



Nolen Edward Renfrow

December 25, 1942 - December 30, 2025

Nolen Edward Renfrow, 83, of Siloam Springs, Arkansas, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on December 30, 2025. Born on December 25, 1942, to Nolen and Juanita (Eddy) Renfrow in Little Rock, Arkansas, he was the oldest of two sons.

Ed was raised in Charleston, Arkansas, where he played basketball and ran track in high school. During his senior year, he won the state championship in the high hurdles with the second-fastest time ever recorded in Arkansas by a high school athlete at that time. He went on to run track at the University of Arkansas. In 1964, he was named by Track and Field News as one of the top 10 collegiate high hurdlers in the United States. He later qualified for the NCAA National Championships, where he finished in seventh place.

Ed married Jane (Reagan) Renfrow on June 14, 1964. His first coaching job was at Woodland Junior High. He then coached at Neosho High School and, in 1971, at the age of 26, he was offered the University of Arkansas head men's track coaching position. He coached the men's team until 1977 and then became the first coach of the University of Arkansas women's track and field program.

Ed earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the University of Arkansas. In 1981, he accepted a position as professor and cross-country coach at John Brown University. He retired from JBU in 2004 and was inducted into the Arkansas Track and Field Hall of Fame in 2005.

As accomplished as he was, Ed would want to be remembered first as a

devoted husband and father who lived quietly and humbly as a follower of Christ. He treasured his years as a coach and professor and cared deeply for his students, many of whom he remained in contact with long after graduation. He was also always willing to lend a helping hand. A man of unwavering integrity, he was deeply involved in his church and community. As a church deacon, he faithfully served those entrusted to his care and served on numerous boards throughout his career, including the Arkansas Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance; Siloam Springs Parks and Recreation; the Manna Center; and Genesis House. At age 40, he earned his pilot's license, reflecting his lifelong love of learning and adventure. An avid lover of nature, he coordinated many hiking and camping trips and enjoyed traveling to numerous countries during summer breaks and throughout retirement.

Ed is survived by his wife of 61 years, Jane; daughters Mindy (Michael) and Lori (Stephen); grandchildren Jordan (Connor), Joshua (Katie), Olivia (Ben), and Ella; and great-grandchildren Alister and Nolan. He is also survived by his brother, Phillip (Nancy); two nephews and one niece; and three great-nephews and four great-nieces. He was preceded in death by his parents, Nolen and Juanita Renfrow.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Covenant Church on Tuesday, January 6, at 10:30 a.m., with Pastor Nate O'Brien officiating. Burial will follow at Oak Hill Cemetery.

In memory of Ed, please consider donating to your favorite charity.

Cemetery Details

Oak Hill Cemetery

2122 W. University St.
Siloam Springs, AR 72761

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN 6. 10:30 AM (CT)

Covenant Church
760 S. Lincoln St.
Siloam Springs, AR 72761

Tribute Wall

AK

“ I ran track with Dr. Renfrow as my coach at JBU. We affectionally called him "Edfrow" We had a lot o fun traveling. I'm not sure we knew exactly what we had at the time.. Thanks for all the memories and we appreciate all the work you put into us. See you soon:)
Mandy Bell Keating

Amanda Keating - March 02 at 06:19 PM

ER

“ He was a great man. He and wife wife “adopted” me as my host parents when I attended JBU.

The first time I flew in a small non-commercial airplane was with him. He took me out to see the Fall colors from the sky.

My deepest condolences to Jane, Mindy, Lori and the rest of his family.

Efrain

Efrain Rovira - January 30 at 08:22 AM

KE

“ Great coach who recruited me to cross country!! What a wonderful memory to have him as our coach!! He was very kind and encouraging!

Kara Hersha Engbrecht - January 05 at 11:21 PM

JD

“ Ed was the nicest kindest man I ever knew

John Deardorff - January 05 at 05:35 PM

JD

“ *It was the nicest, kindest man I ever knew*

John Deardorff - January 05 at 05:34 PM



“ *Heartfelt Sympathies Blue & White Funeral Standing Basket was purchased for the family of Nolen Edward Renfrow.*



January 05 at 03:27 PM

LF

“ *Love your Simmons Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Nolen Edward Renfrow.*

Love your Simmons Family - January 05 at 03:27 PM



“ *Peace, Prayers & Blessings - Blue and White was purchased for the family of Nolen Edward Renfrow.*



January 05 at 09:25 AM

IK

“ Well Edward, sitting here crying eyes out, but as the Bible teaches, we are here for only a season, but what a season it was with 40 years of flying, backpacking, hiking, and of course climbing those beautiful 14ers! Will miss you buddy. Was blessed to be your friend. Will see you on the other side of that tallest mountain.

ike - January 04 at 05:54 PM



“ Dish Garden with Fresh Cut Flowers was purchased for the family of Nolen Edward Renfrow.



January 03 at 05:54 PM



“ Peace, Prayers, & Blessings- Yellow and White was purchased for the family of Nolen Edward Renfrow.



January 01 at 03:18 PM

WB

“ William and Julie Bergen planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Nolen Edward Renfrow.

William and Julie Bergen - January 01 at 03:18 PM

BD

“ Bruce & Ingrid DeYoung purchased the Floor Plant for Sympathy for the family of Nolen Edward Renfrow.



Bruce & Ingrid DeYoung - January 01 at 09:33 AM

CM

“ My deepest condolences to Jane, Mindy, Lori and family. Sending prayers for comfort and strength as this new journey begins.

Cathy Holston McVey.

Cathy Holston McVey - January 01 at 04:28 AM