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#### PAGE 2

## THE FAMOUS RESIDENT OF CROSS PLAINS



#### **Tumbleweed Smith**

Hardly anybody in Cross Plains knew the city once had a famous writer who grew up there until a reporter from Houston came to town inquiring about Robert E. Howard. "He's the creator of the sword and sorcery genre," says Arlene Stephenson, curator of the Robert E. Howard Museum in Cross Plains. He wrote a lot of fantasy."

**Tumbleweed Smith** 

Chances are there never would have been a Harry Potter series or a Dungeons and Dragons board game without Robert E. Howard. He became a literary giant in the late 1920s and early 30s. He is best known perhaps for creating Conan the Barbarian, the last character he created. Experts consider it one of his lesser works.

Arlene says he loved to visit Enchanted Rock near Fredericksburg. He said one day Conan just appeared to him. "He had a look, a physical being, a voice, how he moved and he worked day and night hammering out Conan stories." Two movies have been made about Conan. A movie titled THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD was made about Robert E. Howard. Renee Zellweger had the starring female lead.

In mid June every year the city has its Robert E. Howard celebration. "This is a worldwide event," says Arlene. "These folks come from literally across the globe and all over the US to attend this two-day event. There's a lot of panel discussions with featured guests like the guy that started the Conan Comic books produced by Marvel Comics. That's the caliber of speakers we have for this event. It's quite a big deal for a little town like this."

She savs Robert E. Howard wrote in several genre: boxing stories, comic westerns, true western detective, adventure, "He didn't write books. He wrote short stories. There is evidence he wrote more than 800 poems. Boxes of his writings have been passed down from generation to generation, through countless moves. Luckily, the people in charge of them never destroyed any of his works."

Howard lived in Cross Plains all his life except for a couple of years in Brownwood where he finished his senior year in high school (Cross Plains only went to the 10th grade then) and taking business courses at Howard Payne University. Sometimes people in Cross Plains would see him walking down the street shadow boxing. "People in town thought he was crazy," says Arlene.

Robert typed his stories in his tiny bedroom and sometime he would act out some of his writing aloud in the middle of the night. "Of course, there was no air conditioning and the windows were open and neighbors would yell out 'be quiet I'm trying to sleep.' His mother came to his rescue and told neighbors to keep quiet, that her son was working."

After that reporter came to town and made Robert E Howard a topic of conversation, some prominent citizens bought the house where he lived. Howard died of suicide in 1936 at the age of 30.

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**Answers On Page 3** 

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#### THE MILLENNIUM SHOPPER May 7, 2025









## James Wayne Ponder

James Wayne Ponder, age 80, passed from this life on Sunday, May 4, 2025. He was born on March 18, 1945, in Sulphur Springs, Texas, to Edgar Ponder and Agnes Wright Ponder. James earned a bachelor's degree from UTA and went on to build a successful career in accounting, eventually retiring from Anteco. In 1970, James met the love of his life, Cynthia J. Ponder. They were married on December 18 of that year and shared over 50 wonderful years together, building a life filled with love, laughter, and treasured memories. James will be remembered as a joyful soul who brought happiness to those around him.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his beloved wife, Cindy.

Left to cherish his memory are his children and their spouses, Keith and Sherry Clark, Kevin and Marina Clark, and Christi Ponder and Angela Marsh; five grandchildren, Tristen Clark, Tiffany Clark, Hunter Clark,

Dakota Clark, and Amanda Wehunt; and his sister, Judy Roberts.

No formal services are planned at this time.



## *Randy Cooper* February 3, 1962 – May 4, 2025.

A funeral service for Randy Cooper, age 63 of Quinlan, Texas will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 10, 2025 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Interment will follow at Mel Haven Cemetery. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service from 2:00-3:00 p.m. at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Mr. Cooper passed away at UT Southwestern Hospital in Dallas on Sunday, May 4, 2025 after a long battle with cancer.

Randy Cooper was born February 3, 1962 in Sulphur Springs, Texas to Arthur James "A J" and Arther Lean Cooper. Randy attended Sulphur Springs schools, where he was involved in sports.

Randy is survived by his wife Jeanna, married 41 years on December 22, 1983; daughters, Crystal Cooper and Cheyenne Cooper (boyfriend, Andrew Vanegas) of Nacogdoches; granddaughter, Mirhanda Cooper of Quinlan; sister, Diann Margadonna of Sulphur Springs; and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Brenda Lou Harper; and brothers, David "Chopper" Cooper, Tony Cooper, and Robert Clay Cooper.



