

Richard Charles Neavel, Ph.D.

Richard Charles Neavel, Ph.D., died on October 18, 2010. He died peacefully at the home he shared with his wife of 51 years, Nancy Trager Neavel. Together, Dick and Nancy raised three children: Celia Neavel, M.D., Ken Neavel, Ph.D. and Linda Neavel Dickens, Ph.D. The family also includes grandchildren Beth Cortez-Neavel, Elena Cortez-Neavel, Geordi Cortez-Neavel, Michael Dickens and Joel Dickens. Dick was also the father-in-law of Jose Cortez, M.D. and Kelly Dickens. All family members currently reside in Austin. Dick earned his Ph.D. in geology from Penn State University in 1966. He worked for Exxon Research and Engineering in Baytown for 30 years researching coal quality, where he was among the 1 percent of employees that attained the position of "Scientific Advisor." Dick was also honored with several research and leadership awards. Dick was not only a scientist, but a thespian. He performed various roles in over 18 productions at The Baytown Little Theater, where both he and Nancy were an integral part of the community. Dick and Nancy moved to Austin in 1998 to be closer to their children and grandchildren. In Austin, Dick began to get involved in significant volunteer service; he chaired the Citizens' Review Panel of the Office of the Police Monitor, testified before the State Board of Education several times in support of the separation of church and state and advocated for basic human rights. Dick was a collector by nature. He had a great appreciation for early rhythm and blues, big band, and doo-wop music. Throughout his lifetime, he accumulated a collection of over 4,000 records. He also collected coins, vintage Trager Whiskey bottles, stereoscopes, coal mining equipment, old phonographs, wax cylinder players and music boxes. Each member of Dick's family experienced a unique and loving relationship with him. They are grateful to have been able to spend many devoted hours with him in his last weeks. Dick chose to donate his body to The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School to help continue the research on Bile Duct cancer. There will not be a service. The Neavel, Dickens and Cortez-Neavel families would like to thank HospiceAustin for the support they provided. If you would like to honor Dick's life, please send donations to the Texas Freedom Network or People's Community Clinic.