



Ronald Hodges

January 14, 1938 - September 25, 2025

1938 - 2025

The previously indomitable Ronald R. Hodges passed away in his Los Lunas home on Sept. 25, 2025. Born in 1938, he was raised in Belen, NM, by his parents, Benny Lee and Mary Ellen Hodges, and his grandparents, Frank and Pearl Trainer. After being “encouraged” to end his studies at Belen High School early, Ron became a medic for the U.S. Marine Corps at 17. He later earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees and became the principal of that same school, holding a soft spot for misunderstood troublemakers like himself. For this work, he was recognized as Administrator of the Year for the state of New Mexico.

Ron also served at Belen High as a teacher and wrestling coach and as the superintendent for Belen Public Schools; he later led both Menaul School and Ruidoso High School as principal. His passion for education was developed in part by his many months spent in the VA hospital at age 23, where he almost died of tuberculosis. He spent that time reading, feeding the curiosity that used to get him in trouble, and decided to dedicate his life to working with young people to provide those same opportunities, but without the contagious disease part.

Ron Hodges was a tough man, flawed and human, and generations of Belen residents have stories about both his benevolence and misdeeds. You are encouraged to share all of those stories. As an older man, he learned to laugh

at himself, loving more and fighting less. Everyone should be lucky to live so long.

Ron was preceded in death by his best friend and wife, Paula Kay (Garrett) Hodges, whom he met in the first grade; she passed 42 days before him.

Surviving him to tell the tales are many he loved, and this list is incomplete: daughter Erin and husband Sean; son Joshua and wife Melissa; daughter Kourtney and husband Brawnson; son Sean, wife Micki and family. Adored grandchildren Madison and his other best friend, Theo. Ex-wife-turned-ride-or-die, Robin. Baby sis Sue Ellen and her husband Everett; kid brother Benny and his wife Mary Ellen; their children, and their children's children.

Per his wishes, Ron will be interred at the Santa Fe National Cemetery along with his wife, Paula. A party in his honor will be held on Saturday, Oct. 11, in Belen. Contact your local Hodges for details and get those stories ready.

Tribute Wall

JC

“ I am just now learning of Mr. Hodges passing. Coach Hodges was my teacher and my wrestling coach. He was an incredible coach and a great mentor to many of his students and athletes. He always went out of his way to learn of any difficulties we were going through, and to talk us through them. I had hoped to see him on my trip back to Belen during the Class of 1976 reunion.

Joseph L Castillo - November 28, 2025 at 05:58 PM

DG

“ My condolences to Ron’s family. Ron was my principal, sociology teacher and wrestling coach. He taught me a lot and I am proud to say I am grateful for all he done for me and my class of “1977”. He will be missed by so many. 🙏



David Garcia - November 07, 2025 at 03:23 AM

GB

“ I’m so sorry to hear that Ronny and Paula have passed. I knew both as older classmates at BHS.

Gloria Boliver - October 19, 2025 at 07:53 PM

EW

“ Tom and I were so sorry for your loss. We send our condolences.



Edwina Weathersby - October 08, 2025 at 07:39 PM

AB

“ We are sorry to hear of Ron's passing. We are thinking of, and will be praying for all the Hodges family.
Milton & Annabelle Barela



Annabelle Barela - October 08, 2025 at 07:04 PM

PD

“ Fortunately I only knew him by passing him in the halls, I doubt he even knew my name. For that, I am grateful. Prayers and condolences to those who mourn his passing. BHS 83

Patrica Davis - October 07, 2025 at 06:11 PM

ME

“ Condolences to all who knew and loved Mr. Hodges. He was my history teacher in high school and there was never a dull moment in his classroom.

Michelle Ethridge - October 07, 2025 at 01:23 PM

S.

“ Mr. Hodges was impactful in my life. I have nothing but fond memories of him, especially the time he showed me grace when I appealed a decision of a disciplinary action that allowed me to continue to participate in sports. Showed me how fair he can be, and to me, was a light in this world. May he rest in peace and his family heal.

S.G. - October 07, 2025 at 12:06 AM

JD

*Mr. Hodges was my principal at BHS. I have many good memories of him. I even got to meet the end of his shop made paddle. I decided that walking a girl to class and being tardy was more important. Well on the 6th one I got to go see him in his office. Well, I definitely was smiling and happy when I left and was never tardy again. I will never forget him.
Semper Fi Marine....
R.I.P Mr. Hodges.
My condolences to the family.
Sincerely,
John Day. BHS 1983*

John Day - December 08, 2025 at 04:11 PM

GC

“ Our deepest condolences to the family 🙏
Ron Hodges was my Wrestling Coach and mentor. I have some good memories of those times. RIP Coach



Gerald A Cordova - October 06, 2025 at 07:01 PM

AS

“ Mr. Hodges was my principal from 1981-1983. We need more Mr. Hodges in the "new and improved" school system. Back then we respected our principal and teachers. No cursing to them or around them and that's because we knew if we dared we'd be going to go see Mr. Hodges and his paddle! May God bless his family.

