



Mrs. Ronnie Estes

April 28, 1946 - April 2, 2020

Ronnie Estes of Stevensville, Maryland, and Lubec, Maine, passed away on April 2, 2020, at Chesapeake Future Care in Arnold, Maryland, of complications of COVID-19. She was 73.

Ronnie was the only child of Victor and Irene Biezenski. She was born on April 28, 1946, in Stuttgart, Germany, while her parents, Polish nationals displaced by World War II, awaited emigration from Europe. Choosing the United States over Canada and Australia, they came through Ellis Island in December 1947 and made New York City their new home.

Ronnie grew up in the Jackson Heights neighborhood of Queens, and she became a genuine New Yorker who would never fail to note that pizza should be folded, bagels should be boiled, and the best tap water in the world comes from up north in the Catskills. Her parents sent her to summer camp in Maine, where she developed a love for the state's natural beauty and especially for all animals: throughout life she focused her artistic talents on sketches and paintings of horses and her volunteer efforts on supporting rescue shelters for cats and dogs. And she was never without at least one pet, including several cats and her companion German Shepherd, "Wonder Dog".

Ronnie attended high school in Manhattan at the all-girls Dominican Academy. Next, always the adventurer, she chose to enroll at the formerly all-men Clemson University as a member of the first group of women allowed to live on campus. Her love of animals led to a study of veterinary science, but this was thwarted by her developing asthma, a condition that she would battle for the rest of her life. Instead she graduated in 1967 with a Bachelors in English, and continued at Clemson to complete a Masters in English Literature. Along the way she'd make many an eventful trip home to NYC in her VW Beetle with Wonder Dog as copilot. An ever-proud Tiger, she remained a devoted and diligent follower of Clemson athletics (though not as devoted as she was to the Pittsburg Steelers).

After graduation, Ronnie married her college sweetheart, Oscar "Butch" Mills. His military intelligence career brought them to Fort Meade, Maryland, and then for four years to Berlin, Germany. There she discovered her lifelong penchant for German automobiles. They returned to the Washington area and in 1978 bought a home on Maryland's then-

rural Kent Island. The house was directly on the Chesapeake Bay, with westward views of the sun setting over Annapolis. After their divorce and throughout her life, Ronnie kept the house, and the area became as beloved to her as the Maine of her childhood.

Ronnie's professional career was spent primarily in the D.C.-area "Beltway bandit" contractor community. She used her writing, editing, and publishing skills to develop documents, reports and proposals for Government contracts. She rose to leadership roles and served as Publications Department Manager for several Government-contracting companies. It was while working for NASA-contractor Science Applications Research in 1987 that she met her to-be husband Ron Estes, and they began their new lives together for the next 33 years. Their only child, Eric Michael Estes, was born in 1989.

The family never moved from that Kent Island house, watching as seashell streets were paved and trees were cut down for strip malls and farms were turned into housing developments. Ronnie was always a strong believer in responsible development and in the preservation of Kent Island and the Chesapeake, both environmentally and culturally. She applauded when Walmart abandoned plans for a waterfront, Bay Bridge-adjacent superstore that would've physically marred the "Gateway to the Eastern Shore," and she supported the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in its efforts to keep the Bay clean and full of life.

Ron and Ronnie retired in 2013 from NASA-contractor Science Systems and Applications Inc. and began a new chapter in their lives: spending half the year living in her old stomping grounds of Maine. She designed their dream home, which they soon built in their beloved town of Lubec, the eastern most point in the United States. There they spent the cool summers and beautiful falls visiting with friends new and old, dining on fresh lobster and haddock, and enjoying the town's tranquil harbor and especially its rugged Atlantic coastline. No matter where she was, she always wanted to be near the ocean.

Ronnie is predeceased by her parents, Victor and Irene Biezenski, and is survived by her husband, Ron Estes, and their son, Eric Estes.

A graveside service will be held at the Stevensville Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Chesapeake Cats and Dogs at www.chesapeakecatsanddogs.org/donate/

Online condolences may be made with Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home at www.fhnfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Romana-Ronnie-Estes/

Cemetery

Stevensville Cemetery

808 Main Street

Stevensville, MD,

Comments



“ Today I am just finding out about Ronnie's passing through our Dominican Academy alumnae leader, Dr Julie Upton. Because our high school was so small - only 200 girls in the entire school - we all got to know each other pretty well. I remember Ronnie as being very witty and smart. We would often meet by chance on the train going into the city to school since we both lived in Queens, she in Jackson Heights and I in Elmhurst, just a station away from each other. It certainly makes you think twice about getting the most out of each day when you find out that one of your contemporaries has passed. I hope Ron finds some peace and solace as he gazes over the waterways of Ronnie's life with him. Heartfelt condolences to both Ron and their son, Eric.

Regina Birkner Hartley

Regina Hartley - February 25 at 03:28 PM



“ I did not know and never met Ronnie, but I saw her name on the New York Times as one of a thousand names out of the 100,000 Americans we lost to COVID so far. Each name simply had one line, and hers struck me, as would be what people would say about me 'always wanted to be near the ocean.' As a fellow Marylander who also loves the Ocean, I was curious to know more about Ronnie and was so moved by her obituary. Her love of the water, especially the Chesapeake and Maine, her sense of adventure enrolling at a male-dominant college, her strong writing skills, her fondness of animals, her support of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, all parallel my own life, 40+ years younger. Ronnie I truly would have loved to have known Ronnie, an amazing and inspirational woman, and my heart goes out to all her family and friends.

Lauren Hickey - May 23, 2020 at 09:44 PM



“ We send our deepest sympathy to Ron and Eric. I enjoyed working with Ronnie at SAR and STX back in the 80's and 90's, and visiting her and her parents at Myrtle Beach when we were down there for a golfing trip. Ronnie also helped me out by editing a paper for me just a few years ago. She has too soon passed. May she rest in peace.

Ken and Cecilia Klenk - April 20, 2020 at 09:09 PM



“ My deepest condolences you you and Eric.
Joe Anderson

Joe Anderson - April 13, 2020 at 01:08 PM



“ My deepest condolences to you and Eric
Joe Anderson - April 13, 2020 at 01:08 PM



“ Our deepest sympathy to Ron and Eric. It has been twenty-five years since we were neighbors, but we have not forgotten your kindness.

Allan & Debbie Stevenson

Allan Stevenson - April 13, 2020 at 12:51 PM



“ I'm so sorry for your loss. Ronnie was a member of our family for 20+ years and I will always remember her fondly. Prayers for you and your family.

Susan Berry - April 10, 2020 at 07:57 PM



“ 22 files added to the album Pictures



Eric - April 07, 2020 at 09:23 PM