



## Dr. Neil Ross Gurwitz

February 12, 1929 - September 24, 2021

Dr. Neil R. Gurwitz, born on February 12, 1929, in Laredo, Texas, passed away peacefully at his home on September 24, 2021, at the age of 92. The son of Sam and Anna Gurwitz, Dr. Gurwitz lived the American dream. He was a first-generation American. Neil moved to Bastrop, Texas, when he was in high school. After graduating Valedictorian from Bastrop High School in 1946, he attended Texas A&M University and graduated from Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. Gurwitz was a practicing optometrist in Bastrop for 56 years and was a member of the American and Texas Optometric Associations.

Dr. Gurwitz loved the town his father chose as home and was active in civic, school, and community service all his life. While waiting for a commission as an optometrist in 1950, he enlisted and served in the Army Reserves and continued in the medical section for almost ten years. He served on the Bastrop Library Board for about 12 years, the Bastrop ISD School Board for more than 7 years, and the Bastrop City Council for over 13 years. He was a member of the Bastrop Noon Lions Club and Bastrop Chamber of Commerce for more than 50 years. He was also a Board Member of the Bastrop Economic Development Corporation from its inception, serving for more than 20 years. Neil was a longtime member of the Texas Jewish Historical Society and Congregation Beth Israel in Austin, Texas.

Neil was honored as Bastrop Citizen of the Year in 2000 and in 2014 received a Lifetime Achievement recognition by the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce. The Bastrop High School Alumni Association recognized Neil as an Outstanding Bastrop High School Graduate. He was also honored by the Masonic Lodge in 1997 with its Community Builder Award.

Neil Gurwitz was an optometrist loved by all, an avid historian, genealogist, photographer, and a technology enthusiast. Neil loved Bastrop and started a website over twenty years ago devoted to the Bastrop community. He was one of the Texas A&M Aggies' biggest fans, attending almost every Aggie/UT football game for over 50 years. He was a perfect role model, and never will there be such a kind, funny, caring, helpful, honest, and knowledgeable person.

Neil was preceded in death by his parents Anna and Sam Gurwitz, sisters Nell Rose Gurwitz and Pauline Gurwitz Kress, and brother Arthur Gurwitz. Neil is survived by his wife of 65 years, Betty, and three children: Anita Feigenbaum and spouse Leslie of College Station, Karen Kahan and spouse David of Bastrop, and Elliott Gurwitz and spouse Emily of San Antonio, and his pride and delight, Sarah and Ryan Feigenbaum, Philip and Steven Kahan, and Ethan and Zoe Gurwitz. Neil is also survived by many loved nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family, and dear friends.

Many thanks to the devoted caregivers, Dr. Steven Booton and staff, Texas Home Health, and other medical staff who assisted him. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Bastrop County Historical Society, Relay for Life of Southern Bastrop County, CBI-Technology Fund or a charity of your choice.

Due to Covid concerns, there will be a small private family burial on September 27, 2021. The family encourages the community to attend via live

stream using the following link-<https://www.facebook.com/AustinNaturalFunerals/>. A Facebook account is not required. A live stream of the funeral service will appear on the Austin Natural Funerals Facebook page shortly before 11 am on Monday, September 27th. If a pop-up window appears asking you to log in click "not now" and the live stream will be available for you to watch. If the "not now" button does not appear, scroll down on the page and it will come up for you to select.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. Neil Ross Gurwitz*

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October 14, 2022 at 12:02 PM



“ *September 2021*

*The Honorable Neil Gurwitz was the epitome of a servant, not only to his family, but also to the citizens of Bastrop.*

*We know that Betty and his children miss him, but should take some comfort in the knowledge that his life epitomizes the old saw - Job Well done!*

*He served the community of Bastrop in a variety of capacities. As a city council member, his measured demeanor made for a much better consideration of whatever issue was being considered. He also served on the Bastrop ISD Board of Trustees, on the Board of the Bastrop County Historical Society, and in leadership capacities in other local organizations, as well.*

*His contribution to the welfare of the people of Bastrop will yield dividends for some time to come.*

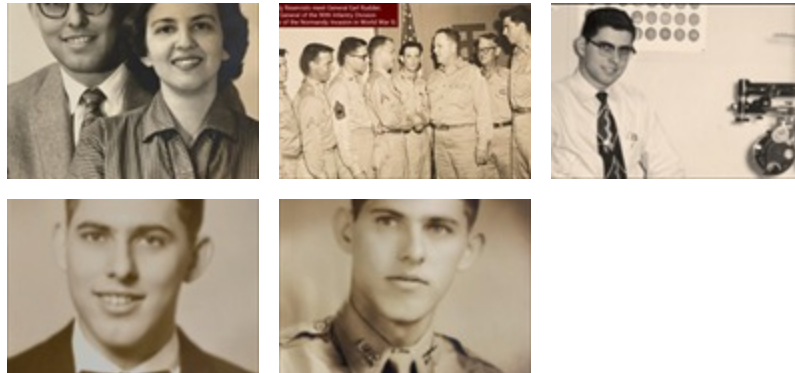
*Neil Gurwitz earned his rest!*

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**Tom Scott** - September 29, 2021 at 10:24 AM

