

Ronald Oliver Saunders

November 6, 1944 ~ September 16, 2025

Ronald (Ron) Oliver Saunders passed away peacefully in his home early on September 16, 2025. Ron was born in Oakland, California, to Marjorie Mae Oliver and DeLoss Edward Saunders on November 6, 1944.

Surviving him are his children: Sheila (Russ), Daniel (OG), and Diana (Cory). His grandchildren are Alexis (Lexi), Joshua (Josh), Ethan, Brynly, and Kiley. He is also survived by his sister, Laurel Saunders Johanson; his beloved brother, Clifford Edward Saunders; his ex-wife, Frances Saunders; and his present wife, Marcy Rowley.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his son David Saunders, and his sister, Dorinda Contaxis.

He attended elementary school in Oakland California, and then after moving, attended high school in Sacramento where he attended LaSierra high school. Ron was well liked and very active in sports where he lettered in wrestling in high school.

After graduating from high school, he attended Weber State University, where he earned his associate's degree. On July 10, 1968, he was drafted into the military and served as a clerk until April 12, 1970, during the Vietnam War. He received an honorable discharge. He shared that during his service, he never believed he would return home and was deeply surprised to have survived. He attributed his safety to his typing skills, which allowed him to serve as a clerk rather than being placed in the infantry. He often spoke with gratitude about the officer who recognized his abilities and gave him that opportunity—an act for which he remained thankful throughout his life.

In 1970, after his discharge from the military, Ron returned to Bountiful and began working as a mechanic at the 5 Points Gas Station, with plans to complete his bachelor's degree. While living in Bountiful, he attended a local dance at "The Terrace," where he met Frances (Fran) Ellen Derheim. Fran recalls that their first encounter felt like something out of *West Side Story*—she looked up, saw Ron standing at the top of the stairs, and said that everything else seemed to blur out of focus. Fortunately, their connection was as strong as that moment was cinematic—because, as Fran fondly put it, Ron was a *horrible* dancer. An accomplished ballroom dancer herself, Fran spent the next nine months teaching Ron how to dance. Their lessons clearly paid off in more ways than one, as they were married in 1971.

Shortly thereafter in 1973, they were blessed with a beautiful baby girl Sheila Ann in 1973. Following Sheila was a loss of their son David who was 28 weeks gestation, and lived only 2 days. Another 3 years later had Danny Oliver Saunders, and soon after Diana Lynn.

He spent the last 15 years with his wife and friend Marcy, doing what he does best: caring, protecting, building, creating, talking and sharing….. and drinking all the orange juice….

Ron was always the "go-to guy"—a true Renaissance man with an incredible breadth of knowledge and an uncanny ability to craft a plan (sometimes more elaborate than necessary, but always effective). His unique ability to connect

with others inspired a term all his own: *“Peopling.”* Ron had a rare gift for bringing people together, motivating them, and making things happen. He was always the first to show up and the last to leave, lending his time, hands, and heart to any cause or need. His remarkable ‘peopling’ skills forged deep, lasting friendships, and those fortunate enough to have known him will forever cherish the impact he made.

"We will deeply miss this dynamic giant of a man—whose great heart and spirit were housed in a smaller frame. He loved fiercely, cared deeply, and served those he cherished with unwavering devotion.

An evening viewing will be held on Thursday, September 25, 2025, from 6:00-8:00 pm at Larkin Mortuary - Riverton (3688 West 12600 South, Riverton, UT 84065). An additional viewing will be held on Friday, September 26, 2025, from 9:30-10:45 am with a funeral to follow at 11:00 am at the Bluffdale 8th Ward (15040 South Mountainside Drive, Bluffdale, UT 84065). Interment to follow at Utah Veteran Memorial Park.