



Ronald Lee Lenhart

July 7, 1937 - November 23, 2016

Meet Ron Lenhart: Digital Photographer, Artist, Writer, Computer Scientist, Information Systems Management Analyst, and College Professor. He had a lifelong love affair with learning, teaching, and artistic endeavors. He had his first photograph published in Popular Mechanics when he was twelve, and he carried a camera with him ever afterward. In his high school years in Mesa, Arizona, he was the school photographer, shooting everything from portraits to sports and all student events. He also had his first magazine cover published by the National Science Teacher magazine. Furthermore, he saw his photographs routinely published in the Mesa Tribune and The Arizona Republic.

By the time of high school graduation, in 1955, Ron had decided to enter the US Air Force and ask for photographic school. Despite warnings from former military family friends not to ask for what he wanted, he did, and found himself in Denver, Colorado, at the USAF Photographic School. He quickly passed through the first month's classes in just days, due to his experience; and so, at the tender age of 18, he was suddenly thrust into teaching the beginning classes while taking advanced classes in color printing, aerial photography, and motion picture work.

Then in 1956, he was transferred to Walker Air Force Base in Roswell, New Mexico, as an aerial photo reconnaissance specialist. After being there only

three months, he was approached to change his specialty to a very different field of work for him – electronic warfare operations specialist. While being trained in this electronics specialty, he got his first exposure to the world of electronic computing. Ron served in the Air Force from 1955 through 1963, serving seven years with the 509th Bomb Wing of the Strategic Air Command. He had the best of all worlds during those years, working in the field of computing, flying, and working with electronic warfare operations.

After leaving the service in 1963, he decided he wanted to enroll in college. At the same time, with a young family to support, he returned to his avocation, photography, and opened a photo studio and lab in his home town of Mesa, where he did advertising photography and also shot portraits and weddings. Before long, he found himself doing computer programming on the side. After less than two years of photography, he returned to computing full-time, along with his school work. He was soon offered a position at Maricopa Community College's computer center as a shift supervisor and found himself working night and day. Those long hours and efforts were rewarded when, in 1969, he was offered his first full-time college teaching position in computer science at Yavapai College in Prescott, Arizona. Ron and his family moved to Prescott.

By 1980, Ron had developed and administered the largest educational computer network in the Southwest, a network based at Yavapai College. That network included ninety-five Arizona school districts, twelve community colleges in Arizona and California, and various departments at Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University. During those years, he always performed his own photographic work to use in his teaching. He also got back into painting with acrylics. At one point, while living in the old mining town of Jerome, Arizona, he supplemented his income by painting scenes from the area and selling his works to tourists. In the meantime, he was teaching at the Verde Valley Campus of Yavapai College. During this general period of his life, the US Postal Service delivered a letter

to him addressed simply as “Mr. Computer [Line 1], Arizona [Line 2]”.

After ten years at Yavapai College, Ron left and started building an underground home on ten acres north of Prescott. This was quite a life-altering experience, jumping from a high technology environment to living without electricity and running water. He built the structure by hand and taught himself to run a backhoe and D9 Cat to grade his land. He once remarked that he ended that summer in the best physical shape in his life. Within a few weeks of starting construction, however, he found himself back teaching part-time for Yavapai College, Prescott College, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott. Embry-Riddle soon offered him a position as Professor and Program Chair of Aeronautical Computer Science at Embry-Riddle.

Somewhere in the midst of all of this, Ron was invited to become a member of a national committee to develop recommendations and guidelines for developing educational programs in an up-and-coming computer revolution. Now, the structure of our entire society seems to be wrapped up in computer technology, and Ph.D.'s in this field abound. In Ron's early days, it was knowledge and know-how in the realm that opened doors for him.

In 1985, he graduated from Prescott College, having years of program administration and teaching experience behind him. Also in 1985, after five years at Embry-Riddle, Ron was offered a full-time teaching position at Mohave College in Lake Havasu City and eventually retired there. While at Mohave College, he started an electronic publishing curriculum and soon started digital photo classes along with his computer information systems classes. He became a very popular teacher. Among his many accolades, a part-time student who was a retired professor from Stanford University told him he was one of the top two teachers she had known in her life, including both the teachers she had had as a student, and the teachers she had known

as a professional teacher herself. These kinds of compliments rewarded him for his dedication. In 1994, he was selected by a student or students of merit as a teacher who made a difference in their lives. He was acknowledged for excellence as a distinguished educator in Who's Who Among America's Teachers, that is, The best teachers in America, selected by the best students.

Ron frequently stated that he had been fortunate to be allowed to follow his passions in art, writing, photography, computing and, best of all, teaching. By 2004, he had worked in the computing field for forty-nine years and teaching at colleges and universities for thirty-six of those years. He said if he counted his seven years of teaching in the Air Force, his teaching career spanned forty-three years. Not eager to retire, he kept a full slate teaching full-time, not only in a standard classroom, but also over instructional television and online over the internet. He also did faculty development, training teachers how to combine emerging technologies for teaching purposes. He presented at technology and teaching seminars and at world conferences, showing the effective use of technology in teaching and learning; and he also conducted online training for college and university faculty from all over the world from his Lake Havasu Campus faculty office using his own teaching server. In the midst of all this activity, he continued to enjoy his avocation of photography and to use it in the creation of art.

