



Ronald Lee Smith

November 14, 2022

Ronald (known as Ron by many, aka Poppy by few) Lee Smith, 76, died suddenly at INOVA Fair Oaks Hospital on November 14th, 2022, from A.L.S., which he had been diagnosed with only days earlier. He spent his last few hours peacefully with his family and watching the Washington Commanders football team kick off against the then undefeated Philadelphia Eagles (which the Commanders triumphed and won 32 – 21).

Ron was born on May 28th, 1946, in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the son of Joe Lee and Erma Belle (Cooper) Smith. After graduating from Tahlequah High School in 1964, he joined the U.S. Navy. Ron attended his Basic training at the Naval Station Great Lakes in Illinois, and then attended the military language school, DLI, in Monterey, California. He was subsequently stationed in Sabana Seca, Puerto Rico. Ron retired from the Navy in 1970 and returned to Tahlequah, OK where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in math and geology from Northeastern State University.

Ron and his family moved to Alexandria, Virginia in 1973 to begin working for the Internal Revenue Service in Washington, D.C., he later transferred to the Department of Defense Inspector General's Office, where he worked for the remainder of his career, he retired in 2007.

For all who knew Ron would also know of his love of chess, and all things sports, mainly football and basketball but his true passion was really tennis. Whether watching professional tennis matches or playing on the local courts in his neighborhood he could never get enough. One of his special moments in his life was having the opportunity to play on the clay and grass courts in Newport, Rhode Island with his good friend and long-time tennis rival, Gaston Naranja.

Ron also kept up with the daily news and read the Washington Post newspaper nearly every day along with many other online publications so that he was ready to converse on most any current event or topic, especially politics (and sports - of course).

Ron spent most of retirement years walking one of his favorite dogs (Babe, and then Rio) around the lake in his community and feeding his favorite Mandarin duck, Ming there, he enjoyed playing tennis with his friends, working out and cross training so that he could play even more tennis, as well as traveling around the world, reading many books, watching Jeopardy, solving hundreds of crossword puzzles (in ink!), spending time with his family (especially his grandkids), and going to the movies with his wife nearly every week.

Ron was predeceased by his parents, and his sister, Phyllis Jean (Smith) Garrouette. He is survived by his beloved wife of 55 years, Shalah Alice (Lightfoot) Smith, whom he met in his high school math class when she moved to Tahlequah, OK mid senior year in 1963. He is also survived by his daughter, Kecia (Smith) Lansbury (Steve); his three grandchildren, Zoe Lansbury, Ben Lansbury, Emma Lansbury; his niece, Karen (Garrouette) Freeman (Terry); his nephews, Randy Garrouette (Cindy), David Garrouette (Kerry), and Terry Garrouette.

Ron's sense of humor, dry wit, and intelligent meaningful commentary on current events, as well as his insightful thoughts on the Commanders Football teams' seasonal roster (and all the other teams in the NFL as well (– and let's be honest, his favorite college teams: University of Oklahoma Sooners and the Oklahoma State University Cowboys too)) will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

There will be a service for Ron's family and friends at Arlington National Cemetery, in Arlington, Virginia, which is held by appointment only and will be announced later. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS.org), an/or the ALS Association (ALS.org) with the hope that through scientific research that there will someday be a cure.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

Events

Details are pending.