



## Hershel Ray Jacobs

November 21, 1938 - November 15, 2021

Hershel Ray Jacobs, former football player, coach, and probation officer, died on November 15, 2021, in Dallas. He is survived by his wife, Bobbie, daughters Lisa and Janet Jacobs, step-daughters Amy and Rhonda Tatum, and step-son Malcolm Tatum. He is also survived by his brother David Jacobs and wife Michelle; sister Eleanor Greer, and sister Sandra Hughes and her husband Johnny. He has two step-grandchildren, and many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

He was born November 21, 1938, in Corsicana, Texas to Myrtle and Arvel Lee Jacobs. Although he came from humble roots, in his later years he often told people that he felt lucky, saying “Never seen the meat so good or the gravy so thick.”

Ray was one of ten children and grew up on various hard-scrabble farms around Navarro County, working in the fields before and after school. Football was a means for him to finally escape the cotton fields, and he defied his father to continue to play.

One of Ray’s stories include the time he held one of his teachers out the second-story window of the former Corsicana High School — and didn’t get expelled. He eloped with his high-school sweetheart, Gladys JoAnn Bryant, and the two of them moved to Brownwood together where they had their first daughter, Lisa, while attending Howard Payne. At Howard Payne, he was twice named NAIA All-American, and three times was chosen as a Lone Star Conference selection. In 2005, he was inducted into the Howard Payne University Sports Hall of Fame. In 2020, he was inducted into the Navarro College Hall of Fame.

He was a first-round draft pick for the 1962 AFL draft, chosen by the Oilers (seventh overall), and by the Cowboys in the seventeenth round (228th overall). Ray was in the hospital recovering from knee surgery when Mickey Mantle came with legendary football coach Bear Bryant to sign him to his first professional football contract. He blamed it on the pain medication and the thick stack of cash they dangled in front of him that he signed with the Houston Oilers and the Dallas Cowboys at the same time. The ensuing lawsuit between the two teams ended with the Oilers winning but they put the trouble-maker on waivers. He was claimed off waivers by the Denver Broncos. Originally a defensive end, he switched to defensive tackle because he was fast and aggressive. He was a two-time second-team All-AFL.

In 1967, he was traded to the Miami Dolphins where he met long-time friend Larry Czonka. The two hunted, fished, drank, and played furious football together. Suffering from various injuries, Jacobs was traded to the Oakland Raiders in 1969, but was released before the start of the season. Picked up by the Buffalo Bills, he was traded to the Boston Patriots. In 1969, he played only part of the season before taking a serious injury to his back.

When he played pro, Jacobs was 6 foot 3 inches (depending on the team, he was either billed as 6'3" or 6'5"), and weighed around 275 pounds. While undergoing back surgery, the anesthesia wore off and he decided to make a break for it, fleeing the operating room with blood streaming down his back, with surgeons and nurses in hot pursuit. He was eventually corralled, drugged much more heavily, and surgery completed successfully. After playing football, he became a coach and teacher at Mabank High School, Corsicana High School, Navarro College, and Ranger Junior College. The third phase of his professional life came when he returned to Corsicana to become a probation officer for Navarro County, where he served for 20 years, retiring at the age of 72.

As a teacher and probation officers, he inspired young men to work hard, go after their dreams, and have respect for themselves and others.

He spent summers working for Carmack Watkins on the pipelines around East Texas. After his marriage of 22 years ended with divorce, his sister Marie introduced him to a fellow nurse, Bobbie. They were married for 30 years.

After retiring from the probation department, Ray was content to drink coffee with friends in the mornings, play dominoes in the afternoons, and tend to his farm on the outskirts of Corsicana. Gregarious and charming, he called everyone "neighbor." Prior to the pandemic, he and his best friend Gene Bullard could be found six days a week holding court at various restaurants around town, discussing politics, sports, and everything under the sun. He was a member of Westside Baptist Church.

Services will be at 10 a.m. Saturday, November 20, 2021, at Calvary Worship Center, 1364 N. Beaton with Rev. Larry Talbert and Bro. Grady Manning officiating. Visitation with the family will be Friday evening from 5-8 p.m. at Griffin-Roughton, 1530 N. 45th St. He will be interred at Hamilton-Beeman Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Josh Tackett, Wesley Jacobs, Randy Tackett, Michael Jacobs, Lance Hughes, Jarrett Greer, Alvin Mullican and Raymond Wright. Honorary pallbearers are Mark Chapman and Aaron Jacobs. He was preceded in death by his parents, sisters Melba and Marie, and brothers A.L. (Jake), Bobby, Jerry, and Fred.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Westside Baptist Church, the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation, or the American Stroke Foundation.

# Events

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**NOV** **Visitation** 05:00PM - 08:00PM

**19**

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Griffin-Roughton Funeral Home, Corsicana  
1530 N. 45th Street, Corsicana, TX, US, 75110

**NOV** **Funeral Service** 10:00AM

**20**

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Calvary Worship Center  
1364 North Beaton, Corsicana, TX, US, 75110

# Comments

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“ 35 files added to the album LifeTributes



**Griffin-Roughton Funeral Home** - December 01, 2021 at 10:54 AM

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“ Cammy Stephens lit a candle in memory of Hershel Ray Jacobs



**cammy stephens** - November 29, 2021 at 03:22 PM

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“ Love and prayers from the family of Judy Dial Ivie, CHS Class of '57.



**Ivie Family** - November 21, 2021 at 09:59 AM

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“ Condolences at this time.  
Leslie Cotten

**leslie otten** - November 19, 2021 at 08:56 PM

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“ 62 files added to the album LifeTributes



Griffin-Roughton Funeral Home - November 19, 2021 at 11:41 AM

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“ Morgana Terry lit a candle in memory of Hershel Ray Jacobs



Morgana Terry - November 19, 2021 at 10:44 AM

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“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Hershel Ray Jacobs.



