



Judge Don Kraemer

May 18, 1945 - January 19, 2022

Our dear husband, father, and friend, Judge Donald "Don" Kraemer, passed away on Wednesday, January 19, 2022, surrounded by family. He was a wonderful husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather, brother, uncle, and Christian friend who meant the world to us and will be greatly missed.

Born in Rosebud, Texas on May 18, 1945, to Benard and Ethel Kraemer, Don became a child of God through Baptism on June 17, 1945 and re-affirmed his faith through Confirmation on August 17, 1958. Don and his older siblings, Ray and Carol were raised on a cotton farm in Rosebud. As a young boy having to help work the fields and pick cotton, it didn't take him long to realize that was not going to remain his career choice!

Don graduated from Rosebud High School in 1963 as class valedictorian. He graduated from Texas Lutheran University in 1967, where he met the love of his life, Sylvia "Sibi" Kraemer and married her in 1966. They formed a beautiful partnership lasting over 55 years that included raising two children, Brett and Erika, and shaping the lives of 5 adoring grandchildren. He graduated from The University of Texas School of Law in 1972, having also served in the United States Army Infantry from 1969 to 1971, including a tour of duty in Vietnam from 1970-1971.

Kraemer, as many affectionately called him, was a resident of Huntsville/Walker County since 1972. Since coming to Huntsville, he and Sibi have been members of Faith Lutheran Church where he served in many leadership roles including Congregational President and Elder. He began a long and distinguished legal career with the Staff Counsel for Inmates at TDCJ. In 1974 he joined then District Attorney Jerry Sandel as Deputy District Attorney. Making a career change at that time gave Don the opportunity to be involved in the prosecution of several defendants connected to the Carrasco siege at the Walls Unit which has had a lasting impact on the Huntsville community and Don's legal practice. In 1976 Don joined the late Jack Haney and the late Martin Colley in private practice with the firm of Colley, Haney and Kraemer. In 2008 Don was elected judge of the 12th Judicial District Court which includes Walker, Grimes and Madison counties. He loved the law and

the bench; and would have continued but for mandatory retirement in December 2020. Don was known as a fair-minded person and described by friends and colleagues as "a fantastic judge and wonderful lawyer" who "made a profound difference".

In addition to practicing law for 35 years, community service was a driving force in Don's life and career since moving to Huntsville. He was elected to serve two terms on the HISD Board of Trustees. Don coached the Huntsville High School Mock Trial team for 10 years. He served on the board of the Huntsville/Walker County Chamber of Commerce, twice as president, as well as a member of the Tourism Council. He was appointed to serve on the Board of Child Protective Services and Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare. He served on the Advisory Board of American Bank and East Texas National Bank of Palestine. He was a member of the State Bar of Texas and the Walker County Bar Association where he has been president and vice-president. This passion for leadership and service was recognized in 2015 with the Mance Park Lifetime Achievement Award.

Kraemer loved spending time with his grandchildren, traveling, camping, playing "42", trout fishing and hunting. One of his most cherished privileges was being the "lease boss" for the Bedias Sportsman's Club for almost 40 years where he made some of his closest friendships.

Those who knew and loved Don have described him and will remember him as:

"Tremendous asset to Huntsville and Walker County for many years"

"Larger than life"

"Truly made the world a better place"

"A truly incredible man"

"A kind and loving man"

"A positive influence in my life"

"Judge Kraemer made a profound difference, and the country is a better place because of him"

"The Big Dog"

"A man of strong faith"

Don was preceded in death by his father - Benard Kraemer, mother - Ethel Kraemer and sister - Carol Smithe. He is survived by his wife of 55 years - Sibi, their two children - Brett Kraemer (wife Rachel) and Erika Kaufman (husband Tim), 5 grandchildren - Andrew Kraemer, Julia Kraemer, Hayden Kaufman, Jace Kaufman and Parker Kaufman, and his brother - Ray Kraemer.

