



## Robert James Graf

February 26, 2026

Robert James Graf of McAllen, Texas, passed away surrounded by the love and support of his family on February 26, 2026, at the age of 87.

Born in October 1938 in Shawnee, Oklahoma, to George B. Graf, Jr. and Fenton McCoy Graf, he was the youngest of three. At age three, Robert's father moved the family to Mercedes, Texas, where they lived amid a small citrus grove and opened a meat processing plant with Robert's grandfather and uncle.

Robert and his brothers, Richard L. Graf (Bess) and Jack B. Graf (Marsha), attended Mercedes schools through high school, where he most memorably excelled in track, running the 440-yard dash and anchoring the relay team, qualifying for state in both events. A lifelong runner, he remained committed to staying active, even as Parkinson's challenged him. When he could no longer run, he adapted, always determined to keep moving.

After graduating from high school, Robert attended Texas Christian University and later served three years in the U.S. Army Security Agency. Choosing a European discharge, he spent several months backpacking across Europe, exploring the culture, delving into his German heritage, and studying the language. Upon his return to the Rio Grande Valley, he attended Pan American University, where he earned a B.S. in chemistry and mathematics.

As he was finishing his degree at Pan American, Robert met the love of his life, Laurie Ann Hollis, and married her ten months later in July 1967, a decision he called “the best of his life.” Together, they raised three children: Ann Elizabeth Seal (Lance), Laurie Christine Graf, and James Wesley Graf (Megan).

Robert spent most of his career teaching middle school math — first at Travis Middle School in McAllen, then at B.L. Gray in Sharyland, and finally at Rio Grande City High School.

He had a lifelong love of gathering with friends over a morning cup of coffee and could be found at the Country Omelet or Whataburger most mornings of his adult life. His curiosity never faded. He studied electronics, languages, theology, and scripture until his final days.

A devoted man of faith, he and Ann were longtime members of St. Mark UMC before transferring to First UMC in Edinburg. He immersed himself in volunteer work and found great joy singing in the choir and in a small men’s ensemble, The Messengers. Music was his way of sharing God’s message — whether at church, at the piano, or in the car with his grandchildren.

Of all his roles, his favorite was “Poppy.” He was deeply involved in the lives of his six grandchildren — Layton Seal, McCoy Seal, Miller Richey, Ethan Graf, Fenton Graf, and Wesley Graf — always present, always dependable, always just a phone call away.

Robert will be remembered for his kind smile, thoughtful questions, quiet strength, and unwavering love. His legacy lives on in the lessons he taught, the music he shared, and the family he adored.

He is survived by his wife, children, grandchildren, and sister-in-law Marsha Graf (Jack). He was preceded in death by his parents; his brothers; and sister-in-law Bess Graf (Richard).

A memorial celebration of life will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 7, in the Prayer Garden at First United Methodist Church, 4200 N. McColl Rd., McAllen, Texas 78504. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in his memory to The Parkinson's Foundation or The Michael J. Fox Foundation.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAR 7. 10:00 AM (CT)

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