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Remembering Roy Huffington

Posted July 14, 2008 | 07:49 PM (EST)

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On Friday, Roy Huffington, my former father-in-law, died at the age of 90 while vacationing in Venezuela. As his last name, I want to take a moment to reflect on the man and his remarkable life.

Roy was born in Tomball, Texas and moved to Dallas during the Great Depression. He grew up in an oil town. He had an accident in the oil fields of Venezuela before Roy was a teenager so, to help his mother and sisters, he woke up at 4:30am to work on his two paper routes.

After earning his Ph.D. in geology from Harvard, he served as a naval officer aboard the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid. Then, following a decade working as an oil company geologist, he went out on his own as a wildcat geologist. Roy Huffington was an oilman when oil exploration was still a romantic endeavor.

Over the ensuing years, he built his company into a very successful international energy company. He got out of the oil business when oil was \$22 a barrel -- and devoted himself to philanthropy, served as U.S. Ambassador to Austria from 1990-1993.

I met him in 1985. And our friendship continued even when my marriage to his son ended. When he gave the speech, I would give him a call and, if he was in town, we would get together for a drink. He often stayed at our house because he remained to the end a passionate world traveler who had visited all seven continents. His love for travel never waned.

My fondest memories of Roy center around his role as grandfather. He had always had his head in the clouds when my first pregnancy resulted in a stillborn boy -- whom we had already decided to name Roy. When he followed, he quickly realized they could be anything a grandson would be.

When our girls were little, I remember he used to patiently take them outside and teach them about geology. He did this with such passion and depth of knowledge that, at one point or another, each of his granddaughters wanted to follow in his footsteps as a geologist.

They all eventually broke off from the geology track, but stayed close to him. And no matter where they were, a distinctive handwriting would arrive in the mail for their birthdays - postmarked from faraway locations with foreign stamps. The card always contained warm sentiments - and a little cash bonus for the girls.

The last time I saw Roy was in May, when he flew to LA -- at the age of 90 -- to attend our oldest daughter's graduation. I'll always remember the smile -- and the pride on his face -- as he watched her accept her diploma.

Newspaper obituaries will rightly remember the Golden Cross he received from the Republic of

country; his philanthropic work as long-time chairman of The Asia Society and The Salzburg Seminar at his alma mater, Southern Methodist University, and other educational institutions to help fund science and the funding he provided (along with his beloved wife Phyllis) to establish the Huffington Center for the Study of Aging and the Aging Process, one of the world's premiere centers on the study of aging.

I'll remember those too. But mostly I'll remember his kindness, his generosity, his integrity, and his humor.

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I'm touched!

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Roy Huffington definitely sounds like a man whom I wish that I had met.

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What a wonderfully remarkable person Roy Huffington must have been. What a true blessing to fearlessness, curiosity, and mentorship through the Depression and even his later years. His legacy to carry on and a great history to reflect on. There is nothing more beautiful than witness grandchildren sharing time together. It is the true definition of "quality time" Even the memory of Thank you for telling us his story.

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- [Moshe](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Moshe](#)

A beautiful tribute Arianna.

Thank you for sharing this, and our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Shalom

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- [CintiBlue](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of CintiBlue](#)

Dear Arianna,

Thank you for sharing Roy with us; what a fine man.

My condolences to you and your family.

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- [nanton29](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of nanton29](#)

Roy Huffington was a great man judging from that wonderful tribute paid to him in the art have you as a daughter-in-law, and to know that you will carry the baton well in his conti

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My condolences to the entire Huffington family. While posted in the Far East, in the '70s, my oil-often guests of Roy and his wife in Jakarta and Singapore. You couldn't have asked for better c petroleum industry a long time and could tell stories through the night. Roy knew everyone who young couple at the time but he took the trouble to get to know us and included us in his invitati was a joy to be around and we held him in great esteem. I was very sorry to hear of his passing

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- [ReelBusy](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of ReelBusy](#)

Dear Arianna,

I don't think many people realize the solid family values foundation with which you have raised y sharing this.

A grandfather is a wonderful thing.

My condolences to you and your daughters on this loss.

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- [Gemma08](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Gemma08](#)

Condolences to you and your family.

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Your article made me cry, Arianna. Your relationship with this man was a tribute to you as well :

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- [psgoodguy](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of psgoodguy](#)

what a lovely tribute. my condolences, arianna.