KG

“ 9 files added to the album *Early Photos*



kgkahan - September 29, 2021 at 01:21 AM

AP

“ Arleen A Peters lit a candle in memory of Dr. Neil Ross Gurwitz



Arleen A Peters - September 28, 2021 at 11:32 AM

AP

*Elliott, my deepest sympathies to you and your family.*

Arleen A Peters - September 28, 2021 at 11:33 AM



*I met Neil when he attended the Bastrop County Genealogical Society meetings. He was a wealth of knowledge about our community, but more than that he was such a nice gentleman. He left a legacy for his family and friends. My sincere condolences to his family. He will be missed by all of us!*

Toni McCullough Dunne - September 29, 2021 at 09:36 AM

BS

“ *My family moved to Bastrop from rural Massachusetts in December 1955, and the following summer, we bought our house on Cedar Street from the Gurwitz family. My sister and I grew up there, and my mom lived there until she entered assisted living. I still own that house. My condolences to the family of this fine man. I haven't had as thorough an eye exam as he performed since I moved to Austin in the late sixties. May you all find comfort in your memories.*

*Barbara Cederholm Stooksberry*

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**Barbara C Stooksberry** - September 27, 2021 at 06:33 PM

SM

*I went to Dr. Gurwitz for all my younger years and my sister worked for him when she was in high school. A wonderful and kind man.*

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**Sue Campbell Moerck** - September 30, 2021 at 07:34 PM

MM

“ *The Gurwitz family encompasses history over a vast time era and geographic area. I hope it will be preserved for all. Neil kept my Dad alive to me by always mentioning vignettes of Dad's interaction with Mr. and Mrs. Gurwitz. I will miss Neil. Betty, you and I have walked many hills and valleys together: our children and our losses, weddings and bar mitzvahs. You have such a steep hill to walk now, but you and Neil have raised Anita, Karen and Elliot to be the finest of children and they will be beside you. God bless you and bring you Peace.*

*Mary*

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**Mary Maynard McMurrey** - September 27, 2021 at 05:53 PM

BS

“ Working on Alexander Gurwitz's memoir was one of the great honors of my life, and Neil was my guide, problem-solver, and constant moral support. I would not have been able to complete the book -- nor would I have even begun it -- without him. He was always a pleasure to visit with and to talk to, and I'll miss him greatly. All my my thoughts and best wishes to the family.

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**Bryan E. Stone** - September 27, 2021 at 03:38 PM

SL

“ Our hearts were saddened to hear of the passing of Dr. Gurwitz. He was a valued member of the Texas Jewish Historical Society and has been missed the last few years. All who knew him enjoyed his company. We remember him fondly. May his memory become a blessing for his family.  
Susan & Bob Lewis

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**Susan & Bob Lewis** - September 27, 2021 at 03:24 PM

SL

“ Sending heartfelt sympathy from the Texas Jewish Historical Society whose many members remember Neil's many years in the Society with great fondness and admiration. On behalf of TJHS, I add my condolences, Sheldon Lippman, TJHS President.

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**Sheldon Lippman** - September 27, 2021 at 01:21 PM

EH

“ Denise and I extend our deepest sympathies to Betty and the family.

*Neil was a remarkable man whom I will remember fondly and I cannot think of him without a smile crossing my face! I met Neil 40+ years ago as the soon-to-be father-in-law of my best friend, David Kahan. When we moved to Bastrop in 1999, Dr. Gurwitz became our eye doctor and I was always struck by his thorough and compassionate bedside manner. His passions for Aggie football, photography, and his family were common threads that we spoke about. Neil impacted so many lives in a positive way! His was a life well lived and we are all better for knowing him!*

*Ed & Denise Hodnett, Somerville TX*

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**Ed Hodnett** - September 27, 2021 at 01:05 PM

JM

“ I am sorry for your loss he was a very kind and wise man. It was always a pleasure during our annual visit.

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**James Medack** - September 27, 2021 at 12:26 PM

VV

“ Neil was such a nice man, and I was always happy to see him and Betty. He will be missed by so many.

