

Ronald Lynn Rencher

July 6, 1941 ~ September 11, 2023

It is with deep sadness that the family of Ronald Lynn Rencher announces his death on September 11, 2023 at the age of 82. Ron died peacefully at home after a hard fought battle with mucosal melanoma.

Ron was born July 6, 1941, in Hawthorne, California, to Aften Flake and Joseph Rencher. He was the third of six children. From a young age, Ron developed a tireless work ethic, both at home on his family's farm in New Mexico, and in his education and music. Ron graduated from Boulder High School in Colorado in 1959 and attended the University of Colorado, where he played saxophone in the marching band. After serving an LDS mission in Norway, Ron graduated from Brigham Young University in 1965. He studied at the University of Colorado, College of Law, and graduated from the University of Utah, College of Law in 1968.

Ron’s first position after law school was with the Ogden law firm of Kunz and Kunz. Two years later, he ran for the Utah State Legislature and was elected to the House of Representatives. In the following years, he successfully continued with his private law practice becoming a partner at his law firm, which became Kunz, Kunz and Rencher, and also won a second term in the legislature. In his second term, Ron was elected as House Minority Whip and after being reelected to a third term, at age 33, he was elected Speaker of the House. He is the youngest Speaker and the last Democrat to hold that position.

After he declined a fourth run for office, Ron chose to focus on his private law practice. However, in 1977, Ron was called back to public service when the Carter Administration nominated him to serve as U.S. Attorney for the District of Utah. He honorably served until 1981.

After serving as U.S. Attorney, Ron returned to the private sector for a long and rewarding career. He served as legal counsel and general manager at the Intermountain Power Agency where he oversaw completion of the Intermountain Power Project, a large-scale project, which remains as a vital link in the western energy grid. He also continued as a prominent member in the Utah legal community, advising clients with this deep knowledge and passion for the law, and leading and mentoring countless younger attorneys. He ended his career as a shareholder with the law firm Parsons Behle & Latimer. Throughout his career, Ron considered his colleagues as his chosen family. He cherished those relationships, and they sustained him up until his last day.

Ron loved the natural beauty of Utah and valued his physical and mental health. He was an avid biker who enjoyed hundreds of rides up City Creek Canyon. After his original cancer diagnosis in 2019, Ron regained his physical health with the same energy and determination he always put into his work. His passion and dedication to his health are an inspiration and part of his legacy.

Ron was a devoted son, father, grandpa, brother and friend. He is survived by his significant other Phyllis Currie, his children Rachel, Jeff, Nettie (Curtis), Carley (Jia Yn) and Ashley (Tim); his siblings Lureen Orchard, Velda (Ken) Anderson and Dennis Rencher; grandchildren Zac (Montana), Annie, Spencer, Audrey, Blake, Addilyn, Preston, Sydney, and Bryce. Ron is preceded in death by his parents; siblings Marilyn Ralph, Val Rencher, Dwaine Rencher; brothers in law Ken Orchard and Julian Ralph; former wife Eileen; daughter Jennie and family dogs Bandit and Rufus.

Ron valued his relationships and nurtured them throughout his life. He leaves a legacy of honorable service, loyalty, discipline, humor, and humility. May we all live more fully in his honor.

A Celebration of Ron’s Life will be held September 29, 2023, 6:00pm, Utah State Capitol Rotunda.