



Alec D. Ritzell

November 3, 1994 - March 9, 2020

Alec D. Ritzell's fascination with the natural world began when he was a toddler gleefully watching the moon. As he grew, his loves expanded to elephants, mammoths and mastodons—he could explain the difference by age 4—deer, fish, and birds. His life ended while he was a graduate student studying bobwhite quail. He was 25.

Born in Denver in 1994, Alec grew up in Colorado and Texas with his beloved brother Nicolas, mother Jackie, and father Andrew Ritzell. Andrew predeceased him, as did his grandparents William Ritzell, of Hemphill, TX, and Ruth and Murray Monse, of Houston, TX.

Alec had a history of beating long odds. At birth, he was a 4-lb. preemie who fit in the palm of his father's hand. At age 24, he was a 210-lb. weightlifter. He started community college with developmental math classes. He graduated in 2017 with a 4.0 and a B. S. from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, before pursuing a master's degree at Texas A&M – Kingsville.

Alec was a superb student and dedicated worker, endearing himself to his professors and other students (except, perhaps, those peers who were angry that he'd blown the curve). His academic achievements enabled him to attain research assistantships and internships at the Borderlands Research Institute, the Noble Foundation, Rolling Plains Quail Research Foundation, and Caesar

W. Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute. He also garnered many scholarships. Due to the generosity of these organizations and donors, Alec would have graduated with a minimal amount of student loans, an accomplishment that gave him great satisfaction.

Alec had a beautiful singing voice, and was the King of Karaoke, especially when singing Johnny Cash tunes at the Railroad Blues bar in Alpine. And he loved to talk, usually on long telephone calls with family and friends. He had endless topics to discuss and fended off any attempt to end a call with the plea, “Just one more thing....”

He loved the outdoors, whether walking alone in the hills behind his dorm at Sul Ross, hiking with “The Crew” in Big Bend National Park, hunting with his brother across Texas, or fishing at the Post in Marathon. Alec’s last fishing trip, in early June 2019, was with his brother Nic at Baffin Bay in South Texas, using the Kistler fishing rods his Grandpa Bill had given him.

When Alec was diagnosed with glioblastoma a few weeks later, Alec’s family and friends were hopeful he would beat the odds once again. He fought with everything he had. He spent a month in neuro ICU, largely paralyzed, undergoing radiation and chemotherapy. By mid-September, he regained his ability to speak—and most importantly to Alec—eat. And eat he did, usually starting his day with salmon, cream cheese, caviar, and capers. Spurred by fond memories and too many hours watching the Food Network, his food “wish list” grew to many pages, leading his family to call him the “Man of Flavor.”

The nickname “Master of Flirting” would have fit, too. On Alec’s first visit to Alpine in 2014, his Aunt Michelle had to bribe him to ask a young lady to dance. After that, he never looked back. Through multiple rounds of radiation, chemotherapy, and hospitalization, Alec flirted with his nurses, telling one

“That mask can’t disguise how pretty you are.” Not that Alec was a player—far from it. He was genuinely guileless and utterly sincere.

During Alec’s cancer treatment, Alec and Jackie lived with Uncle Clint and Aunt Lisa Harman in Houston. Jackie and Lisa were his constant caregivers for the next eight months. Despite his gains in fall 2019, Alec began struggling after Christmas, and was hospitalized repeatedly. An MRI in late February 2020 showed the spread of Alec’s cancer to his neck and spine. No further treatment being possible, his family moved him to Houston Hospice on March 5, where he died four days later, surrounded by family and friends.

In addition to his mother Jackie (Austin, TX) and brother Nic (Dallas, TX), Alec’s survivors include his Uncle Mark Monse (Powderly, TX); Aunt Lisa Monse Harman and Uncle Clint Harman (Houston, TX); Aunt Michelle Monse (Dallas, TX); Uncle Eric Monse and Aunt Lisa Jo Monse (Rosharon, TX); and cousins David Monse, Caitlyn Mangun (and husband Bryce) (Dallas area), Kacey Hahn (and husband Josh), and Paul Harman (Houston area). The family is grateful that Jackie’s boyfriend Kevin Ham drove from Austin to Houston weekly throughout this ordeal to support Jackie, helping her shoulder this overwhelming burden. The family also wants to thank Nic’s girlfriend, Breanne Kurtz, for her steady and loving support.

