



## Leon Dave Rocamora

May 3, 1920 - January 10, 2021

Leon Dave Rocamora, 100, died Sunday, January 10, 2021 at Mission Hospital, Asheville, NC, as a result of Covid-19.

Leon was born on May 3, 1920 to Leon and Fan Baruch Rocamora in Asheville, NC. He was very active in Boy Scouts, becoming an Eagle Scout. He received The Silver Beaver award in 1970, for council-level distinguished service.

When his father died, Leon was 15; his mother was suddenly running the family business, which would become Asheville Showcase. Leon started working at the store part time. Leon arranged his schedule at Lee Edwards High School so he could take the bus to the store every day to help his mother.

Leon graduated from Georgia Tech in 1941 with a degree in mechanical engineering. He enlisted in the Navy that same year, becoming the principal operator of training centers for mechanics for engines on destroyers and submarines; he was later in charge of the heavy machinery on a U.S. base in Guam. As a veteran, Leon was able to go on one of the Rotary-sponsored Honor Flights to Washington, DC. It had a tremendous impact on him, especially the cheering crowds who greeted the returning vets at the airport in Asheville. In 1948, Leon was set up on a blind date with Dolores (Dot) Shmerling (of blessed memory) at a wedding in Augusta, GA. They were married four years later, on December 26, 1952 in Augusta.

After his Navy stint was over, Leon returned to home to work at Asheville Showcase. Leon and his younger brother, Bill, ran the business for over 70 years. An accomplishment that Leon was most proud of was the founding of Equipment Distributors, Inc. EDI was a buying group and bona fide cooperative, a first for the industry.

Located in downtown Asheville, the store had its share of visitors from time to time who were down on their luck and needed a meal or bus fare. Leon would call one of the local restaurants and say that so and so was on his way and that he would be happy to treat that person to a meal. Or he would send one of the store's drivers to the bus stop with bus fare for the person who wanted to get home. Leon was a great example for all around him of what it is to be a mensch. He was a wonderful husband, father and grandfather, and a friend to so many.

Leon and Bill sold Asheville Showcase in 2008. Not ready to retire, Leon embarked on his second career. At age 88, he became a real estate broker. He also became involved in several community service activities, including Meals on Wheels, Manna Food Bank, and helping to serve meals to the Veterans at the Veterans Restoration Quarters.

Leon was a wonderful storyteller, and he loved a good joke. He was an accomplished traveler and fisherman. He was an active, life-long member and Past President, among other roles, of Congregation Beth HaTephila in Asheville. In 2017, Leon and his dear friend, Karl Straus, posthumously, received Congregation Beth HaTephila's first-ever Chaver Award.

Leon was predeceased by his beloved wife Dot (of blessed memory) in 2002. He is survived by his brother William "Bill" of Asheville, NC; daughter Hermene Rocamora (Clarence "Corky" Rorrer) of Alexandria, VA, son Larry (Nancy) of Durham, NC; grandchildren Jeremy Burnside of Springfield, VA and Kelsea Burnside of Fairfax, VA, Leah Penland (Corbin) of Wilmington, NC, and Kayla Rocamora of Wilmington, NC; and great grandson Leon "Leo" Penland.

The family is very grateful for a wonderful and vast group of friends of Leon in Asheville, too numerous to name, but including all the people he met through his decades-long, 6-days-a-week visits to swim (and hold court) at the YMCA. We would personally like to thank Margaret Baker, Hilary Paradise, and nieces Susan and Jane Rocamora and Jane's son, David, for their friendship and the good, loving care of our beloved Leon, especially during this pandemic.

There will be a private graveside funeral on January 12 in Asheville.

Donations in Leon's memory can be made to Congregation Beth HaTephila ([bethhatephila.org](http://bethhatephila.org)), Meals on Wheels, Asheville ([mowabc.org](http://mowabc.org)), or any charity you wish.

# Comments

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“ I'm one of probably thousands of people who mourn the passing of a truly great gentleman. I worked with Leon on several community boards and his can-do attitude and self-effacing humor always made it a better experience. Dershie Mcdevitt

**dershie mcdevitt** - January 12 at 11:49 PM

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“ It was a privilege to know and work for Leon. He had an awesome sense of humor and a joyful laugh. He was a fair and honorable man. I missed him when I moved on .  
My sympathies to the family. Be at peace Leon

**Diane Rice** - January 12 at 08:11 PM



“ Although I only knew Leon for a short ten years his friendship will remain. My life is better for knowing him. Peace be with you and your family in this time.

**Michael Joseph** - January 19 at 05:51 AM

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“ Leon was a special person-so glad I got to join him last spring for "happy hour" at The Crossings. He was always surrounded by adoring females-me being one of them!  
Will miss you at the pool Leon-your light shines on.

My condolences to the family,  
Debra Moon



**Debra S Moon** - January 12 at 12:05 PM

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“ Larry, Hermine & Family,

My heart grieved, when Hermine messaged me with the news of Leon's passing. I am so sorry for your loss. Leon was my mentor and my friend. So many memories down through the years as his competitor, his employee and his friend. I loved your father deeply.

Through the years I have written many birthday poems, and limericks for various occasions. It is not often one gets to write one for a hundredth birthday, and I have been honored to have made him laugh for many years. Oh the stories he has shared with me, and the ones we were lucky enough to write together, I will treasure each and every one.

May you each take the time to recall the many stories, I am sure he shared with each of you and the ones you wrote you were Blessed to write together, as a balm of healing to your hearts. May the many memories, be the bond that keeps your family strong, as you honor the Cornerstone of your family.

My condolences,  
Sheila T. Bivins

**Sheila Bivins** - January 12 at 12:00 PM

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“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Leon Dave Rocamora.



January 12 at 09:33 AM

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“ Leon was my boss at Asheville Showcase. Such a sweet man! Loved by all. He will be missed by many. Sincere condolences to you all. Rita and Eddie Deweese

**Rita Deweese** - January 12 at 09:09 AM

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“ Dear Larry and family,

Would that we all might live such an extraordinary and worthwhile life as your father did. Such a vivid example of generous, selfless service and unwavering devotion to family, friend and community. Thanks be to God for his beautiful life. May your dad's memory always be an enduring blessing....

**Mark Higgins** - January 12 at 08:55 AM

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“ Christineg Gonzalez lit a candle in memory of Leon Dave Rocamora



**Christineg Gonzalez** - January 11 at 09:16 PM

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“ So sorry to hear of Leon's passing. What a great guy. My mom Phyllis and Leon were born a month apart and were lifelong friends. The last time they were together was at Karl's funeral. I have many happy memories of parties and celebrations attended and hosted by my mom and dad (Norman) with Leon and Dot, Billy and Joan, and their families. Sending hugs to Hermene and Larry and their families, to Billy and his family. Leon's memory will endure in our hearts forever. Fondly, Nancy Sultan

**Nancy Sultan** - January 11 at 06:14 PM

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“ So sorry to hear of Leon's death. He was a great man and friend. He will be greatly missed by so many. The family is in our thoughts and prayers.

Love,  
Donna and Ron Wilburn

**Ron Wilburn** - January 11 at 05:47 PM