



Ronald Paul Lovell

August 11, 1937 - March 26, 2025

Beloved emeritus journalism professor, mystery writer, devoted son, friend and mentor Ronald P. “Ron” Lovell died peacefully in his Gleneden Beach home on Wednesday, March 26, 2025 in the company of close friends. He was 87.

During an Oregon State University career that lasted nearly 25 years, he helped launch the careers of dozens of notable journalists. Among them was Chris Johns, a 1974 OSU graduate who would become the first photojournalist to be editor-in-chief of National Geographic magazine.

Ron was born in 1937 in Colorado Springs, Colorado to Verna Bickerton Lovell and Paul Lovell. He enjoyed a happy time as an only child in Colorado and in Southern California, and went on to graduate from UCLA. He served as a clerk in the Army and then began a journalism career that included stints as Denver bureau chief for Business Week and senior writer for Medical World News in New York City. He joined the OSU faculty in 1971 and retired in 1995.

In his retirement years on the coast, he volunteered teaching English for Oceana Family Literacy and wrote two series of mystery books featuring private investigators Thomas Martindale (a former journalism professor at a college resembling Oregon State) and Lorenzo Madrid cracking cases in settings that centered in Western Oregon and – most commonly – the Oregon Coast.

Although he also authored several textbooks, mystery writing was his favorite.

“The coast lends itself to creativity,” he told Erin Dietrich of The News Guard in a 2016 interview. “It’s a good place to set a mystery because you’ve got coves, caves, lighthouses, all kinds of places to put your characters in danger.”

He bought his house in Gleneden Beach in 1997 and settled there with his mother, father and grandmother. After they passed, he lived there alone for the rest of his life, enjoying frequent meals out with friends, writing and marketing his novels and leading workshops

to teach other writers how to successfully self-publish.

Among his survivors are several cousins in Colorado Springs, including Edwin “Eddie” Lawrence, his wife Holly Lawrence, their daughters Arwin and Aria, and Eddie’s brother, Richard “Rick” Lawrence.

When he knew the end was near, Ron wanted nothing more than to spend his final days at home, and his friends and family are grateful for the compassionate care provided by Signature Health Hospice and by Aging Wisely with Heartfelt Hands.

He has been laid to rest next to his parents at Oak Lawn Memorial Park in Corvallis, with De Moss-Durdan Funeral Home handling arrangements.

A memorial celebration will be held on Saturday, May 10, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 2435 NW Oar Place in Lincoln City, OR 97367.

Memorial contributions may be made as gifts in Ron’s name to the Oregon State University Foundation, 4238 SW Research Way, Corvallis OR 97333.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY 10. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PT)

First Congregational Church
2435 NW Oar Place
Lincoln City, OR 97367

Tribute Wall

KN

“ I was so sorry to hear that Mr. Lovell had passed. I only knew him from his detective stories. I contacted him to ask if he could send me the books that were missing from my collection. When the books arrived, he had signed all of them. Again, I am sorry for your loss. Kathy Nitkowski Eugene, Or.

Kathy Nitkowski - April 16, 2025 at 11:14 PM

LK

“ I worked with Ron for nearly 30(!) years and was often delighted to be introduced by him as "my graphic designer." We met at Oregon State when I worked in the Publications Department. He was in charge of communications for the College of Arts and Humanities (or whatever it was called—it's been a long time!). He was wonderful to work with, but there was one stipulation—the dean (his boss) would NEVER allow any color used on a brochure that was even close to green or yellow—the colors of OSU's rival, the University of Oregon. So I took on the job of color watchdog because Ron had red/green color deficiency.

Ron had such a successful background in his pre-academic life and yet he chose to be a nurturing mentor, advocate, and encourager of his students and those he worked with—not to mention what I know now of his work with budding authors and his giving back to the community in so many ways.

We are so lucky for his gifts. As an example, he promoted my work to Delmar Publications (now Cengage) who was the publisher of several of his textbooks so that I was hired to do the design and production of his textbooks and then those of many other authors. What an incredible boost that was to my career and what a testament to his caring advocacy. I am so grateful and indebted to him.

And then came the fun—we had so many laughs and so much fun working together on his mystery series books. I think of him so often and miss his quirky sense of humor and soft voice and laugh.

P.S. Please don't use green or yellow flowers at his memorial. (I can hear him chuckling.)

—Liz Kingslien

Liz Kingslien - April 11, 2025 at 08:57 PM

BG

“ I first met Ron in 1973 when I was a clueless freshman at Oregon State University. I was fortunate enough to have him assigned to me as my academic advisor. So, began a 53-year relationship that transformed from Ron as an academic advisor to Ron as a very dear friend. I will miss him dearly. Among my most cherished memories are the dinners and lunches we shared at a variety of restaurants along the coast. Sometimes I would have my parents in tow, whom Ron got to know quite well, as well as my wife, Melinda. Then, there was Ron's career as a mystery writer. At about the time Ron was promoting book three or four, I published my first book. Somehow, we came up with the great idea of doing a joint book tour in Alaska. We thought that might be appealing because Ron's new book, *Murder Below Zero*, and mine, *The Gentleman from Finland*, both took place in the far north. We also reasoned that Alaska was a great untapped market. We quickly found out there was a reason why not many authors tour in our northern-most state. Needless to say, it was a marketing disaster until we got to Fairbanks. Apparently, a reporter for the Fairbanks newspaper had written positive reviews of both of our books. When we walked into the little store in the middle of snowstorm, we were mobbed. That really made the trip for us, that, and finally seeing a moose, albeit in the parking lot of the Anchorage Central Library. That trip was almost 20 years ago, but I still remember it as if it was yesterday. I especially remember Ron's wry sense of humor as we made our way from sparsely attended book presentations in Anchorage to Fairbanks where we finally hit the jackpot.

- Bob Goldstein

Bob Goldstein - April 06, 2025 at 03:27 PM

LC

“ Ron was a wonderful professor who became a valued advisor, family friend, mentor and beloved “uncle” to us and our children. We loved the Thomas Martindale series and the stories behind it. His memory was impressive, his compassion deep and his laugh infectious. He is loved and missed by many.

Liz Clark - April 03, 2025 at 11:07 AM

EA

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Ed Armstrong - April 02, 2025 at 08:33 PM

JB

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Jim B. - April 02, 2025 at 05:53 PM