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**Vickie Vogel** - September 27, 2021 at 11:44 AM

 Sheila  
Lieto  
Keith

“ Mother and I are so sorry for your loss. We are lifting up you and your family in prayer for comfort and peace.  
*Lollie and Sheila Lieto*

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**Sheila Lieto Keith** - September 27, 2021 at 08:28 AM

SJ

“ Neil was such a wonderful human being, active in the community, caring as a doctor, kind as a neighbor. May God grant Betty and family peace.

Stephanie Jenkins - September 27, 2021 at 08:07 AM

GF

“ Rest in Peace. Today and always may fond memories bring the Gurwitz family peace, support, and strength. Our love and deepest sympathy, Tim and Gayle Foster

Gayle and Tim Foster - September 26, 2021 at 11:45 PM

PF

“ Dr. Gurwitz was a kind and gentle man and will be greatly missed. I send much love and sympathy to all his family.

Polly Frushay - September 26, 2021 at 09:21 PM

FH

“ Neil stands as an icon of community involvement and kindness in our eyes. We always looked forward to seeing Neil and Betty at events that centered on the good of Bastrop. Neil was central contributor to the Historical Society during years of great change and growth. Frank Huffman and Lucy Todd.

Frank Huffman - September 26, 2021 at 06:07 PM

SD

*Neil was such a nice man. The first time we met he told me he grew up in Laredo and knew my late mother and my grandparents. Whenever he came to a Texas Jewish Historical Society meeting we would always chat. I had asked him to be part of a panel discussion for our meeting in Laredo, January 2020, because of health reasons he couldn't attend. But he put together a wonderful binder with stories and pictures of his life when his family still lived in Laredo.  
He will be missed...may his memory be for a blessing.*

*Sally Sheiness Drayer*

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**Sally Drayer** - September 27, 2021 at 11:53 AM

CR

*I knew Dr. Gurwitz most of my life and he was my optometrist my whole life until I moved to GA a few years ago. Always got a thorough eye exam. We bought the house his parents sold when they moved away from Bastrop in 1956. Neil and Betty stayed. Neil was very involved in the community helping with the photographs and history of Bastrop. He was a valuable asset. Love the whole family. My condolences to all. And Sally Sheiness was my suite mate in the dorm during my first year at U of H.  
Carol Cederholm Reidy*

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**Carol Reidy** - September 28, 2021 at 08:45 PM

JH

*“ I only knew Dr. Gurwitz from him taking care of my eye exams from 2000 until he retired, but I always looked forward to seeing him because of his calm and comforting personality. I have come to know his lovely wife, Betty, and Karen and David Kahan over the past few years. I can only imagine that Karen gets her sweet caring demeanor from her parents. I regret I did not know Dr. Gurwitz better especially when I found out he only lived a block from where I live. Many prayers and blessings for the Gurwitz family.*

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**Jana Hellbusch** - September 26, 2021 at 05:23 PM

DB

“ So sorry to hear this. Dr. Gurwitz was a wonderful man who will be greatly missed. Our deepest condolences to Betty, Karen, David, and all the family. Cherish the memories!  
*The families of Dinah, Chuck, JW, and Valerie Breeden*

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**dinah breeden** - September 26, 2021 at 01:33 PM

LA

“ My heart is with you. Neil Gurwitz was a most amazing man and I feel so lucky to have known him. Sending love. Laurie Jalenak and John Williamson

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**Laurie** - September 26, 2021 at 10:23 AM

TJ

“ We are so sorry to hear this. He was such a kind, generous, and giving man. 42 years ago he took a chance hiring me right out of school, with no experience at all. He patiently taught me, and now, thanks to him, I have a career that I love. Our love and prayers to you all.

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**tracy johnston** - September 26, 2021 at 09:31 AM

JN

“ Words cannot express how deeply saddened to hear of his passing. Our hearts and thoughts go out to his family during this difficult time. He was a wonderful neighbor and friend as well as the entire family. A man of honesty and integrity. He will be missed greatly. Please know that the entire Namken family sends our most heartfelt condolences. Mildred, Wally, Janet, Jarrett and Jake Namken Patsy and Rhett Trigg

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**Janet Namken** - September 26, 2021 at 02:25 AM

DB

“ My thoughts and prayers to Betty, Anita, Karen, Elliot and extended family at this time. Dr. Gurwitz was such a kind and funny man. He sure was an Aggie fan. A #1 fan indeed. He loved going to the football games. He was a dear friend to my Dad, Ramon Burstyn. Those two could talk for hours about football, eyes and family. I was blessed to know him. RIP Dr. Gurwitz. ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️👍 Gig em❤️❤️

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**Dawn Burstyn-Meyers** - September 25, 2021 at 11:05 PM