts.” George and Bettye were involved with the Republican Party in California before moving back to Texas, where George worked tirelessly in elections for many years. Even while ill, he handled many responsibilities, including helping Bettye and the Republican Women.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Jack and Don Parker; and daughter Tammy Parker Murphy. He is survived by his wife, Bettye Parker; daughter Melanie Parker of Decatur; stepson Mike Ferguson of Southlake; stepdaughter Karen Shadden of Mineral Wells; 13 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; two nieces; and a nephew. Memorial donations may be made to CASA of Wise County.