A memorial service and reception to celebrate Judge Don Kraemer's life will be held on

Saturday, February 5, 2022, at 11:00 AM at Faith Lutheran Church, Huntsville, Texas.
Please feel free to wear colorful or thematic attire to represent your personal relationship with Kraemer.

Out of respect for one another during this time, we ask that those attending wear a mask indoors.

The service will be livestreamed on YouTube.com. Search "Faith Lutheran Church Huntsville Texas".

In lieu of flowers, the family would ask you to consider Memorial donations made in Don's name to:

Texas Lutheran University's Benard and Ethel Kraemer Scholarship at 1000 West Court Street, Seguin, Texas 78155 or at www.tlu.edu/give-to-tlu

Faith Lutheran Church and School at 111 Sumac Road, Huntsville, Texas 77340 or at www.faiythhuntsville.org/give

Memorial condolences may be made to the family online at www.shmfh.com

Previous Events

Celebration of life

FEB 5. 11:00 AM (CT)

Faith Lutheran Church
111 Sumac Road
Huntsville, TX 77340

Tribute Wall



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Judge Don Kraemer.*



February 05 at 08:10 AM

AH

“ *My heartfelt condolences go out to Sibi, Brett, Erika, and all the family. I have many childhood memories during the times that my family would get together with the Kraemer family. He was such a kind and interesting guy, and exceptionally good at the game of Clue. He always won! I know Don will be greatly missed by all who knew him.*

Andrea Hargreaves - February 04 at 08:58 PM



“ *My deepest condolences to your family for the loss of Don. He was a great lawyer and jurist. More importantly, he was an honorable and caring man. It was a privilege to practice in his court, and occasionally to share our experiences as combat soldiers in Vietnam. It is a great loss for our community.*
Bruce Green

Bruce C. Green - February 04 at 02:57 PM

JG

“ *I remember Judge Kraemer from Haney and Kraemer, and from the fun relationship he had with John and Fay Reynolds. I worked for John Reynolds & Assoc. from 1988 to 1992; we always had a lot of fun when Don or Jack would call the firm. He always had a smile and was always nice to talk with. Miss those days; I am so sorry for your loss.*
Janet Gunn

Janet S Gunn - February 01 at 01:38 PM



“ I knew Don in his teen years and always loved and respected him. His wife Sibi and Brett and Erika and his family are in my prayers and I share their sorrow. It has been barely a year since we lost my son, John, Don's nephew , Don's sister Carol and now Don. I am deeply saddened at Don's death and the three deaths which have shaken the Kraemer family and friends. I share my sorrow with them and celebrate the memories we shared. I look forward to being with him in the feast without end in God's new Kingdom. God bless you Sibi, Brett and Erika and the rest of the family. You are in my prayers and I share your sorrow. Sam

Sam Urrate - January 28 at 01:01 PM

CN

“ I am so sorry for your loss, Sylvia. My thoughts and prayers are with you and all your family. May God give you peace, strength, and comfort.

Carol Nichols - January 26 at 11:28 PM

SS

“ All during my childhood and though out my life, he always had a kind and genuine smile everytime I saw him at church or in town. Much love to Sibi and all the family.



Shania Springer - January 26 at 09:20 PM

DN

“ I was so shocked and upset to hear of Judge Kraemers passing. I worked for Judge Kraemer for 16 years during his law practice and always respected him greatly. My heart goes out to Sibi and their children as I know he will be greatly missed.

Donna Nash

Donna Nash - January 26 at 05:31 PM

SA

“ I was so sorry to learn of Don's passing. I first met him and Sylvia when I joined the staff of their alma mater, Texas Lutheran University, in 1985 and Don was a member of the Alumni Board. Later it was a pleasure getting to know their children Brett and Erika when they enrolled as students. Like all who knew Don, I so appreciated his wisdom, humor, engaging personality, and encouragement of others. He was a great Bulldog who will be sorely missed.

To the family, may you experience God's presence and peace as you mourn your loss and celebrate Don's exceptional life.

