



## Ricky Lee Herold

April 5, 1957 - April 8, 2023

Ricky Lee Herold, 67, civic leader and community friend, passed away on April 8, 2023 at his home in Grand Prairie, 3 days following his sixty-seventh birthday.

Visitation will occur from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday, April 17, 2023 at First Baptist Church of Grand Prairie, 950 Mayfield Road, Grand Prairie TX 75052 where a Memorial Service will follow at 2. A private interment will occur at Grand Prairie Memorial Gardens.

Rick was born on April 5, 1956, in Farmers Branch, the only child of the late Forrest Newell Herold and the late Doris Mae Trok Herold. He attended R.L. Turner High School, then the University of North Texas, where he earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in Recreation Management.

Rick was a prankster with a big voice and a bigger heart. For years, he traveled the nation following John Cougar Mellencamp concerts and was always up for an adventure, often going off-road to get to where he was going, both literally and figuratively. He was a fan of cruises and got to a beach as often as possible. And, Rick loved sports, especially UNT's Mean Green basketball and football, attending games regularly and tailgating frequently.

Rick was an Adjunct Professor in UNT's Recreation and Leisure Studies

Department. He served on the Board of Directors for the North Texas Alumni Association for five years and was a member of the President's Council. He provided the commencement address in 2006 and 2017. He was named a Distinguished Alumnus by the Recreation and Leisure Studies Division. Rick was awarded the UNT Spirit Award by the President of the University of North Texas in 2002.

Rick was a park and recreation director for 38 years, including a 16-year stint in Euless and 16 ½ years in Grand Prairie, from which he retired in 2018. He started his career in The Colony with Colony City Manager Tom Hart using the private pools, yards and garages of residents for swim classes and parks programs.

As the Parks Director in Euless, he oversaw millions of dollars in parks and recreation projects, with signature projects being Texas Star Golf Course, Texas Star Conference Center, The Parks at Texas Star, and The Stars Center at Texas Star.

While Director of Parks, Arts and Recreation in Grand Prairie, Rick was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Parks and Recreation Administration (AAPRA). He won two NRPA Gold Medal Awards in 2008 and 2017 and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Texas Recreation and Parks Society in 2019. During his time in Grand Prairie, projects included:

- The Epic ---Recognized as one of America's most innovative recreation centers
- EpicWaters Indoor Waterpark, that just keeps pulling in Best Of awards
- Prairie Lights, a Holiday Drive-Thru Christmas Light Show, #5 Best Holiday Happening, USA Today
- The Summit, the award-winning "America's first baby-boomer facility"
- Renovation of Tangle Ridge and Prairie Lakes Golf Courses

- Ruthe Jackson Conference Center and Wedding Venue
- Loyd Park Campgrounds and Lodge
- PlayGrand Adventures, America's largest all-ability playground
- Renovation of the historic Uptown Theater
- Farmers Market
- Shotwell Life Center

A noted speaker, Rick presented seven times at the NRPA National Congress, and more than 50 times to state and local organizations. In addition, he was the emcee for the Texas Recreation and Parks Society (TRAPS) Annual Convention fourteen times. He served two terms as President of the DFW Parks and Recreation Directors Association. Rick was a member of the Texas Recreation and Parks Society (TRAPS), the American Academy of Parks and Recreation Administration (AAPRA), and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

A graduate of the Disney Training Institute (2018) and a marketing master, Rick started "Brand-Aid" the first marketing institute ever developed for the parks and recreation industry. It enjoyed five sell-out seasons and the final two years as part of the National Recreation and Parks Association National Congress.

#### Awards and Honors

- 5-Time National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Gold Medal Finalist (Class II---Best Department in America Population 150,000 to 400,000)
- 2-Time National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Gold Medal Winner (Class II-Best Department in America population 150,000 to 400.000.
- Lifetime Achievement Award, Texas Parks and Recreation Society, 2019
- Outstanding Alumnus, University of North Texas

- Career Achievement Award, Texas A&M University
- More than 50 local, state, and national awards within the parks and recreation profession
- Outstanding Leadership Award, Vought Industries
- Man-of- the-Year, Grand Prairie Chamber of Commerce (2016)
- Public Service Award, Grand Prairie Chamber of Commerce (2008)
- President's Award, Grand Prairie NAACP (2007)

In 2021, the Grand Prairie Parks, Arts, and Recreation Administration Building was renamed the Rick Herold Parks, Arts, and Recreation Building.

Rick's creativity, dedication, and heart for service was a major catalyst for growth in the City of Grand Prairie. His projects changed lives, created economic development, and made people want to live in his cities; and the effects on the lives that he touched will never be forgotten.

He was preceded in death by his beloved parents, Doris and Forest Herold, and survived by his uncle William Trok and wife Barbra; aunt Roberta Morrison; uncle Michael Trok and wife Jane; aunt Lynn Trok; several cousins, many friends and Scrappy, who will continue to live with the Hart's.

Those who wish to make a donation in honor of Rick, may do so to:

PlayGrand Advenutres, park for people of all abilities. [www.playgrandadventures.com](http://www.playgrandadventures.com)

Or

Rick Herold Parks and Recreation Endowed Scholarship

Make check payable to UNT.

Memo line: Rick Herold Parks and Recreation Endowed Scholarship

Mail to:

University of North Texas Division of Advancement

1115 Union Circle #311250

Denton, Texas 76203-5017

Attn: Gift Processing

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

APR 17. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church  
950 Mayfield Road  
Grand Prairie, TX 75052

# Tribute Wall

BB

“ Rick, you left memories in our community that will last forever. A great loss to all who needed your foresight. RIP old friend

Bobby Baker - April 17, 2023 at 12:25 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Ricky Lee Herold.



April 15, 2023 at 01:33 PM

KS

“ Rest in Peace Rick. Enjoy the reunion with your parents. You will be missed.



Kenda Stacy - April 13, 2023 at 10:16 AM

TC

“ So sorry to all who lost a good friend, mentor, co-worker and family member.

*I had the privilege of working with Rick while he worked for the City of Grand Prairie. He was fun and always sent me birthday cards and bought me lunch. He was open to new ideas and had a lot of his own.*

*Thank you Rick for being a good friend and great leader. I'm so glad you had a relationship with the Lord. Rest in Peace.*

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**Tammy Chan** - April 13, 2023 at 08:41 AM

CH

“ Sweet childhood friend. What a fun time we had. Rest in peace ❤️

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**Connie Bowden Hooper** - April 13, 2023 at 12:54 AM