[_ Reply](#) [_ Favorite](#) [_ Flag as abusive](#) Posted 02:19 PM on 07/15/2008
- [Shayrae](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Shayrae](#)

psgoodguy...I hope you don't mind that i am posting my condolences to arianna as a rep
Comment' tab is not working. Dear Arianna, as a regular poster to this site, I want to let y
and beautiful tribute to your former father-in-law. You, your former husband and your dai
love Mr. Huffington had for his family. He seems to have been a wonderful man.

[_ Reply](#) [_ Favorite](#) [_ Flag as abusive](#) Posted 03:06 PM on 07/15/2008
- [PLUMPLUM](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of PLUMPLUM](#)

Dear Arianna,

I would like to extend my sincere condolences to you on the passing of Mr. Huffington. I read at
wasn't sure of the familial connection albeit the surname.

I hope good memories will make this time less difficult to traverse. You have carried his name w
accomplishing so much.

You and your family will be in my prayers.

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- [Lisette](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Lisette](#)

Dear Arianna,
Thank you for sharing your memories with us,
the readers of Huffington Post.
And,my condolances to you and your daughters on this loss.

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- [Russycle](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Russycle](#)

Arianna, thanks for sharing Roy's legacy with us. Next to losing my father, the passing of my fat
moment in my life. Deepest condolences.

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- idarosenberg [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of idarosenberg](#)

Dear Arianna, I was so sorry to read of the passing of your father-in-law. Having lost my dad ye feeling of loss when you loose someone that not only you love, but has also had a presence in you, your daughters, your former husband, and the family and friends of your father-in-law that name proud. With warmest regards, Ida

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- deepeace [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of deepeace](#)

Nice piece, Arianna. I, too, maintained a healthy, loving relationship with my father-in-law after I would talk every week about the regular conversations between Bob Edwards and Red Barber Barber had died, I had to pull off the road and cry, because he was my last living link with Herbi years later.

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- webweaver [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of webweaver](#)

Dear Arianna:

My condolences for the loss of your father-in-law. It's a confusing set of emotions to miss someone that the life they lived was honorable and full, and ended the way they lived. Bittersweet.

I didn't know you had a stillbirth... my first pregnancy was a stillbirth boy. And my fourth was a stillbirth girl. Different situations, very different reasons, but the same outcome... I am writing a book about my birthing something unique. It's not like an early pregnancy miscarriage and it's not like losing a live child different. It's terrible, no question about it, and there are no good words to describe it. One thing that these experiences have taught me about cherishing my children and valuing each minute.

Thank you for your work, and your words. Someday I would love to talk with you about our shared experiences.

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Arianna:

My deepest sympathy for your loss.

It was interesting to learn that Roy served aboard the Hornet, as I served as a docent aboard her (the Hornet is a historical landmark and museum ship in Alameda, California).

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- WVPanhandle [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of WVPanhandle](#)

Arianna,

So very sorry to hear of the passing of your former Father-in-Law. You are doing a magnificent job. He started. He must have been a true inspiration to many. My sincerest condolences.

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[_ JennyJay](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of JennyJay](#)

Thanks for the story, that we should get to know him a little. You and your family are lucky to have known him well.

[_ Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 10:11 AM on 07/15/2008

[_ Janet Carter](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Janet Carter](#)

You are a very fine lady, Arianna, to maintain contact and a positive relationship with your former father-in-law and to your daughters for your loss.

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Arianna: You have recreated for us the remarkable man who was your former father-in-law and four daughters. Your words are eloquent testament to your love and respect and may they abide over the years to come. Take comfort in knowing that his was a full life, well and productively lived all of you. RIP Roy Huffington.

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[_ Sciguy](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Sciguy](#)

RIP, sir. May your decency continue to spread.

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[_ army193](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of army193](#)

My thoughts are with you, and your family.

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[_ grumpygranny66](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of grumpygranny66](#)

My condolences to you and your daughters. I feel your grief because, I lost my husband of 40 years extremely hard on your daughters more than you can imagine because, I see how it affects my daughters and I can give you is to remind them of him every opportunity you have, go over pictures of him with them over their grief.. I myself is getting over my grief, by posting on HuffPo, so in a way I am getting over it and you will be in my prayer...

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[_ mamacat](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of mamacat](#)

Deepest condolences on your loss.
Thank you for sharing your memories.

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