



Ronald George Frangipane

July 26, 1944 - April 25, 2020

Emily and I are deeply saddened to say that our father Ron Frangipane has passed away April 25th at the age of 75, having succumbed to Covid-19 pneumonia. Our daddy led a colorful, zany, beautiful life. When there was no guarantee of his survival after his injuries sustained during hurricane Sandy, God granted him nearly a decade in which time he welcomed two grandchildren. Our father was a musical wizard, a comedian, and a sweet, sensitive soul. Beyond his family, music was the greatest love of his life. I've never heard a piano sound more exquisite or seen a man so passionate while making it sing. He was a brilliant man, and a shining light who impacted and mentored many students at Monmouth University where he was a professor of music. But he also impacted countless others and helped sculpt pop culture during a music career that spanned decades. As a pianist, accordionist, saxophonist, composer, producer, arranger, orchestrator, conductor and sideman, my father can be heard playing on countless records from Sugar, Sugar to John Lennon's Happy Christmas. From the iconic hooks of Daydream Believer and I'm A Believer to Jodorowsky's The Holy Mountain and Mic Jagger's Ned Kelly. From The Cowsills to Melanie, Janis Ian to Jimi Hendrix, Gene Simmons to Grace Slick and far too many others to mention, I'm proud to say that my father touched countless music, film, TV and Radio fans around the world. In the 1980s he wrote jingles and station identification for many radio stations and music for television in several countries. His genius astounds me. He was one of the hardest working people I have ever met. He started working at 13 and never stopped.

But there was so much beyond his career that made Ron the wonderful parent, son, friend and character he was. He could sit from 6AM to 8PM on the dune beaches of Cape Cod with all of us and his best friend crazy Uncle Stevie with a book, pair of headphones and tanning oil and be as happy as a clam. He truly loved Cape Cod and the joy of a family vacation. His best friends Jill and Steven Sawyer and their son Devin would frequently vacation with us, usually renting their own home right next to ours, and Ron would find some of his happiest days on Earth there. He took us to Broadway and the Bronx Zoo. To Yankees games and Disney; what he called 'field trips'. And thanks to 'a guy' he knew, he always procured the best seats in the house. He was a nut, but the most gentle, loving nut

you'd ever meet. He was truly a shining light; a beacon of bright color, fine suits and wild dark waves of hair. Everyone knew when Ron entered the room. And if you ask anyone who has had the pleasure sitting at the dinner table with him (and especially if it was at a restaurant) and they will tell you of our father's many many stories. Stories of the music industry, stories of life and truly some of the funniest stories you'd ever hear. Incredible feats of rescuing a Great Dane named Blanco who jumped off a yacht in the East River while wearing a pair of Pallazo pants; The man that is, not the dog. Stories of being chased down the Merritt Parkway by a giant wooden telephone wire spool and stories of the close bond between him and his own father forged, in part, by countless deep-sea fishing voyages. They will also tell you of a man whose love of art, food, world travel, romance, and music inspired them and frequently changed them for good. Most of all, he was an incredible father. He was our hero, our greatest supporter, and our friend. He was mad as a hatter, hysterically funny, and as gentle as a kitten. He loved Mel Brooks, and we would quote lines from The Producers and howl. He loved his animals and treated them better than he treated himself. His kindness was boundless. He gave of himself to anyone who asked, even if it was to his detriment. We were never in doubt of his love. Ron leaves behind his ex-wife and friend till the end Susan Knowlton, daughter Emily and son Gregory, his two grandchildren Wyatt and Sofkuri, his daughter-in-law Colleen, best friend Jill Sawyer, and many other sad hearts.

Greg's last words to his father are:

It was my honor to have been your caretaker for the 7 years after your accident.

I can hear your voice echo in my ears saying "goodnight Son, I love you. Sweet dreams" as I would help you to bed. I will never stop missing you. Goodbye my dear father. I love you.

Emily's last words to her father are:

I will miss you more than you will ever know. I will be holding your thumb for the rest of my life. I love you Daddy.

In lieu of flowers, we ask that you please make a donation in Ron's name to the New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury Fund- BIANJ. All services are private private, memorial gathering will be held at a later date.

Comments



“ I just learned of Ron's passing and feel a great loss in my life as I know you do. Ron and I were close friends and colleagues in the 70s and 80s in NYC when I was a studio singer. We did many record dates together. He always lit up the room and had many wonderful stories and memories to share. We reconnected several years after I moved to Los Angeles to begin my career as a composer. He was now at Monmouth U and wanted to bring me there to talk about my career and perform some of my music. He was always supportive of people he cared about and will be missed by so many of his peers. My heart goes out to you and his family.

