

## Paul Peter Mendes '67



Paul Peter Mendes, 75, completed his earthly tour of duty, and passed peacefully August 21<sup>st</sup> of 2019 at his home in The Woodlands, TX. Paul was born in New York City and spent his youth in Highlands, New Jersey. The son of Vincent Joseph Mendes and Kathleen Kavookjian Mendes, he was preceded in death by both his parents, his two younger brothers Haik and Thomas Mendes and is survived by his loving wife of fifty years, Charlotte Knight Mendes; daughter Laura Kathleen Mendes, son Paul Peter Mendes Jr., brother Vincent J. Mendes Jr., two grandchildren and four nieces and nephews.

A childhood on the Shrewsbury River made young Paul an accomplished boater and he and his brothers used their smarts and skill to out maneuver and torment the local marine police. Devising intricate “escape strategies” to jump sandbars or maneuver deftly across underwater anchor cables, it was clear from an early age that he possessed a tactical mind. After graduating high school Paul attended Sam Houston State University where he received his degree in Photoengraving with a minor in Photography, and later completing his master’s degree in public service administration. Paul was a proud member of the ROTC at Sam Houston and accepted his first commission directly out of college spending the next ten years in the U.S. Army 5th Group Special Forces, commonly known as the Green Berets. He served three tours in Vietnam, and was on one of the last choppers out after Saigon fell. Paul volunteered to return to Vietnam with JCRC (Joint Casualty Resolution Center) to recover soldiers missing in action and had a passion for bringing his fellow soldiers’ home.

Once his final tour in Vietnam was complete, Paul continued his career in Military Intelligence and was stationed around the globe rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and serving as Head Quarters Commandant at Fort Lewis until he retired from the military in 1993.

He received many commendations for his military excellence including four Bronze Stars with citations for valor, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, three Overseas Service Medals, four Army Commendation Medals including another citation for valor. Was awarded the Humanitarian Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal twice, Joint Service Commendation Medal, American Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross, Air Assault Badge, Combat Infantry Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, and Sharpshooter qualifications for both pistol and rifle.

He was truly a man in the service of his fellow men and sought an opportunity that allowed him to transition from serving his country to serving his community. He began a second career in City

Management and was most recently at The City of Magnolia, where he served as the beloved (by most) City Administrator running the day to day operations of the city. His staff were his second family and Paul often referred to them lovingly as his "troops."

Paul was a devoted family man, who married the love of his life and was a doting father who was so dependable that his cell phone was nicknamed the "bat phone" because no matter what the time or where he was he always answered it and was there, anywhere you needed him, as quickly as humanly possible. He delighted in spoiling his granddaughters Kaeley and Hannah, and nothing made him smile more than their happiness. A consummate animal lover, there was never a stray that he didn't assist and loved his own pets dearly.

Beyond being a decorated officer, a beloved father, grandfather, and pet whisperer he was also an accomplished scuba diver, pilot, sailor, horseman, marksman, skier, and an impressive raconteur. He could entertain for hours with stories of his life experiences and had such an impressive catalog of adventures that it seemed he never told the same story twice. Paul was a renaissance man in every sense of the word and we had so much left to learn from him. We will miss him terribly and will honor him every day in our memories.

From Community Impact Newspaper

Magnolia City Administrator Paul Mendes died in his sleep and was found in his home Aug. 22, city officials announced Aug. 22 in a statement on the city's Facebook page.

"He was always the first here and the last to go, and he was always thinking of others. Every time we had a council meeting, he would go up to the council members: 'Do you need something to eat; do you need something to drink?' That's just the way his nature was," Council Member Matthew "Doc" Dantzer said.

Mendes had served as city administrator in Magnolia since July 2010 and previously as city manager of Oak Ridge North, for which he was hired in 1993, *Community Impact Newspaper* reported. He also served in the military for 26 years.

"Municipal service was a second career for the retired Lt. Colonel who served in the U.S. Army," city officials said in the statement. "Mr. Mendes was beloved by City Council and city board members, and especially city staff."

In an April 2011 [profile](#), Mendes said the most rewarding aspect of his job was being able to do things that help residents.

"Paul was a manager that his door was always open. He always had a smile, a welcome, a 'come on in,'" Dantzer said. "He was a humble servant leader."

Dantzer said he believes there are too many words to describe Mendes, but "integrity," "work ethic" and "honorable" top the list.

Dantzer said he believes the ongoing construction in the Magnolia Ridge and Mill Creek subdivisions as well as the proposed Audubon Magnolia master-planned community and H-E-B at Spur 149 were largely made possible by Mendes' work within the city.

"He's done so much over the years that most of it's been forgotten. He is such a humble person that he never took credit; he never self-promoted," Dantzer said. "I don't know if those things would have happened without Paul's guidance and leadership."

Sandy Barton, the president of the Greater Magnolia Parkway Chamber of Commerce, spoke of Mendes' character.

"Paul Mendes was a rare human being: kind, thoughtful, intelligent, caring and helpful. He was extraordinarily well-liked and well-respected not only in our community, but throughout the area and beyond," Barton said in a statement. "He was one of those special people who could 'walk the walk and talk the talk.' He knew his business and made a positive impact on the Magnolia community and all the people he worked with. His presence and leadership will be sorely missed."





**If you have further information or would like to share a memory, please send to [shsumsac@gmail.com](mailto:shsumsac@gmail.com)**