



Joe Ray Ocker

February 1, 1931 - January 9, 2015

Greeted by his Lord and Savior and an abundance of family and friends, Joe Ray Ocker entered his eternal home on Friday, January 9, 2015 surrounded by his loving family. Joe Ray was born February 1, 1931 in Rosebud Texas to the late Walter and Annie Ocker. Long -time resident of Rusk, Joe Ray and his wife of 59 years, Florence Latham Ocker, were owners of Ocker's Affiliated Food Store, formerly known as Buckhorn Grocery and Market.

Joe Ray served in the Army as a Military Police during the Korean War. After returning home he met and married the love of his life, Florence "Boss Lady" Latham, and continued his career in the grocery business as a manager of the Weingarten's Food Store Chain. The Ockers moved to Rusk in 1972. He was a member of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

Joe Ray was a very active member of the Rusk community and Cherokee County. His many involvements included the Rusk Chamber of Commerce, Rusk Quarterback Club, Rusk Kiwanis Club, The Independent Cattleman's Association of TX, Cherokee County Go Texan Committee for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raiser's Association and the Cherokee County Farm Bureau, where he represented Cherokee County on both the state and local levels.

Mr. Ocker loved the community and especially the children and youth programs. He served on the Rusk ISD School Board and for many years sponsored an annual community Easter Egghunt. He always looked forward to the spring when he could work with the Cherokee County Livestock show.

Nothing made him smile bigger than seeing the hard working kids sell their livestock.

Mr. Ocker was known for having the greatest candy isle ever and for magically pulling balloons from the collar of "his" kids that shopped in their grocery store. He loved to aggravate the little ones by lovingly confusing their gender. Some of his happiest and most peaceful times were working on their family farm riding the tractor, feeding the cows and working in the garden, but most of all spending time and supporting his grandkids. You could always find him on the 50 yard line or in a lawn chair behind home plate, no matter the weather.

Mr. Ocker was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Walter, Melvin, Freddie and Darrell Ocker; and sisters Laverne Troutman and Ursula Maxey. He is survived by his wife Florence, brother and sister-in-law Judy and Don Ocker, sister Ann Nell Bilnoski, son Jerry Ocker and wife Anita, daughters Cindy Fulton and husband David, Lori Hassell and husband Ricky, Lindy Finley and husband Kenny; grandchildren Luke Ocker and wife Melissa, Jake Ocker, Kimberly Linder and husband Chad, Trent Fulton and wife Jorden, K'anna Fulton, Jody Moake and wife Calah, Hallie Moake, Hayley Kendrick and husband Jared, Kala More and husband Josh and Kasey Finley; Great grandchildren Nolan Linder, Tucker Fulton, Makinlee and Madalynn Moake, and Kaitlyn and Case Kendrick; as well as a host of family and friends.

Visitation for Mr. Ocker will be at First Baptist Church, Rusk, Monday evening 5-7 p.m. A memorial service will be held on Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. at First Baptist Church, Rusk followed by Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic church in Rusk. Interment following at Salem Cemetery in Rusk. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Sacred Heart Catholic Church Building Fund, 760 South Main Street, Rusk, TX 75785 or to the Cherokee County Farm Bureau Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 87, Rusk, TX 75785.

Tribute Wall



“ Joe Ray Ocker

October 04, 2023 at 11:30 AM



“ I am very grateful to have had an uncle like Joe. He showed me love and gentleness. As a small girl, he & Aunt Florence found time in their busy lives to take drive me home, after a visit. Did I mention it was over 500 miles, one way? Who does that? I love you and will never forget you.

Marianne Latham - January 13, 2015 at 08:43 PM



“ Mitzi Gall lit a candle in memory of Joe Ray Ocker



Mitzi Gall - January 13, 2015 at 03:04 PM



“ The family is in my thoughts and prayers.

Mitzi Gall - January 13, 2015 at 03:04 PM



“ Jpe Ray was a wonderful an he helped a lot of people I know he help my children by selliny children calves to show.he then helped them to handle their calves and told them how to care for them. It helped them to become more responsible people