Adrienne Albert 12.20.2021

Adrienne - December 20, 2021 at 05:53 PM



“ I just found out about Ron's death, so this is a belated sharing of memory. I knew Ron from River Dell Junior and Senior High School days. We met in junior high band. I was a trumpet player, and Ron at that time was an accomplished accordion player who also played clarinet and sax. He was clearly a musical genius whose creativity also carried over to humor and story telling. In fact, it was often difficult to know which stories were fiction and which were fact. We shared friendship and music for all of junior and senior high school. We played together in the River Dell band, orchestra, and jazz band. He was always writing and arranging music. I remember the utter joy on his face when we conducted the music he wrote. There came a time in our high school senior year when Ron, along with Aleck and Derek Brinkman, made the decision to become professional musicians. While I loved music, and still play trumpet, that was not my path. I marveled at Ron's commitment and preparation for a music career. And I continued to marvel at the vastness of his musical connections and influence throughout his life. It's a cliché that I regret not having reconnected with him in later life, but that's the way I feel. Your memories conveyed in his obituary are perfect. What a wonderful way to remember your father and the ways he shared his joy with you. May these memories continue to walk with you from now into eternity. Blessings to you all.

Lawrence D Reimer - November 03, 2021 at 10:53 AM



“ I never met Ron Frangipane, but his keyboards held forth on the first records I really loved: Soundtrack albums released under the name The Archies. I grew up to be an amateur music journalist. For years, I searched to find the names of the musicians who provided that wonderful music. I'm proud to say that I've been able to credit most of them. The musicians I was fortunate enough to speak with had nothing but good things to say about Mr. Frangipane and his talent. Ron Dante was especially effusive with compliments. On my blog next month, I'll be posting a feature about the Great American Rock 'n' Roll Song Book. It includes Archies songs, and there's no telling how many more of the compositions listed were made into records that featured Ron Frangipane arrangements and/or keyboards. I'm dedicating my "40 Rock" blogpost to him. You'll find it online at Blogger's Pop Culture Cantina.

DC Hampton Jacobs - November 25, 2020 at 10:02 PM



“ Thank you so much for this! As his son (and his caretaker in the last 7 years of his life) it fills me with joy to read things like this. Would you be able to please point me in the direction of the blog? I searched for it at the Pop Culture Cantina but I couldn't find it. Thanks again for taking the time to write a note here.

-Greg Frangipane

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 09:51 PM



“ I worked with Ron from 1975-1977. He was a formidable talent. I am sorry he is gone. So sad for his family and friends. Best wishes to all and keep his memory inside forever.

James - November 01, 2020 at 10:45 AM



“ Thank for for this, James. This is his son Greg. Would you please tell me what you were doing with Ron during those years? I am researching a book about my father and it would be great to know more. I'm trying to fill in blanks and if you'd be able to give me a bit of info, I would be eternally grateful. Thank you very much for your note James.

-Greg Frangipane

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 09:55 PM



“ Dear Greg and Emily...I am so sorry to hear of Ron's passing. He was an amazing colleague, collaborator, inspiration and friend when we worked together in the 1980s. Sorry too to learn of his accident belatedly. May you never know such sorrow again ... and May his extraordinary memory be a blessing.

Bruce Breslau
Chatsworth, CA

Bruce Breslau - August 29, 2020 at 03:57 PM



“ My sister Ann Wyllie spoke often about Ronald's incredible musical talent at River Dell. They shared the time in the RD Marching Band, and while memories were fading, she always remembered her time in the band and RDHS. Ann passed away early in April and we all miss her very much. These are very difficult times ~ our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Carol and Ed Blakeslee - August 17, 2020 at 04:03 PM



“ Carol and Ed,

Thank you so much for your note. I'm so sorry to hear about Ann, but it's nice to know that they enjoyed the time they spent together at River dell. Thank you again,

-Greg Frangipane, Ron's son

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 09:58 PM



“ I am so very sorry to hear that Ron has passed. I worked with him on many recording sessions in which he was involved in NYC in the early 1980's. He was such a wonderful kind human being. It was an honor to have known him. I cannot imagine the profound loss your family is feeling. I send my most profound condolences. Kathy Ingraham

Kathy Ingraham - July 21, 2020 at 07:02 AM



“ Kathy, Hi! This is Greg, Ron's son. I'm sure you and I have met in person in the past.