Steve Anderson

Steve Anderson - January 26 at 01:55 PM

MM

“ Sibi and Erika I am so sorry for your loss! I was so heartbroken to hear of your loss! It was an honor to work with and call your husband/father my friend! What a beautiful soul he was and I will never forget his smile and laugh! Erika he loved you so much and was so proud of you! He told us the story of throwing meat in your room to see what would come out from the bed to eat it LOL he was such a story teller! RIP Kraemer and fly high!

Minette Montegudo - January 26 at 11:27 AM

KL

“ There’s probably not enough space here to say how special Kraemer and Sibi are to me and my family. They were looking out for me staring in 1996 before my folks ever moved to Huntsville. I loved sitting next to Kraemer in choir, especially when I was pregnant with my oldest in 2002. His baritone voice was soothing and I used to tell him I was going to call him in the middle of the night after the baby was born if the baby was keeping me up so he could sing through the phone. I think he told me he would not be answering lol. I used to tell my two older kids in church, “If you two don’t behave, I’m going to make you sit with Mr. Kraemer!” to which they would reply, “Not Mr. Kraemer!” Although we don’t know quite how that started or what Kraemer did to deserve it lol. My dad always said that God lived in Kraemer’s closet. I’ve thought a lot lately about what that might mean...Dad and Kraemer were friends, I know Dad loved him as a brother and respected Kraemer when he spoke. Kraemer’s faith in Jesus was alive and in their conversations from time to time or in men’s Bible study, I think Kraemer would say something that would give Dad something to gnaw on for a while. I guess Dad figured Kraemer heard it directly from God, maybe over a conversation God and Kraemer had in the morning while Kraemer got dressed for the day (thus God existing in Kraemer’s closet). Well, a few mornings ago, instead of Kraemer opening his closet door and talking to God, God opened His closet door and Kraemer was standing there. My dad probably not too far behind the Lord, so happy to see his friend. But I will miss the hugs that completely wrap me up because Kraemer was so tall and his warm smile. A wonderful man so caring, with wise counsel I carry with me still today and pass to others. Sibi, we love you and your family mightily.

Karen Wuensche Lacy - January 26 at 11:19 AM

RD

“ I will surely miss my friend, "Brother" Kraemer, as he said hello "Brother" Deller, and his hug wherever it was.
I will also miss Sibi's raisin pie she made for us and sitting outside eating most of it. Sibi thanks for being such a great neighbor and friend.
Brother Kraemer our boys Todd and Matthew thank you for your kindness and instructions to them.
"Brother" Deller and Chris

Richard Deller - January 25 at 11:54 AM

KK

“ judge kraemer was a great lawyer and excellent judge. i am lucky to have practiced in his court. several years ago i had a case in his court regarding a property damage dispute. unfortunately, texas law did not necessarily recognize the legal theory i was pursuing on behalf of my client. the lawyers for the insurance company requested that judge kraemer dismiss the case on several occasions before and after the jury trial. judge kraemer denied all motions to dismiss, after trial, the insurance company filed an appeal arguing the law in texas did not recognize the merits of the case. the texas supreme court recognized the inequity in the law and in a 9-0 decision ruled that judge kraemer was correct in his rulings. the result was that for the first time the state of texas recognized the legal theory i was pursuing on behalf of my client. judge kraemer and i created new law in the state of texas. were it not for judge kraemer recognizing the inequity in the law, my client would not have received the fair compensation he was due. kevin r. knight

kevin r. knight - January 25 at 10:20 AM



“ I met Don and Sibi when I was about 9 years old. At that point, I didn't know who they were as far as how they knew my parents. I only knew that they were wonderful and I loved them. My brother and I enjoyed VERY MUCH the evenings when the Kraemers and Pinegars would come over. There was so much laughter on those evenings. Again, not knowing why these special people were in our lives, just grateful that they were.
I remember the nicknames. Don was the Boy Wonder. Walter was the Gun. Dad was the Chief. They called me Baby Jill, which sticks to this day.
Don was so funny. He was so BEYOND kind. I loved him, and I look forward to seeing him again.
All my love and deep sympathy to you, dear Sibi, Brett, Erika, and all of your sweet families.