After moving to the greater St. George area, Ron took up projects that would benefit his community. He photographed local historical changes that came about with significant construction projects – the downtown St. George project, the construction of a new courthouse in the historic district, and a highway project through Washington City. At home, he 'relaxed' by working on his computer file of photographs while also keeping up with the news online and/or on television -- with football, basketball, or baseball games running in the background.

Ron loved getting out into the beautiful state and national parks of Southern Utah to try to capture it all with his faithful Nikon. He set up a web site to share his photographs with friends near and far (at www.lenhartimages.com.) He had a lot of fun photographing the Big Horn sheep on the east side of Zion National Park, where he developed a kind of relationship with the herd he encountered there. He referred to the leader of the herd -- a sturdy, assertive ram with an impressive set of horns and a notable array of battle scars-- as "The Old Man". The Old Man seemed to recognize Ron's scent and the sound of his voice and to tolerate his proximity -- even seemed at times to understand what he said and respond appropriately. Is it possible The Old Man looked at Ron in a similar way? There they stood surrounded by the red, white, and gold rocks of the beautiful surrounding mountains, two battle-scarred old men whose paths crossed, respecting one another's space. Ron wondered whether The Old Man was nearing his end.

A fortune teller years ago told Ron that he would not die until his favorite team, the Chicago Cubs, had won the World Series championship once more. Every year, after the contest was settled, he would say something to the effect he had another year to go, and whew! He didn't mention the outcome this year.

Ron's camera is still sitting where he put it the last time he came home. The entrance wall is filled with pictures he has taken. A box of T-shirts that he planned to market for Veteran's Day, featuring his original patriotic design, is still sitting on the floor in our dining room. (Ron was a patriot.) Some of the bills he was in the middle of paying have not been paid. He said there was a grace period, and he would take care of things after he got home. In his absence, the dog sleeps in Ron's chair and watches his bed to see if he will materialize. A neighbor with a white beard and a floppy hat prompted alert ears the other day, and an anxious little whine. But Ron is not coming home

this time, and nothing will ever be the same. Yet, just as his absence changes everything, so did his presence. He chose to be present while he was here. He chose to be himself. He chose to encourage and help others. He chose to make a contribution.

Ron summed up his active life this way: "Everything I have learned in my life has come together these last several years where my photography, writing, art and design, and teaching have all combined in the world of computing." Ron thought of himself as an artist at heart, a college teacher by choice, and a computer technologist by education and training. When he was asked, "Why not retire from work?" his response was, "I have never gone to work a day in my life. You don't call it work when you love what you do, and do what you love."

God bless you on your journey, Ron. I love you.

Carol Lenhart

He is survived by: his wife Carol Ann of Washington City, Utah; his mother Roseann Young Lenhart Lawhead (age 101) of Mesa, AZ; his sister Sharma Jean Lenhart Hightower of Springfield, MO; daughters Sheri Lenhart Brewer Emard of Gilbert, AZ and Stephanie Lee Lenhart Fischer of Colorado Springs, CO; a son Steven Michael Lenart of Gilbert, AZ; and five grand-children, Michael, Katie, and Lacie Lenhart and Jakob and Joshua Fischer; a niece Debbie Hightower Krull of Sykesville, MD; a nephew, David Hightower of Springfield, MO; and three great-nieces, one great-nephew, and a great granddaughter.

He was preceded in death by: his father, Hubert Lenhart; a granddaughter, Alisa Rae Brewer; and his brother-in-law, Earl Vernon Hightower.

A funeral will be held in Washington City at the 700 East Telegraph Street chapel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Thursday, December 1, at 10 a.m. with a viewing before the funeral at 9 a.m. Interment will take place at the Washington City Cemetery on 300 East Street following the funeral.

Cemetery Details

Washington City Cemetery

200 N. 300 E.
Washington, UT

Previous Events

Viewing

DEC 1. 9:00 AM - 9:45 AM (MT)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Washington , Utah
700E Telegrapgh Street
Washington, UT

Service

DEC 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (MT)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Washington , Utah
700E Telegrapgh Street
Washington, UT

Tribute Wall

DF

“ I took every class Mr Lenhart offered at MCC. He was a fantastic instructor and mentor. His teachings and mindset have guided my entire career. I'm now a VP of Data Platforms and Engineering, leading a team of 60, at a 5000 person company. I wouldn't have gotten here without his guidance and knowledge. Fundamentally, his teachings were about helping people, providing actual value through evaluation, analysis, and hard work. I wish I could have told him all of this but I hope his family knows how he impacted those he taught.

Dan Franks - November 10, 2024 at 02:06 AM

CL

“ I only met Ron once, very recently, but I heard such wonderful, romantic things about him from his dear wife, Carol. He was so intelligent and dedicated to teaching, and obviously an excellent husband. He will be missed!

Carol Long - November 28, 2016 at 11:24 PM



“ 11 files added to the album Ronald Lenhart



Front Desk - November 28, 2016 at 02:58 PM