



# Roger Lee Andrus

JUL 21, 1944 - NOV 8, 2012



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## **Roger Lee Andrus**

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**M**y thoughts about a brother I loved more than any other man in my life and who I will miss like I have never missed anyone before, by Ray Andrus: Roger fought the good fight but succumbed to leukemia on November 8th, 2012. Roger is survived by: His Wife: Cora Andrus His Sons: Aaron (wife Shannon), Kelly (Melissa), Daniel (Holly), Travis, James (Nicole) Daughters: Teresa (deceased), Paula (Hans), Sherree (Chase) Brothers: Ray (Sharon), Mike (Shar) Sisters: Loy (Keith – deceased), Terry (Larry), Pat (Jeff) Grandchildren: Twenty (Who all felt they had the greatest Grandpa in the world and will miss him greatly.) Great-grandchildren: Four (Who all feel the same way about Great-grandpa as their parents do.)

Roger was born in Los Angeles, California. His mother Emma and 1 ½ year old brother Ray were living in Cal. with Emma's brother and sister-in-law Doug and Juanita McOmie. Roger's father Clarence was serving in WWII stationed in Hawaii when Roger was born.

Roger grew up in Murray Utah. When he was 14 the family moved to what was then Butler (but is now Cottonwood Heights) Utah. He attended elementary & junior high schools in Murray and then attended and graduated from Jordan High School after moving to Butler. Roger always had tons of friends growing up. Everyone who knew him liked his ready smile and many jokes and stories. What a great storyteller Roger was. He never let the facts stand in the way of a good story.

Roger was small but an excellent athlete. He was a varsity wrestler at Jordan. As a senior wrestling in regional finals competition Roger's only loss was to the wrestler in his weight class from Bingham High who would go on to win gold in the State finals competition.

After graduating from High School Roger followed his cousin Kenny Godfrey and brother Ray into construction work. He worked as a Hod Tender for several masonry contractors in Utah. His uncle Doug McOmie (then still living in Cal.) who drove



truck for Jaqua Block Co. suggested to Roger that he could make big money in California (Doug had the family gene for “improving” stories). Roger and his friend Butch moved to Lancaster, CA to take jobs as hod tenders for Old Mill Masonry. Doug (using that family gene) had told the owners of Old Mill what great tenders Roger and Butch were. On their first scheduled day of work when Wayne Vogel (one of the owners of Old Mill) drove by Roger & Butch’s apartment to pick them up for work he later joked, “I damn near drove right past them without stopping. I figured those two skinny little sh\*ts surely couldn’t be the tenders Doug had told me about.” Wayne quickly took a liking to Roger’s hard work and quick mouth. He nicknamed him “Spindle” for reasons that were obvious to everyone he worked with. Roger was small, but strong and a hard worker. Wayne taught Roger to lay block, stone and brick. Roger became one of the best masons I (Ray) ever worked with. Of the MANY masons I saw in 25 years as a mason myself, Roger was the fastest and best block mason I ever worked with. NO ONE could lay as many properly laid block per day as Roger. Roger said, “Wayne taught me, ‘you’re going to have to be smooth and slick because you’re not big enough to just muscle these block like most of the other guys.’ So that’s what I did.”

Roger met Marty York soon after moving to Lancaster. They married in 1965 and had 3 sons. While the marriage ended in divorce several years later, Roger and Marty did not become the enemies that some divorced couples become. I expect it surprises no one who knows Roger, Cora and Marty that they have remained friends to this day.

Roger got into drag racing in Salt Lake and took his love of racing with him to California. He hooked up with some racers in Lancaster and got into stock car racing. Roger quickly became one of the three best and fastest racers at Saugus Speedway just over the mountains from Lancaster. His friends and family spent many exciting Saturday nights cheering for him and holding our breath as races heated up and the pushing and shoving that is part of stock car racing intensified. Roger loved racing and was a good driver. He was perfectly willing to mix things up during the race if that’s what it took. However, when the racing was over, Roger was one of the most popular racers at the track. Not just with race fans, but with other drivers and their



race teams.

Roger and Ray both ended up leaving Lancaster and returning to Utah after about 9 years. Roger did some truck driving and Ray did a little school teaching, but they ended up working together again as masonry contractors. During this time Roger and his first wife Marty divorced and Marty returned to Lancaster.

Roger met Cora in 1981 and they married June 17, 1982. An interesting story about their marriage and blended families: A paraphrase of something we have all heard Roger and Cora say many times is, "There are not my kids and your kids, there are only OUR KIDS." This says something significant about Roger and his kids. Even though there have been times when custody, work requirements & residence locations caused times when the kids were many miles apart they have also made the effort required for them to be together as much as possible. The kids never refer to each other as being "Roger's kid" or Cora's kid" or "Marty's kid" nor do they say "Your mom" or "Your dad". What a great example that we could all learn from.

