

## Bennie Pearson

28 August 1929 – 27 October 2019, 90, NSS 1847

Bennie J. Pearson has died. He was a very important figure in the early days of Texas caving. Bennie was NSS #1847. He was a founder of the U.T. Grotto in 1951 and also of the Balcones Grotto in 1955. There are 11 citations for Bennie Pearson in the book *50 Years of Texas Caving*. It will take some time to learn about Bennie. If something was happening in Texas caving in the early-mid 1950s, Bennie was often a part of it. Bennie dropped out of the caving world in the mid-1950s

Bennie was a student of the legendary R. L. Moore at U.T. Austin and earned a Ph.D. in mathematics in 1955. He continued his professional career on staff at the Illinois Institute of Technology and the University of Kansas City. Upon retirement, he returned to Texas and lived for a time in central Texas near Longhorn Cavern. In January 2004, a group of senior Texas cavers took that opportunity to visit Bennie and enjoyed a wonderful afternoon with one of the legendary figures of Texas caving.



Bennie is pictured here (right) in 2004 with Joe Pearce, his good friend and caving companion from the 1950s. Carl Kunath photo.

Bennie's final years were plagued with Parkinson's and advancing dementia. He died October 27, 2019 at age 90 leaving a loving daughter, Cynthia.

We are diminished. — Carl Kunath



Here is an earlier photo of Bennie during his active caver days. He is seen at the entrance to Fisher's Pit in 1953. Jerry Chastain photo.