



Dr. Ronald Lee Detrick

September 19, 1937 - January 23, 2025

Dr. Ronald Lee Detrick, a distinguished educator, visionary leader, and devoted family man, passed away peacefully on January 23, 2025, in McKinney, Texas. Born on September 19, 1937, in Dayton, Ohio, to Frank and Alice Detrick, Ronald lived a life defined by a passion for education, a relentless pursuit of knowledge, and a profound commitment to his family and community.

From a young age, Ronald's inquisitive mind and love for science set the foundation for a remarkable journey in academia and leadership. His educational path included earning a Bachelor of Science (BS) and a Master of Education (MEd) from Ohio State University and Miami University. In 1963, he moved his family across the country to Southern California to pursue a Doctor of Education (EdD) from UCLA in Science and Education. He later obtained an Administrative Credential in Education Administration from Long Beach State University, solidifying his expertise in educational leadership.

Dr. Detrick dedicated his life to empowering students and educators alike. As Director of Career Education for the San Diego Unified School District, he was a pioneer in creating innovative programs, including the Regional Occupation Program, which was implemented in many school districts across the nation—which prepared students for meaningful careers by bridging academic learning with real-world applications. His forward-thinking approach and

inspirational leadership earned him widespread admiration and respect.

Beyond his role at San Diego Unified, Ronald led the Education Department at National University, mentoring countless aspiring educators and shaping future leaders in education. His profound impact on the lives of students and colleagues alike left an indelible mark on the educational landscape.

Later in his career, Dr. Detrick demonstrated his entrepreneurial spirit by successfully owning and managing a real estate office, further showcasing his adaptability and drive for excellence.

A lifelong learner and active professional, Ronald was a member of several esteemed organizations, including the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). His remarkable contributions to education earned him numerous accolades, such as the Outstanding Educator Award, Administrator of the Year, and a prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

Retirement brought new adventures as Ronald and his beloved wife, Julia Ann Thorne, relocated to McKinney, Texas. They embraced a fulfilling life filled with exploration, shared meals, and treasured moments together. Ronald found joy in solving crossword puzzles (which he wrote in pen, no less), watching classic westerns, periodic trips to the nearest casinos, and tuning in to the Grand Ole Opry.

Family was always the cornerstone of Ronald's life. He was a devoted husband to Julia and a proud father to their three children: Jeffrey Ronald, Rodney Lee, and Angela Kay. As a grandfather to seven grandchildren—Ana, Riley, Katy, London, Emily, Emily, and Ryan—he delighted in their accomplishments and never missed a school event or milestone, embodying

his unwavering dedication to those he loved. He shared his love of learning and road-tripping with his kids and grandkids, always exploring nature and teaching them about science and the way the world works.

Dr. Detrick's integrity, compassion, and visionary leadership extended beyond his professional achievements. He collaborated with prominent political figures, including Governor Jerry Brown and President Ronald Reagan, further illustrating his influence and dedication to public service.

He leaves behind a profound legacy of service, love, and leadership. Dr. Ronald Lee Detrick's life serves as a testament to the transformative power of education and the enduring impact of a compassionate and purposeful heart.

He is survived by his cherished wife Julia, his children Jeffrey, Rodney, and Angela, and his grandchildren Ana, Riley, Katy, London, Emily, Emily, and Ryan. His memory will continue to inspire and guide all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Dr. Ronald Lee Detrick will be remembered not only for his monumental contributions to education but also for the kindness, wisdom, and love he shared throughout his life. His spirit will live on in the hearts of his family, friends, and countless individuals whose lives he touched.