Maybe dad brought me to a session. As soon as I read your name I was sure we've met. Anyway, thank you for your comment. We are gutted and speaking just for myself, I'm still really struggling. I miss him deeply so hearing from the people he worked with and called friends means so much. Thank you again

Greg - August 13, 2020 at 10:10 PM



“ Our days at River Dell High school band were made richer by Ron's wonderful talent that exuded from his head through his heart and out to his hands and feet. I remember at his house when he was showing us this wonderful, new "stereo" and the amazing way he could move parts of the music around the room. He was an amazing and wonderful good friend from the good ol' days. I have thought of him often and will continue to do so.

Mary Alice Turner Johnson RDHS '63

Mary Johnson - May 19, 2020 at 06:52 PM



“ Mary Alice, thank you for this. It means so much to hear how well people remember him. I very much appreciate your comment and the time you took to write it.

Greg - June 29, 2020 at 04:43 PM



“ I was a Sophomore in high school when your father was a Senior. He had not a clue as to who I was, but I sure knew him! Everybody did! I was in awe of his talent as he sat down at a piano in a living room jammed wall to wall with teenagers. Open house parties were a "thing" back then. The room quickly became his. He was amazing. But you know that.

Your tribute to your father is simply beautiful. He lived a wonderful life, didn't he? Your family was blessed with love and laughter. Who could ask for more. May you always smile as you remember your Dad and how he lived and loved life...and you.
Jane Raffo Nocella

Jane Nocella - May 18, 2020 at 01:15 PM



“ Thank you Jane. Thank you very much.

Greg - June 29, 2020 at 04:40 PM



“ I originally met Ron when he and his family came to Christ Church, Greenwich with his family to get his son Greg Baptized. We began a long and wonderful relationship between our families. Filled with love, deep spiritual learnings, growth, and prayer, lots of laughter, and of course music. Ron touched our lives deeply and we will always prize those days . We were blessed to be able to share some very special times and hold the memories in our hearts. Our love goes out to the whole family. I am deeply touched by Greg and Colleen for their dedication and care as his condition worsened. I true act of love by them and all the family. Chuck and Barby Goldschmid

Barby Goldschmid - May 12, 2020 at 04:59 PM



“ Barby, thank you <3

Greg - May 13, 2020 at 10:40 PM



“ Ron was an amazing human. He lit up any room he walked into and got the party started, for real!! He inspired so many and I can truly say he changed my life and encouraged me to pursue my dreams in music to the fullest. I will carry him in my memory and my heart forever. Sending love and blessings to Ron's family. Thank you for the amazing memories, Ron.

Eleni - May 08, 2020 at 07:29 PM



“ Eleni! Thank you so much for this. Dad adored you!

Greg - May 13, 2020 at 10:39 PM



“ Thank you so much, Elena <3

-Greg Frangipane

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 10:03 PM



“ Ron was a musical genius. He was a leader of the music students in all aspects of River Dell HS. We lost a valuable member of the class of 1962.
Tom Koestner

George and Joan Koestner - May 08, 2020 at 05:59 PM



“ Thank you so much!

Greg - May 13, 2020 at 10:38 PM



“ Ron and I went through River Dell together, we shared good times and a fun day fishing with his dad on his boat. I have a vivid memory of sitting across the lunch table from him at school as he tapped his fingers on the table and wrote music. I also remember that at an early age he was going after school to music classes in NYC. Looking back and remembering Ron it is easy to understand the extreme talent he became, all that he accomplished, his reputation and the various well known artists he worked with.
Rest in Peace Ron.
Bill Niederauer

Bill Niederauer - May 06, 2020 at 12:16 PM



“ Thank you so much Bill. I very much appreciate your note.
-Greg Frangipane, Ron's son.
Greg - April 04, 2021 at 10:05 PM



“ Ron was easily one of the best things about Monmouth University. His storytelling was like no other and his ability to be both empathetic and a straight shooter were unparalleled. I will miss this man forever. So thankful for all the knowledge he shared with me in my 4 years at MU.

Steph Ramos - May 06, 2020 at 11:10 AM



“ Thank you, Steph!
-Greg Frangipane
Greg - April 04, 2021 at 10:06 PM



“ I met Ron when I was hired to play a concert at Monmouth U., and enjoyed Ron and his irreverent musical opinions. When I started working there, we had even more fun. he will be missed.