The recession of the early 1980's took the fun out of contracting and Roger and Ray closed their masonry business. Roger returned to trucking and Ray went to work for a General Contracting Company. In the ensuing years Roger and Cora lived in Harriman Utah and later moved to a house in Hurricane Utah.

Occupationally, while Roger was an excellent mason, trucking has always been his first love. He referred to his truck as his "Comfort Zone". During his battle with Leukemia, Roger's greatest personal success was his ability to return to driving for a few months while the Leukemia was in remission. The people at Godfrey Trucking (especially Dick and Scott Godfrey) have been a second family to Roger over the years and have been especially kind during this recent time of illness. He loved the people at Godfrey and he loved driving trucks. Like any job there were some difficult days, but in the bigger scope of life, Roger was proud of being a trucker and he was Damn Good at it. Those who worked with him and know the difference between good drivers and run of the mill drivers all tell me Roger was one of the best. He was a real driver's driver. Scott Godfrey told me, "I wish all my drivers worked as hard as Roger and took care of the equipment and treated our customers like he did". Our family has received many kindnesses from Roger's friends in the trucking industry.



Roger has always been a great dad. It comes as no surprise to those of us who know them that Roger's kids have many of his qualities. In addition to all of them being kind and friendly, most of them are somewhere between very good and great storytellers. Some apples just don't fall far from the tree. They also are ALL hard workers. As his boys were growing up, Roger used them as his hod tenders on side jobs he did. He expected them all to work hard and do a good job (for not much pay). Lessons they learned from their dad have served them well as adults. They are all valued employees at their respective work places. Aaron is even a foreman now at the same masonry construction company where Roger was a foreman many years ago. Roger taught Daniel to be a hod tender and he taught both Daniel and Paula how to drive trucks for a living. Travis has become an excellent finish carpenter and Kelly, James and Sherree are all valued managers at the retail stores where they each work. All learned much of what they know from their dad.

As with many of us "older" folks, as Roger got older, family activities became more and more important. Roger fought against his leukemia longer and harder than many would have. Part of the reason he fought so long was his desire to have "One more trip to Dumont with my kids". Roger told his sister Pat and others that one of the things he would like to do one more time is a Dumont trip. He LOVED this time with his kids and grandkids. Roger was one of those grandpas that the kids simply couldn't get enough of. While adults visited and did things with other adults it was Roger who preferred to spend his time with his grandkids. He told them stories, encouraged them to play pranks on each other and on adults in the family (I know, hard to imagine Roger putting kids up to pranks isn't it.), he let them bury him in sand. In many ways he was the oldest "kid" in the family. No offense intended to our own grandparents who I remember as being eternally old, but Roger was the kind of grandpa I think he would have liked to have had but didn't.

A mention of Roger's wife if I may: No one will be or has been more profoundly affected by Roger's passing than his wife Cora. Her life will be forever different now. I can say it has been my privilege to witness her courage and her profound love for Roger. This has been a very scary thing for her to experience and she now faces a future that will certainly not be the future her and Roger talked about "When we win



the lottery” as Roger used to joke. That said, Roger and Cora have raised some truly fine children. As I have watched them and their children over all these many years, my wife Sharon and I have both talked many times about what good kids they are. (Yes I know they are adults, but the older I get the older “kids” get.) They will look after their mom and Cora will experience the blessings that come from raising and loving good kids. (And yes, Marty deserves her share of the credit for these fine young men and her part in raising them.)

I have known and loved Roger his entire life. He is my brother and my life long friend. I could write books about our experiences together. His illness and passing has been my hardest cross to bear thus far in my life. Parents should not have to bury their kids and older brothers should not have to bury their little brothers. I will miss him in ways I never imagined or expected. When we were young we had our fights as brothers always seem to do, but as adults, even during the many years we worked together in construction, we never had even one truly angry word pass between us. We may have argued politics and had our sarcastic jokes between us but I think the last time an angry word passed between us was when we were 16 and 17 years old and our cousin Kenny introduced Roger to beer for the first time. That day Roger took the keys from my car and while teasing me and running from me, he dropped the keys down a hollow tree. I had to drive my old 52 Chevy for weeks with a hot wire to the ignition until I could afford a new ignition switch & key. How do brothers go all these years without any fights or even angry words passing between them? I don't really know, but that's how it has been with us and I'm grateful this has been the case. Grace is perhaps not a word that would commonly be used in talking of Roger, but to me, I think it applies. What is grace really, if not giving and expecting nothing in return? How often did those of us who know Roger experienced his eagerness to give to us in ways that we often didn't even notice because giving with no strings attached was so commonplace from him? (I know Roger had it in him to be a horse trader and wheeler-dealer. But when push came to shove, if you needed it and Roger had it, it was yours.) Whether simply a smile and a kind word or a story to make you laugh, a couple of bucks to tide you over, a place to stay or something you needed to borrow, Roger was generous with anything at his disposal. I know he has given much of his



