

OBITUARY

For

Walter D. Feaster

December 17, 1950 - February 03, 2021



Walter was born, the only child to Emmert & Rita Feaster, who both resided until their death in Monahans, Texas. He remained there until he “escaped” after High School to join the Navy. For that vacation, and he wouldn’t NOT agree, he spent that career on the Island of Bermuda, drinking plenty of beer, with his Hobi-Cat Sail boat and on occasion doing some machinery work for the Navy. At the end of that tour, he set off for the farming country of Pennsylvania where his parents grew up and met. He spent a summer or so there and then wandered back to the West Texas area and continued his lifelong career as a machinist. The last 15 years or so were not easy for Walter. Due to a heart condition he was faced with renal failure and Kidney Dialysis – three days a week for the remainder of his life (15 years). All of that and up until 5 years ago he was still working 50 hours a week. He could have stopped but “I gotta keep going”. He was a hard ol’ cuss.

Walter was quite the outdoor enthusiast, he messed around with a little caving early on and then was very involved with the Outdoor Club, in the Midland, Odessa area, making an infinite number of trips from as far south as Big Bend and way up to the Guadalupe Mountains and beyond. He came back to caving with a vengeance – All Caving All the Time. He might have not been a member of all of the caving organizations towards the last years of his life, but you can bet he was an active member at heart of PBSS, TSS, TCMA, NSS and every other set of letters that represents some aspect of caving.

When I think of my friend and almost brother, Walter, however it is that of a Cavers Caver. I would think it was fair to say that he has been in just about every cave in Texas and damn near all of the ones in New Mexico – AT LEAST ONCE !

Caving was how I met Walter – Permian Basin Speleological Society back in the 80’s. I went to a PBSS (Permian Basin Speleological Society) meet with some mutual friends, The Brinsons, met Walter and our caving friendship started its long 30 plus years (the next weekend we went to Black Cave). It wasn’t too long before he was invited to the house for Bar-B-Q dinner, where not far in the future myself and entire family sort of “adopted” Walter. We went camping but that always included a cave. My girls called him Uncle Walter and he was always good to help look out after them when they were caving with us. He was inclusive to all events that we had all holidays, pretty much every Sunday dinner and of course our “RIB-FEST” which he could eat his weight in Ribs (so could I).

As there ae so many of you out there that knew Walter, if I started to try and name accomplishments he did in caving, someone would say, Oh, you forgot... Therefore, I am just

going to throw out what I think are the big ones and everyone else can remember the one that they had with Walter.

Walter and I both co-managed Amazing Maze Cave and Walter managed 09 Well Cave for 10 or so years. He spent around 15 years or maybe more being the lead hand and a lot of time being the Only hand on the Precision Survey of Ft. Stanton Cave. I know because I led every trip from the mountain outside the cave to within just a hundred feet or so of the drop into Mud Turtle Junction. That's Every precision survey trip for FSPS. That is not withstanding the other Numerous (with a capital N) trips in to Ft. Stanton to show folks through the cave and all the ones to carry materials – Heavy materials – concrete and steel panels for new gates. How many trips did he coordinate and lead to Carlsbad Caverns to haul rock from the original Lunchroom either to Pickle Alley or later to the surface. And speaking of hauling rock, how about the man who BROUGHT HIS OWN BUCKETS for EVERYONE to haul rock out of Sonora Caverns for 10 or more years.

I truly could go on and on. The caving community has lost a vast amount of good folks throughout the years, there is no doubt. But for me, when Walter passed, we lost a Great guy and a CAVERS CAVER!

See Ya Wally ...

Gralin Coffin