Annette Saiz - October 05, 2025 at 09:30 AM

AR

“ Mr. Hodges was my teacher and mentor. He really loved his student's. I learned a lot from him. GOD bless you Mr. Hodges. Keep teaching in Heaven. Annette Romero

Annette Romero - October 04, 2025 at 07:31 PM

JC

“ *Condolences to the Family. I graduated from Belen HS and served with Ron as a Corpsman in the Marines. Bless you Brother. Rest in Pease 🙏*

Jaime Chacón - October 04, 2025 at 01:41 PM

RO

“ *Ron&Debbie Ortega lit a candle in memory of Ronald Hodges*



Ron&Debbie Ortega - October 04, 2025 at 12:45 AM

MG

“ *Margaret Garcia lit a candle in memory of Ronald Hodges*



Margaret Garcia - October 04, 2025 at 12:41 AM

BR

“ *God bless you and your family Coach! Barbara Rodriguez*



Barbara Rodriguez - October 03, 2025 at 03:53 PM

RM

“ Renee M. Martinez



Renee M. Martinez - October 03, 2025 at 04:50 AM

MT

“ Mr. Hodges was my Sociology teacher in high school, Class of 76, & I'll always remember the field trip he took us on to the State Penitentiary. One of my favorite classes & teachers. Prayers & condolences to his family.

MaryAnn Thompson - October 03, 2025 at 01:05 AM

MB

“ I have always known Ron as Coach Hodges. He helped me win a state championship in wrestling and I learned a lot from him that I have used in my life and business. My prayers go out to his family.

Max Bustamante - October 02, 2025 at 07:54 PM

MC

“ Ron was my JV football coach and wrestling coach and I also had him for sociology. Had the privilege of seeing him at our 50th class reunion 12 days before his passing. My prayers are with him and his family.

Mark Cornelius - October 02, 2025 at 07:04 PM

JE

“ *Mr. Hodges was my principal. I never had any issues with being in his office, and he was super nice. Praying for his family. May his memory be eternal.* ”



Janie Kennedy Evans - October 02, 2025 at 05:52 PM

LM

“ *Lorraine Marquez lit a candle in memory of Ronald Hodges* ”



Lorraine Marquez - October 02, 2025 at 04:32 PM

AR

“ *My high school principal. Also tutored my sister after a bad car accident. Came to the house. God Bless him and may he R.I.P. (P.S. he paddled hard! LOL)* ”



Anne Wagenblast Rivera - October 02, 2025 at 01:52 PM

TC

“ *Toby Castillo lit a candle in memory of Ronald Hodges* ”



Toby Castillo - October 02, 2025 at 11:56 AM

TC

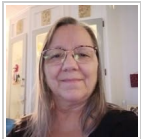
I remember him in High School. I had him in my Freshman Sociology class at the Valencia campus at the mall. He made Sociology very interesting.

Toby Castillo - October 02, 2025 at 11:57 AM

PH

Ron Hodges was my teacher in high school who impacted my life. He is the reason I became a teacher. Being his student and then working for him was a gift. He believed in me and assigned his son Sean to me as a student teacher. God Bless his family and may he rest in God's peace. —Phyllis Hayes

PH - October 07, 2025 at 11:24 PM



“ *Mariclare Wagenblast Halladay, class of '78. Had Mr Hodges for Sociology. He came to my house for tutoring after a bad car accident. May he Rest in peace.*



Mariclare Halladay - October 02, 2025 at 11:54 AM

AR

I remember that.

Anne Wagenblast Rivera - October 02, 2025 at 01:48 PM

TM

“ *1973.. First period Sociology class at Belen High School.... Mr. Hodges was one of those teachers you never forget.*



Theresa Montoya Marshall - October 02, 2025 at 10:40 AM

WC

He was a great wrestling coach as well.

Wil Chavez - May 21 at 11:36 AM

CE

“ *Charles Eaton lit a candle in memory of Ronald Hodges*



Charles Eaton - October 01, 2025 at 10:51 PM

RT

“ *I loved his sociology course he taught at Belen H.S. May he rest in peace along with his wife.*



Renee Tabet - October 01, 2025 at 07:09 PM

BK

“ *Good teacher, great coach and complicated human being, my condolences to the Hodges family.*

Bob King - October 01, 2025 at 07:04 PM

DU

“ *Diana Phillips Ulibarri lit a candle in memory of Ronald Hodges*



Diana Phillips Ulibarri - October 01, 2025 at 06:00 PM



“ *Our deepest condolences to the family,
Steve and Klaudia Sanchez*



Klaudia Sanchez - October 01, 2025 at 02:47 PM



“ *Glen & Mary Gabaldon lit a candle in memory
of Ronald Hodges*



Glen & Mary Gabaldon - October 01, 2025 at 11:53 AM



“ *Tony F Padilla & Family lit a candle in
memory of Ronald Hodges*



Tony F Padilla & Family - October 01, 2025 at 11:53 AM