



## Frederick (Fred) Mann

April 7, 1949 - March 28, 2026

In 5,4,3,2,1, cue talent...

We have some sad news to report today about the passing of a beloved professor of communications. Frederick (Fred) Mann passed away in McAllen, Texas, on March 28, 2026, at the age of 76.

Born to Winne and Fred Mann in Boston, Massachusetts, on April 7, 1949, Fred was the oldest of three children and had a nomadic childhood due to his father's Coast Guard stateside career. After attending schools in Ohio, Michigan and Louisiana, Fred graduated from Churchland High School in Virginia. Shortly after graduating, the family moved to Texas where Fred attended Texas A&I University in Kingsville. He met Virginia Villarreal there, and the two were married in 1970.

After receiving their Bachelor's Degrees in Education, Fred and Virginia moved to McAllen and Fred began serving in the U.S. Army National Guard and later in the U.S. Army Reserve. He served for over 20 years during tumultuous times and was never called up nor saw combat, retiring as an Infantry Major. Fred credited his great-grandfather Samuel White, who was imprisoned during the Civil War, as being his guardian angel.

In 1972, Fred began teaching at McAllen ISD – a career that spanned 30

years. His first teaching assignment was World History at Lincoln Junior High, where he also took care of the audio-visual equipment, mostly 16mm and overhead projectors. Having loved radios from a young age, Fred began a student radio club, KLIN, which played music into the cafeteria during lunch periods. This became his inspiration to develop a course in Radio & Television production for the district.

Fred received his Master's Degree from East Texas State University in Educational Technology and began teaching classes in Radio and TV Production. Instruction focused on hands-on, real-life experiences such as taping sporting events, performing DJ work at school functions, producing weekly news programs, and interviewing local and national celebrities such as George Bush, Laura Bush, Jesse Jackson and Miss USA Laura Martinez Herring. Fred's high school students went on to win numerous state and national awards. The students were even asked to stop participating in one national contest because, as high school students, they were winning many of the categories and the contest was meant for university radio/TV programs.

Fred would beam with pride when his students won national recognition for their productions. He was especially proud of their winning the Pacemaker Award for Best Television Newscast Nationwide, CNN-Student Bureau, 1st Place Award in Sports, Channel One, #1 Newscast in the Nation, and the airing of a CNN-Student Bureau story televised on CNN Newsroom worldwide. In 2002, Fred received the All-American Adviser Award presented by the National Scholastic Press Association.

A highlight of his career was participating in the People to People Citizen Ambassador Program to Viet Nam in 1993. The 12-member Visual Literacy Delegation spent two weeks touring schools in Viet Nam, participating in panel discussions and meeting with professional counterparts to discuss visual media in their respective classrooms.

After retiring from McAllen ISD in 2002, a chance encounter with Dr. Marian Monta opened a brand-new opportunity for Fred to teach a television production class at the University of Texas Pan American. From adjunct to full-time professor, Fred loved his 15 years as an educator at the university. He worked with an amazing, dedicated team of professors in the communications department and soon began leaving his mark. He started Bronc Radio and Bronc TV, where students could refine their on-air skills and put into practice all the facets involved in producing weekly news programs. They entered contests and brought home as many as 15 awards in one year from the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association. Fred helped many of his students get internships at local stations, and numerous students were offered positions when their internships were completed. He retired from UTRGV in 2018.

Having been raised in a Coast Guard family, in 2005 Fred joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla at South Padre Island. This volunteer organization supports the U.S. Coast Guard, focusing on boat inspections, recreational Boating Safety Classes, and public information. Fred served for 15 years, using his media skills to become a Public Affairs Specialist, and received numerous commendations and awards for his service.

Fred and Virginia loved to travel, doing most of their traveling from the 1970's through 2015. They enjoyed camping in their VW Vanagon and later in their Toyota Chinook. Their travels took them throughout the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. Fred's favorite national park was Big Bend National Park in Texas. Fred and Virginia made many trips to the remote park, and Fred proudly served on the Board of Directors of the Friends of Big Bend in 2003-2005.

When it came to favorite pastimes, Fred spent countless hours on his ham radios. Known to his ham radio friends as N5IVZ, he collected QSL cards from

ham operators around the world and was proud of his “Worked All States” and “Worked All Continents” Awards using Morse Code. He also enjoyed riding his bicycle and even competed in the Chihuahuan Desert Mountain Bike Challenge in Lajitas, Texas, in 2000. Arriving at the finish line scraped, bloodied, bruised, and grinning from ear to ear, Fred told Virginia, “Wow! That was a kick!” Fred continued riding until his Parkinson’s disease diagnosis in 2016.

For the last 10 years of his life, Fred faced declining physical and mental health which required more and more assistance. He lived at Waterford Gardens for two years and at Avalon Memory Care until his death on March 28, 2026. During this time, he and Virginia met many an angel on earth who lovingly cared for him and met his every need. Eric, Fred’s younger brother, died in December 2025. They are now together again either reading, playing chess (Eric’s choice) or Battleship (Fred’s favorite).

After hearing of Fred’s passing, friends and family flooded Facebook with an outpouring of love. Students shared personal accounts about their beloved teacher, Mr. Mann, and how his mentoring, support, and encouragement forever changed the course of their lives and inspired them to believe in themselves.

Fred is survived by his wife of 55 years, Virginia Villarreal Mann. He is also survived by his sister Victoria Mann Bolling (Rick) of Auburn, Alabama, his sister’s five children and five grandchildren, and numerous cousins.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, April 25, 2026 at 2 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 4200 N. McColl in McAllen. Please make a donation to your favorite charity or non-profit in memory of Fred. Services will be provided by Kreidler Funeral Home, Inc. of McAllen.

And we're out. That's a wrap.

###

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

APR **25**. 2:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church of McAllen  
4200 N. McColl Rd.  
McAllen, TX