



JAMES O. NELSON

SEP 25, 1935 - SEP 14, 2012



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James O. "Jim" Nelson, a long-time member of the South Florida legal community died Friday at South Miami Hospital of complications from heart disease. Mr. Nelson, surrounded by his children, siblings and loved ones, was 76.

Born in Gainesville, Florida, Mr. Nelson attended UF, where he played football, but would become a devoted Hurricane. The son of a carpenter, he put himself through undergraduate school and law school at the University of Miami, and went on to have a successful career practicing law, much of the time at no charge.

He served as a paratrooper in the army's legendary 82nd Airborne division, and was a member of the elite Special Forces reserve. He moved to Miami in 1956 and enrolled at UM. Working full-time in construction, he also attended school full-time, earning his degree in accounting and a Juris Doctorate in law.

Mr. Nelson was the first and only night student elected president of the UM Student Bar Association. He was a member of Iron Arrow, the school's highest honorary society, editor of the Student Law Review, and recipient of the Outstanding Law Senior Ibis award. He served on the UM General Alumni board of directors and Law Alumni board of directors.

Mr. Nelson's first job as a lawyer was as a plaintiff's attorney with Shelby Highsmith, who went on to become a United States District Court Judge. Mr. Nelson later served as regional corporate counsel for Travelers Insurance Company before beginning a mediation practice, which he continued until his death.

As a mediator, Mr. Nelson gained a reputation among South Florida attorneys for his remarkable ability to bring sides together and settle cases. . Mr. Nelson handled countless cases - battered women, bankruptcies, criminal defenses, traffic offenses - pro bono, at no charge. Ever modest, he was not one to talk about his pro bono work. He was a member of state and federal pro-bono programs, the South Dade Mental Health Foundation board, and Concept House board. Mr.



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Nelson, literally, built the popular Captain's Tavern restaurant in Pinecrest and was a founding partner in the landmark establishment

Mr. Nelson is survived by his life partner, Linda Sandberg, sons Brian Nelson(wife Wendy) of Miami, Bruce Nelson(wife Jacky), of White Stone, VA, daughters Kathy Cabrera(husband Franco), of Charlotte, NC, Lauren Stem(husband Eric) of Pinecrest and step daughter, Heather Calhoon (husband Curtis) of Hollywood. He is also survived by his brothers Ronald C. Nelson(wife Anne)of Garland, TX, Michael Bruce Nelson(wife Nomi)of Corsicana, TX, Gary Nelson(wife Mary Jane)of Miami, and sister, Diana K. Smith(husband Clyde), of Marina Del Rey, Ca. Mr. Nelson has nine grandchildren, and one great grandchild. His parents Otis and Delma Nelson of Gainesville, Fl., preceded him in death.

A Memorial Service will be held at the University of Miami's Newman Alumni Center, 6200 San Amaro Drive, Coral Gables, at 6 p.m. Wednesday, September 19th.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Mr. Nelson's memory to the American Heart Association or the charity of your choice.

Funeral Arrangements by Van Orsdel Funeral Home - Kendall Chapel 11220 N. Kendall Dr. Miami, Fl. 33176 for any questions or flower delivery inquiry (305)279-6644 www.vanorsdel.com



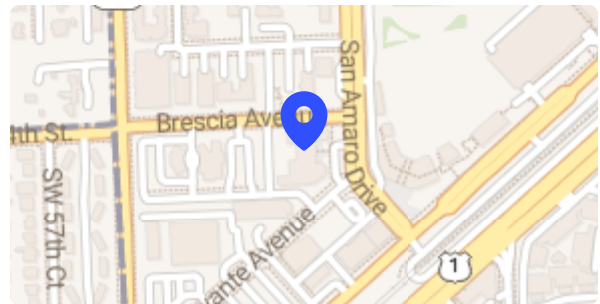
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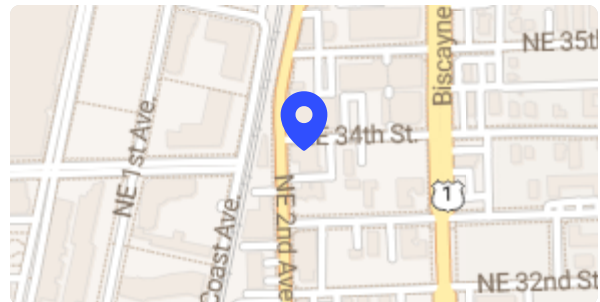
Service

- Wednesday**, September 19, 2012
- 6:00 PM ET
- Neuman Alumni Center @ UM**
6200 San Amaro Drive, Coral Gables, FL FL



Cemetery Details

- Van Orsdel Crematory**
3333 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami FL 33137





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring JAMES by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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