



## Russell William Morley Jr.

May 30, 2025

May 22, 1928 – May 30, 2025

Russell William Morley Jr. was born on May 22, 1928, in Cleveland, Ohio, to Christine Sulzmann Morley and Russell William Morley Sr. He grew up alongside his siblings—William Russell Morley, Patricia McKenzie (Morley), and Dorothy Athens (Morley). From a young age, Russell exhibited a natural athleticism, excelling in boxing, basketball, football, and most notably, baseball.

Baseball was Russell's lifelong passion. He often shared vivid stories of saving up during the Great Depression just to buy a baseball, and of playing in city parks with friends until dusk. His talent as a pitcher blossomed early, and by 15 years old, he had signed to play professional baseball. He competed in the minor leagues, was offered a position with Cleveland Indians and ultimately signed with the Philadelphia A's. Baseball was a world he embraced with grit and pride.

Russell's greatest story, however, was meeting Jacqueline "Jackie" Gage, the love of his life. They met as teenagers and quickly formed a bond that would last a lifetime. They were married on October 14, 1947, and went on to share more than 50 years of marriage. After marrying, they relocated to McAllen, Texas. Following a shoulder injury sustained during his baseball career, Russell was advised to relocate to the Rio Grande Valley, where the warm climate would be more accommodating to his recovery. Russell held several positions over the years, but dedicated most of his career to Hygiea, all while

remaining closely connected to the sport of baseball. He played for local professional teams, the McAllen Palms and Mission 30-30s. Together, Russ and Jackie raised three children—William “Bill” Raymond Morley, Donald Thomas Morley, and Beverly Jean Moore (Morley).

In McAllen, Russell spent many years working with Hygeia Dairy Products for over 30 years, then later alongside his son Bill at Rio Fresh for 8 years as a manager, and eventually found joy in a new chapter working as a school bus driver for McAllen ISD. His route was more than a job—it was a way to build friendships across the Rio Grande Valley, offering a warm smile and steady presence to countless families. One of his greatest joys during this time was getting the opportunity to drive his grandchildren to their own sporting events, proudly cheering them on from behind the wheel and the sidelines alike.

Russell was a magnetic storyteller whose tales were filled with mischief, heart, and humor. Whether recalling childhood antics in Cleveland, recounting baseball triumphs, or describing the moment he met Jackie, he spoke with a gleam in his eye and an infectious smile. He coached his sons on the mound and in life, and spent many years coaching Peewee, Little League, and Pony League baseball, leading several teams to championship titles and building a legacy of mentorship that extended far beyond his own family. He was known for his quick wit, booming voice, and unshakable love for his family. In his later years, Russell developed a deep love for golf—playing up to three times a week well into his nineties. When he wasn’t out competing on the greens, he was proudly teaching his grandchildren how to swing a club and perfect their stroke, passing along not just skill, but a passion for the game.

Russell is survived by his children: William “Bill” Raymond Morley and his wife Christine Morley (Schuster); Donald Thomas Morley; and Beverly Jean Moore (Morley) and her husband Richard Moore. He is also survived by his grandchildren: Michael Morley; Melissa O’Neal (Morley) and her husband Brad O’Neal; Megan Larson (Morley) and her husband Chris Larson; Lindsay Wernecke (Moore) and her husband Brice Wernecke; Thomas Morley and his wife Faby Morley; Nick Moore and his wife Alex Moore (Kyle); Ashley Alaniz

(Moore) and her husband Matthew Alaniz; and Will Moore. His great-grandchildren include Bryson, Lundyn, Hunter, Cole, Sadie, Emmitt, Levi, Teigan, Goldie, Chloe, Lily, and Sawyer. He is also survived by his sisters, Patricia McKenzie and Dorothy Athens. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Jacqueline Morley; his parents, Christine and Russell Sr.; and his brother, William R. Morley.

A private graveside gathering to celebrate Russell's life will be held at a later date.