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money to others (sometimes over my objections) but more than that, is it not grace to share a smile and kind word? Was there ever any question of whether or not Roger would let you borrow anything he owned if you needed it and expect nothing in return? Is that not grace? If it's his time you need for help, did he ever say "no I can't help" when he really could have helped? Kindness and giving were such a part of him and the person he was that we kind of took it for granted and yet, is kindness and giving not grace?

You be the judge of what words to use to describe Roger. Whatever the words we use, I presume to speak for all Roger's family and friends when I say: We will miss you Roger. Our lives will be less without you. May you be blessed in your next life as you have blessed us in this life.



## Tribute Wall

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AH

**Allan Hansen** posted:

I was one of the shade tree mechanics that worked on their cars over at Don Nuzum's backyard garage in Lancaster. I was younger than most of this group. It is with great fondness that I remember firsthand Roger's storytelling abilities because my brother and I were the basis for his "twin's stories" that he loved to tell to everyone. He always made it sound like my brother and I were destroying the entire town! He was part of the great memories that make that time in my life really worth remembering. God bless you Roger.

November 16 at 6:26 AM

RD

**Randall Deppe** posted:

I was so sadden to hear Roger had passed away. What a great man he was to me. All the years we worked together in the masonry business in the 80s from Bear Lake to Little Lakes, CA, he was always fun to prank on or to just get the work done! He always made sure there was some of both! Hahahahaha, I will always remember him as a great man, hard worker, and just plain fun to be around in any situation! You have gone home now Roger. May you rest in peace. I would like to offer my deepest sympathies to Cora and the rest of the family. I pray God's blessings of peace and understanding fill your souls. God bless you now and in future day! Roger the artful dodger we love and miss you sir!

November 12 at 3:40 PM

SF

**Steve And Sydney Furr** posted:

Dear Cora and Family, It is with much sadness that we send this message at Roger's passing. We have such wonderful memories of living next to you in Rose Canyon. We never could have built the house without your scaffolding, digging the big rig out of the snow bank, Nate going on a run in Roger's beautiful truck. So many more. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you because it is very difficult to lose loved ones. Love, Steve and Sydney Furr

November 12 at 10:15 AM

LR

**Linda Rutherford Jex** posted:

My heart goes out to Rogers beautiful family. Wish I could have known you all, in a way I have. Rogers greatest legacy was his children and his beautiful wife. He so loved his grand children. He was so very proud of all of you. May the lord help you all with the comfort and love and surround you in the pure white light of his love. Linda Rutherford Jex 801 255 5247 if you ever need any thing or just some one to talk to.

November 12 at 6:07 AM



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DD

**Diane Downs** posted:

As I read the obituary I could remember all these things about Roger. I am so saddened about loosing Roger and my heart goes out to all of your families. I worked with Roger at Eagle Trucking and we became friends and what you wrote about him Ray was right on the button. My heartfelt condolences to Cora. I can't imagine of life without my husband. Your family sounds wonderful and great support for you. He was a light in this world.

November 12 at 4:50 AM

MF

**Michelle Fortner** posted:

They broke the mold when they made Uncle Roger. Sending love to you Aunt Cora, and to all my cousins as well.

November 12 at 4:14 AM

CG

**Chuck Godfrey** posted:

WE WILL MISSYOU VERY MUCH YOU WAS A GREAT FRIEND.

November 11 at 2:22 PM

TS

**Terry Sidwell** posted:

I love my brother he was a gift to us all. I know that I will feel this lose for a very long time. Roger's suffering is over but ours will go on. There will be times I'll think of one of his stories and laught but then I won't be able to remember that one important part and I'll cry. A piece of me is gone never to be replaced I love you Roger, don't for get your promis to me. I LOVE YOU SO MUCH

November 11 at 12:42 PM

CS

**Cheri Simon** posted:

To ALL of the Andrus Family, My heart hurts for you, and my deepest sympathy for you all. Words cant take the HURT away,I know that. But you are all close, use one another for comfort and love. Roger did alot for the Simon family. He gave his shoulder and support. Unconditionally. Thank you Roger. Roger you earned your wings. May His spirit soar, and Gods love enfold him. May God be with you all, giving you strength and support. God Bless you. Love Cheri Simon

November 11 at 10:00 AM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

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