Jill Driscoll - January 25 at 08:23 AM

NV

“ Our deepest condolences to this family. God be with you during this time.

Nicole Venette - January 24 at 02:57 PM

DG

“ Our deepest condolences to Sibi and the Kramer family. Don was a great man and will be missed by many. We pray for peace and comfort during this difficult time.
Donna and John Gilbert

Donna Gilbert - January 24 at 01:02 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Judge Don Kraemer.*



January 24 at 09:45 AM

SR

“ *We are so sad to hear of Judge Kraemer's passing. He was such a wonderful man and a pillar of the community. We are praying for the Kraemer family.*

Susan, Wolfgang and Shay Retzlaff - January 23 at 12:28 PM

TB

“ *Our deepest condolences to Sibi and the Kraemer family. Don will truly be missed as a friend and neighbor. Lots of love and prayers!*

The Buxkemper's - January 22 at 09:21 PM

MH

“ *My prayers to family and friends of Don Kraemer. Don was a friend and admired person. I have many memories of him in my work relations and as a friend. He always had time to help those that came into his office. He supported his community in so many ways. Don will be missed by us all.*



M. Hyvl - January 22 at 12:02 PM

LA

“ *My most sincere condolences to the Don Kraemer family.*



Linda Andrews - January 21 at 05:16 PM

SB

“ Our deepest and heartfelt sympathy go out to you and all your family. May you cherish your good memories of Don, and let those memories help you through the days to come.

Ralph & Sandra Blair

Sandra Blair - January 21 at 03:50 PM

LT

“ My condolences to the family of Judge Don Kraemer. I met Judge Kraemer when I was a young Huntsville Item reporter in the 1980s. I've always had tremendous respect for him. He was an extremely intelligent person with a keen and rational mind. I much admired him as a judge with true integrity and a deep appreciation for and love of the law.

Lisa Trow - January 21 at 03:18 PM



“ Sincere condolences to the family of Judge Kramer. Thank you to to his family for sharing him with us for those decades of public service! Judge Kramer was a wonderful person, fair judge and a mentor for so many. Being a lifelong resident of Walker County, I can't count the number of times I had jury duty in his court. He was always professional ... and entertaining!! We actually hoped to be picked so we could spend more time in his court! Our legal community is feeling a great loss right now. God Bless Judge Kramer.... 🙏🙏

Jamie Sue Brinegar - January 21 at 02:08 PM



“ Since I moved to Huntsville, and Faith Lutheran, when I was only 20 Don and Sibi "took me is" like their title sister and practically raised me - although Don always joked he did NOT want to be held responsible for that! I'll sure miss that dry sense of humor and strive to help Sibi any way I can.

Dena Byrd - January 21 at 12:24 PM

CN

“ Clay Newcomb & Frances Newcomb lit a candle in memory of Judge Don Kraemer



Clay Newcomb & Frances Newcomb - January 21 at 12:11 PM

MM

“ I have known Sylvia since elementary school but Mr and Mrs Kraemer have visited me in my hometown and I was fortunate to visit them in their home. They were most gracious and took time to share aspects of their community. Absolutely lovely people.

Marty Marks - January 21 at 11:46 AM

NH

“ Nancy Hopper lit a candle in memory of Judge Don Kraemer



Nancy Hopper - January 21 at 09:23 AM

JJ

“ My prayers are with the family during this difficult time. I am so very sorry.

Jeannine Jacoby - January 21 at 08:19 AM

MW

“ I'm sorry for your loss.



Mellicent Sikes Wiley - January 21 at 02:14 AM

 Charlotte Efird

“ Charlotte Efird lit a candle in memory of Judge Don Kraemer



Charlotte Efird - January 20 at 07:34 PM