Adrien Synnott - May 05, 2020 at 08:39 AM



“ Ron had a huge and wonderful impact on my life. I had the great pleasure of teaching on the MU faculty with him for many years, starting in 2001. I also got to play in his pit band for a few productions, and what an incredibly good time we had! He brought joy, laughter, beauty and love wherever he went. I can't think of anyone I admire more, and I'm so grateful to have known him both as a friend and as a fellow musician.

Laura DuBois - May 05, 2020 at 02:50 AM



“ Thank you so much, Laura!
-Greg

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 10:07 PM



“ Ron and I were classmates in both Oradell Elementary School and River Dell High School. We used to revel in our times spent as youngsters in Brooklyn. Sorry to hear of his passing.

Joe Perrone - May 04, 2020 at 12:56 PM



“ Thank you, Joe. I appreciate your note.
-Greg Frangipane

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 10:08 PM



“ Im so sorry for your loss. I knew Ron during my 4 years at Monmouth U. I loved his stories and he was an amazing talent. I always looked forward to going to Woods Theatre where I could see him hanging out of the window to his office smoking a cigarette. I loved chatting with him during our breaks when we were rehearsing. I brag about Ron from time to time that I was able to work with such a legend. What a great man my condolences.

Dale - May 04, 2020 at 11:45 AM



“ DALE,
Thank you for your note. I very much appreciate it.
-Greg Frangipane

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 10:09 PM



“ Ron was my friend in high school. We had many good laughs together. My fondest memory was sitting with Ron at a table in the cafeteria at lunch time. He would often have some music to practice. It didn't matter that there was no keyboard. Ron would play on the table. He would nod to me and I would turn the page.

Rob "Bobby" Ellis RIP

Robert Ellis - May 04, 2020 at 08:17 AM



“ Rob,
Thank you for your note. It fills me with joy and pride when I read the comments made by his schoolmates, as this has been a terrible time. I want you to know that I do appreciate that you took the time to write.

-Greg Frangipane

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 10:11 PM



“ When we met at River Dell in 1959...i knew my high school years were going to bring us all amazing musical memories that began and ended with Ron Frangipane. His genius kept the bar high and his intense dedication become my own mantra for excellence.

Leigh Cort - May 04, 2020 at 05:55 AM



“ I was so sorry to read about the recent loss of Ron. You were our next door neighbors on Indian Field in the late 60s early 70's. Your father definitely brought "cool" to the neighborhood. I have vivid memories of those years and of being in awe of him and all his musical friends and talent. What a beautiful tribute to a man you were lucky to call dad. Cherish the memories. Again, so sorry for your loss. Anne Coudert Schreckinger

Anne Schreckinger - May 05, 2020 at 05:40 PM



“ Such a beautiful tribute to your father. I was saddened to read of his passing. Before I retired in 2006, I was surprised to see him as a customer in the bank where I was working. We had a nice conversation. It had been many years since I had seen him. We graduated from Riverdell the same year. He will be missed. Janet Post (Finch).

Janet Post - May 03, 2020 at 10:22 PM



“ Janet,
Thank you very much for your note. I'm so happy to read all of the remembrances from his school friends, and they make his loss just a bit more bearable as I read them. Thanks again,

-Greg Frangipane (Ron's son)

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 10:14 PM



“ There’s only a sliver of Uncle Ron here, but it’s the only picture I have (circa 1973). My hear aches for you all. Such memories growing up together. Sending LOVE



Jen Hayes - May 02, 2020 at 02:59 PM



“ Jenny, I LOVE tis picture!

Emily - May 02, 2020 at 06:37 PM



“ Ron was two classes above me at River Dell, while my brother was one year ahead of Ron and while I can not claim Ron to have been a friend, my entire family knew of Ron Frangipane and his love of music

Chris Nielsen May 18

Chris Nielsen - May 18, 2020 at 03:43 PM



“ Today, for no reason at all, the name "Ronnie Frangipane" popped into my head. You see, I didn't know Ronnie personally, for I was four years younger and in River Dell Junior High School when he was in our high school. But, every musical event featured him, and all these years, I have remembered his talent.

Sharon Milch - June 29, 2020 at 07:58 PM



“ Thank you so much for your note! I appreciate that you took the time to write, and it fills my heart to hear what a giant he was in Oradell.

Thanks again,

-Greg Frangipane, Ron’s son

Greg - April 04, 2021 at 10:18 PM



“ Bongarzone Funeral Home lit a candle in memory of Ronald George Frangipane



Bongarzone Funeral Home - April 28, 2020 at 11:51 AM