November 19, 2021 at 10:16 AM

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“ Heaven is sweeter and our hearts are feeling the loss of Ray, his funny, gentle, faithful serving heart at Westside Baptist as part of our church family. Reunion day is coming and we rejoice that we will see him again in heaven!! But until then, we carry on. Thank you for the light of Christ that shined through you, brother!!!

Betty & Jesse Bibb

Betty & Jesse Bibb - November 19, 2021 at 09:42 AM

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“ Brigitte Herchner lit a candle in memory of Hershel Ray Jacobs



**Brigitte Herchner** - November 18, 2021 at 04:18 PM

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“ Peggy Jordan lit a candle in memory of Hershel Ray Jacobs



**peggy Jordan** - November 18, 2021 at 01:27 AM

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“ The Shannon, Green, and Moran Families purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Hershel Ray Jacobs.



**The Shannon, Green, and Moran Families** - November 17, 2021 at 11:39 PM

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“ Shelia Guill lit a candle in memory of Hershel Ray Jacobs



**Shelia Guill** - November 17, 2021 at 10:47 PM

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“ Rest in peace Neighbor. You will be missed. To Ray's family he was a big brother to many. Wish I could make it up to Corsicana for his services, but cannot.

**Jimmy Dawson** - November 17, 2021 at 05:30 PM

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“ Marsha Bonner Taylor lit a candle in memory of Hershel Ray Jacobs



**Marsha Bonner Taylor** - November 17, 2021 at 12:34 PM

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“ Hugh Owen lit a candle in memory of Hershel Ray Jacobs



**Hugh Owen** - November 17, 2021 at 11:13 AM

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“ My thoughts, prayers, and strength to the Jacobs family. He was such a great person all the way around. He helped me so, so, much in high school. Loved this man always. May he rest in heaven.

**Julia Johnson** - November 16, 2021 at 10:40 PM

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“ Julia Johnson lit a candle in memory of Hershel Ray Jacobs



**Julia Johnson** - November 16, 2021 at 10:38 PM

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“ Ray Jacobs, Ron Morgan, and Ray Goodman were my top 3 favorite teachers. I saw Ray (Jacobs) one afternoon at Church's Chicken and spent 30 minutes talking football

R.I.P. to a Great Man

**Jerry Ingram** - November 16, 2021 at 06:26 PM

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“ Ray Jacobs was a classmate when we were students at Howard Payne University. He was a great football player, and a person who cared deeply for others, as his life pursuits underscored. He was a friend to many, and admired greatly by all who knew him. May God bless him, and all who loved him.

Dr. Don Newbury  
Chancellor,  
Howard Payne University  
Brownwood, TX

**Don Newbury** - November 16, 2021 at 02:42 PM

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“ Bear was one of the best people I've known. He had a giving heart. Rest In Peace Ray.

**Ken Douglas** - November 16, 2021 at 11:34 AM

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“ Coach was one in a million! We know how much he cared about his many many students and players because he never missed an opportunity to reconnect with us. My prayers are with you all!  
My prayers to his family



**Freda Dillard** - November 16, 2021 at 11:17 AM

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“ So sorry for your loss great teacher and coach, he came to our reunions and kept track of us. Great man and teacher.

**Linda Daniels** - November 15, 2021 at 11:40 PM

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“ To the family of Ray Jacobs. One of the kindest people I have known. My sympathies and prayers go out to the Jacobs family.



**Debbie Lake** - November 15, 2021 at 09:53 PM

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“ Lori Huddleston Smith lit a candle in memory of Hershel Ray Jacobs



**Lori Huddleston Smith** - November 15, 2021 at 09:43 PM



“ Ray was one of a kind. Great storyteller. We'll just never see the likes of him again. A 40's & 50's classmate and friend of mine at Lee Elementary, Corsicana Junior High and Corsicana High School. May we meet again someday and laugh together.

C. Robert Keathley, Corsicana, Tx

**C. Robert Keathley** - November 16, 2021 at 01:59 PM



“ Prayers for Ray's family. He was totally unique, and unforgettable. He will be missed by all that knew him.

**Donna** - November 16, 2021 at 02:58 PM



“ Our Hearts are so saddened by the loss of a Great Man and Mentor, for everyone he touched. Beyond my dad being the Rock he was,, there have been some really great leaders in my life, but none have had the impact that Big Daddy had on my life at a young age.. He was a friend when we needed him to be and in an instant knock you down with a fore arm shiver to the chest. He treated all of us students from Mabank as if we were his own, in both the good times and the bad. You will be missed but never ever forgotten Big Daddy!!!

Our Prayers are being lifted up for the Jacobs Family.

Mark Barron

**Mark Barron** - November 16, 2021 at 08:23 PM



“ Many prayers for his two wonderful daughters who loved him and "did for him" at every opportunity May God comfort them, as they remember their Dad. Francie Yates

**maryfrancieyates** - November 16, 2021 at 09:03 PM



“ I was an in-law to Ray for 27 years. Fun to be around and the strongest man I've ever known.

**Jim Bray** - November 16, 2021 at 11:28 PM



“ "The Bear" and I commuted to Dallas weekly while I was pursuing my undergrad degree. Oh, the stories he told! Such a wonderful man -- and he loved Lisa and Jan beyond measure and was proud of both of them. Condolences to the family.

**Linda Timmerman** - November 17, 2021 at 12:11 PM



“ So sorry to hear of Ray's passing. He was a bigger than life person and excellent athlete. We played for the same NFL teams. Our condolences to all his family.

Jerry and Joan Hopkins

**Joan Hopkins & Jerry Hopkins** - November 19, 2021 at 03:34 PM