darla foreman - January 13, 2015 at 03:08 AM

 Shana Ferrara

“ I remember being one of those little girls he would always call a little boy and have fond memories as a child shopping at Buckhorn Grocery and staying on the candy isle trying to decide which one piece of candy I wanted out of all the hundreds they had but more fondly I remember going in there and being with my dad one time and we got behind a very large family with multiple kids. When it came time to pay I remember they didn't give him money or a check they just signed something. When dad and I got back to the car I asked him why those people with all that food and all those kids didn't pay and my dad said "Mr. Ocker makes his living believing in people when no one else will." I didn't quite understand that so I asked what he meant. He said "Sweetheart Rusk doesn't have a lot of wealth and money and most people work at the state hospital and get paid once a month. Towards the end of the month they run out of money for food and groceries but their kids still need to eat. The banks don't loan money for you to buy food so Mr. Ocker let's them charge it until they get paid so they can still feed their kids and have groceries ." I then understood what my dad meant when he said Mr. Ocker believes in people that others don't ! Wonder how many kids went to bed with full belly's and to school with a good breakfast simply because Mr . Ocker believed in them enough to give them groceries until they could afford to pay him?? My guess would be the number is too high to count !! Rusk lost a good, honest, decent, god serving man but our loss is heaven 's gain.

Shana Ferrara - January 13, 2015 at 01:41 AM

MW

“ Praying for your family. The Ed Wheeler family.

mary wheeler - January 12, 2015 at 08:44 PM

JM

“ *Ja'Tia McGowan lit a candle in memory of Joe Ray Ocker*



Ja'Tia McGowan - January 12, 2015 at 04:52 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Joe Ray Ocker.*



January 12, 2015 at 04:42 PM

KC

“ *Keith Croft purchased the Secret Garden Basket for the family of Joe Ray Ocker.*



Keith Croft - January 12, 2015 at 08:59 AM

BH

“ *Mr. Ocker was one of the kindness and great person. I remember what a great boss he was. I enjoyed working at buckhorn grocery. I felt part of the family there. To all the family I send condolences. I know that he is now with his Lord and Savoir Jesus Christ. Bernie Hutson*

Bernie Hutson - January 11, 2015 at 05:46 PM



“ Jennifer Stanford Montemayor lit a candle in memory of Joe Ray Ocker

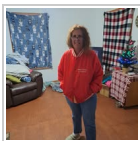


Jennifer Stanford Montemayor - January 11, 2015 at 04:27 PM



“ Mr. Ocker and sweet wife where some of the first people I meet when I moved to Rusk. We went to church together for years he was always so good to me and my kiddos. He always had a sweet word and a kind smile. He helped me over the years with youth bake auction's and fundraiser. And he and his wife, Anita and Jerry where so kind and encouraging when my life changed directions and continued to be a blessing to me. For those things I will forever grateful and lucky to have known Joe Ray. You will be missed- Mikah Bowden

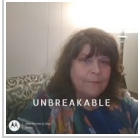
Mikah Bowden - January 11, 2015 at 12:51 PM



“ Zelma Bowman Anizan lit a candle in memory of Joe Ray Ocker



Zelma Bowman Anizan - January 11, 2015 at 12:23 PM



“ *Donna Mitchell lit a candle in memory of Joe Ray Ocker*



Donna Mitchell - January 10, 2015 at 09:07 PM

SF

“ *Mr Ocker was a very fine man. We will all miss him.*

Sam Fowler - January 10, 2015 at 08:44 PM

CF

“ *Carlene Fraim lit a candle in memory of Joe Ray Ocker*



Carlene Fraim - January 10, 2015 at 07:42 PM

CF

My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. May God Bless.

Carlene Fraim - January 10, 2015 at 07:43 PM

LH

"Baskets of Prayers" being sent to all Joe Ray's family. Florence, you have a lots of Family, Friends, Love and Hugs surrounding you during this time.

Leslie Hassell - January 10, 2015 at 08:30 PM

HK

May the Lord provide strength and comfort during this time and the tips of angels wings wipe your tears. May fond memories and the laughter of reminiscents ease your pain. KNOW that we are praying for each of you. Howard and Cindy Kline

Howard and Cindy Kline - January 11, 2015 at 07:52 AM

FO

I spent many hours in my younger years working part-time at the original "Ocker's" grocery store. I made lasting friendships with many others that worked for Mr. & Mrs. Ocker. I vividly remember Mr. Ocker's love for children; always making a balloon appear from behind their ears. As much as I have been grateful for employment at the store; I became more grateful knowing that my daughter was in the best hands when Mr. Ocker drove the school bus which she rode as a little girl. I love this family dearly. Many memories...love and prayers to each of you; especially Mrs. Ocker.

Felice O'Neal - January 11, 2015 at 12:29 PM

LK

Prayers for the Family.

Lynn & Lynn Ann King - January 12, 2015 at 05:54 PM

SW

“ I have known Mr. Joe for as long as I can remember. When he owned the stoRe. And then he drove my kids bus 4 and gave them candy canes for Christmas and all the funny stories they told about him and sandie. He will be missed RIP Mr.Ocker



shellevia wickwAre - January 10, 2015 at 07:15 PM