



## Edgar Josef Smutny

In his 88th year Edgar died on March 3, 2016 at Faith Personal Home Care in Houston, Texas. He was born on April 20, 1928 in New York City, New York to Edgar Julius and Edith Heyn Smutny. A Celebration of Life will be held at Ed's home. 1701 Maryland Street, Houston, Texas, 77006 at 2:00 PM Thursday March 10th In lieu of flowers the family requests memorial donations be made to Vantage Hospice, 21720 Kingsland Blvd, Suit 301, Houston, TX 77450 or The Salvation Army, Call 1-800- 725-2769, Mail checks to: The Salvation Army, 1500 Austin Street, Houston, Texas 77002. Ed grew up in New York City, NY and Denver Colorado. He graduated from the Colorado Military School in Denver in 1944. He then moved on to the University of Colorado where he successfully majored in the sciences achieving a PhD in the field of Chemistry. He acquired a position with Shell Corporation as a research Chemist where he spent 20 years at Shell's distinguished Emeryville Research Center in California. In 1973 Ed moved to Houston, TX with Shell at the Westhollow Technology Center until retirement in 1987. Dr. Frank Mango writes: Ed was a brilliant chemist, a pioneer in Noble Metal Catalysis. He was a generator and incubator of new ideas throughout his career, spanning 34 distinguished years with Shell Corporation. He made numerous discoveries in metal catalysis, one in particular, referred to by co-workers as 'the Smutny Reaction', reflects on his considerable impact and prestige at Shell and within the industry. A US patent was issued in 1966 (US Patent 3,267,169), and a full paper was published in 1967, Journal American Chemical Society, 89, 6379. Dow Chemical now uses Ed's technology in a new olefin process recently brought on stream. Ed's opinion on technical questions was often the 'opinion that mattered'. Before there was Wikipedia there was Ed, everybody's source for 'who', 'what' and 'where'. His notes were an archive treasure at Shell Development. If there had been an important talk at Shell, a decade or so ago, and no record of it in Corporate Files, he knew it, recalled the person, time, and subject, and had the notes with critical comments attached. In a field that was growing exponentially, and information exploding even faster he read everything of importance and attended every talk of note. His was the first hand up with a question often more interesting than the talk. Such engagement is rarely found today. He loved chemistry, and Louis Pasteur, the father of organic chemistry, above all. Pasteur's insight on the act of creation, delivered in a lecture at the University of Lille, in

1854, "chance only favors the prepared mind" , was Ed's creed. Perhaps more than anything else, it defines the man. After retirement Edgar continued his interest in Chemistry through consulting and participating by request in research projects. Edgar married Ynez Carter-Jewell in 1974 in Houston, Texas. Their married life spanned 41 years. Ed was a member of The American Chemical Society. He enjoyed skiing, speculating in the stock market, keeping up on national and local political events and opinions, he loved to debate on many subjects and was particularly fond of the history of the American Civil War and Americas Presidents; Jazz, the performing arts and visual arts meant a great deal to him as he was able to speak on almost any aspect of these cultural expressions. Ed is survived by his wife Ynez; his step children Malcolm (Faith) Cameron, Sydney (Jim) Whitfield, Frazer Cameron, his step grandchildren Rose (Jason) Double, Rebecca (Kim) Louis and Kelly (Cory) Fifield, step great-grandchildren Braxton, Tavin, Clara, Cameron and Sophie. He was preceded in death by parents Edgar and Edith, and his sister Ann Dr. Edgar Josef Smutny will be remembered for his passion, wit, emotional leaps up and down, his endless consumption of newsy information, strongly held unwavering opinions, snap judgments, his admiration for veterans, broad financial support to the community and his moments of wonderful kindness.

# Tribute Wall

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“ Ed was my next door neighbor and landlord for a time in Houston. He was kind and compassionate, generous and a progressive thinker. He embraced the future and technology better than anyone i knew. He was open-minded and easy to talk to, always giving you his full attention. I never met his wife, but I knew him to be a devoted husband. Ed was one of the good guys and I still think of him all these years later. RIP Ed. From Tony Yarbrough.

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**Tony Yarbrough** - September 20, 2025 at 09:42 AM

RN

“ Edgar Josef Smutny

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**Richard Neuman** - August 24, 2019 at 08:49 PM

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“ He was an exceptional guy. I met him late in his life. My wife Jackie and I admired him for his wit and great personality.

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**Richard Neuman** - August 24, 2019 at 08:49 PM