## **Billy James Turner**

Graveside Services for Billy James Turner, age 71 of Pickton, Texas were held at 11:30 a.m. on Monday, May 5, 2025, with Bro. Derrick Dillion officiating. J.T. Davis, Jacob Hurley, Kaleb Turner, Maverick Jones, Jamie Williams, Mikey Williams, and Rowdy Davis served as pallbearers. His great-grandchildren will be serving as honorary pallbearers. Visitation was from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Monday, May 5, 2025, at West Oaks Funeral Home and burial to follow at Como Cemetery. Billy passed away on April 28, 2025, in Mt Pleasant, Texas.

Billy was born on December 9, 1953, to James and Iva Stroman Turner in Dallas, Texas. He married Rose Mary Rothrock on May 14, 1999, in Como, Texas. Billy enjoyed selling fruit and worked for many years at

Kellers Creamery. He was an avid fisherman, enjoyed playing paintball and adored spending time with his family. He is survived by his children, Billy Turner and his wife, Karla, Joseph Davis and his wife, Sarah, Jason Davis and his wife, Jennifer, Kenny Turner and his wife, Bethanie, and Janet Alkire and her husband, Jeremy. Grandchildren, Megan Jones and her husband, Maverick, Jacob Hurley, Savannah Thrash, Mallory Davis, J.T. Davis and his wife, Sammie, Matthew Davis and his wife, Sarah, Kevin Davis and his wife, Emily,Tyler Judy and his wife, Sarah, Kaela Davis, David Turner and his wife, Kaylynn, Billy Turner Jr., Lauren Stacy and her husband, Aaron, Rowdy Davis, Gillian Setzer and her husband, Zachary, Kendal Taylor and her husband, Chase, Kaleb Turner, Addison Turner, Cambreigh Turner and Aubrey Turner; sisters, Linda Propes and her husband, Rague and Pat McCoy and her husband, David, numerous great-grandchildren as well as nieces and nephews. Billy was preceded in death by his, loving wife, Rose Turner and his parents, James, and Iva Turner. Arrangements were under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home. www.westoaksfuneralhome.com

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The version of Mother's Day celebrated today is more directly rooted in the work of Ann Jarvis and her daughter, Anna Jarvis, who established the holiday to honor her mother. Frustratingly for the younger Jarvis, most people don't celebrate it today the way she intended.

Ann Maria Reeves Jarvis (1832 -1905) bore more than a dozen children. Most of the children died from diseases such as diphtheria or measles, which were common during her day in the Appalachian area of Virginia (later West Virginia) where she lived. Jarvis worked hard in her community to try to help other mothers and families avoid the tragedies she had suffered. Part of a national public health movement populated in large part by women reformers, Jarvis organized Mother's Work Clubs and promoted special Mother's Work Days, when women would collaboratively collect trash and undertake other projects to improve local environmental conditions and their neighbors understanding of hygiene.

The focus of Jarvis work changed when war struck. Her region was deeply divided by the Civil War. Local soldiers fought on both sides of the conflict, and guerilla warfare was rampant. Jarvis insisted that the women's groups she organized help both Confederate and Union troops who were sick or wounded, and she worked to promote peace and unity following the war. In 1868, despite threats of violence, she organized a Mother's Friendship Day to bring families from both sides of the war together to try to restore a sense of community. It's possible that Howe's proclamation two years later was inspired by Jarvis; the two knew each other. At the very least, Jarvis and Howe shared the belief that women and especially mothers were best suited to bring people together with a goal of peace.

After Ann Jarvis death, her daughter, Anna Jarvis (1864 -1948), set out to honor her mother's legacy by establishing a national Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May, the day her mother had died. Anna, who never married or had children of her own, did not focus the holiday on peace activism but on the idea of honoring one's own mother. She chose white carnations as an emblem and urged people to write heartfelt letters of gratitude to their mothers (in Anna Jarvis eyes, sending a pre-printed card didn't count). Anna succeeded in her quest for official recognition, and President Wilson issued a proclamation of the first national Mother's Day just before the start of World War I in 1914.



THE MILLENNIUM SHOPPER May 7, 2025



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