A few days before Alec’s death, the family pastor reminded Alec and the family that Christians do not say goodbye. We look forward to the day we will see him again.

The family is grateful for the dedicated care that Alec received from so many, including his oncology team, the ambulance drivers who took him to treatment, his speech and physical therapists, and the compassionate nurses at Houston Hospice.

Alec's family will inter him privately in Houston in March and hold a celebration of his life in Alpine later this spring. (Date to be announced.) In lieu of flowers, anyone wishing to honor Alec may contribute to the Alec D. Ritzell Endowed Scholarship Fund at Sul Ross State University, the Caesar W. Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, or a charity of your choice. Or just take a walk, listen to the birds, and praise God for Alec's life and the natural world he loved.

Alec D. Ritzell Endowed Scholarship Fund

Attn: Kara O'Shaughnessy

Sul Ross State University

Office of Development & Alumni Relations

SRSU Box C-114

Alpine, TX 79832

(Details of the scholarship are being finalized. Please contact Michelle Monse (mdmonse@yahoo.com) before contributing to check on its status.)

Caesar W. Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute

Attn: Dr. Fidel Hernandez

Texas A&M University – Kingsville

700 University Blvd., MSC 218

Kingsville, TX 78363

Cemetery Details

Glenwood Cemetery

2525 Washington Avenue
Houston, TX 77007

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 29. 1:00 PM (CT)

Dettling Funeral Home
14094 Memorial Drive
Houston, TX 77079
(281) 497-2121
david@dettlingfuneral.com

Tribute Wall



“ Alec D. Ritzell

October 08, 2023 at 10:52 AM



“ Alec D. Ritzell

October 06, 2023 at 01:12 AM



“ Alec D. Ritzell

October 05, 2023 at 09:45 AM



“ Alec D. Ritzell

October 05, 2023 at 01:54 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *LifeTributes*



Detting Funeral Home - January 28, 2022 at 10:07 AM



“ 6 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Detting Funeral Home - January 26, 2022 at 05:56 PM



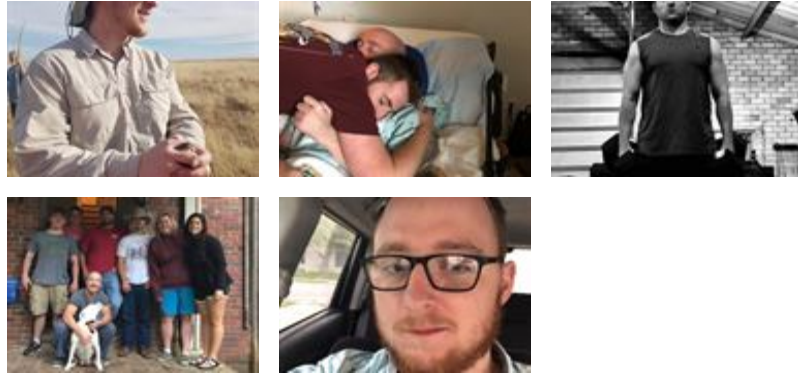
“ 12 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Detting Funeral Home - January 25, 2022 at 05:51 PM



“ 228 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



Detting Funeral Home - January 21, 2022 at 10:58 AM



“ *As the days and weeks pass may you continue to feel comforted by the love and support of family and friends. Proverbs 17:17 says, "A true friend shows love at all times. And is a brother who is born for times of distress" Grief can be so hard, but our special memories help us cope. Remembering and cherishing a life well loved and lived.*

Angela - March 29, 2020 at 10:43 PM



“ *Liz lit a candle in memory of Alec D. Ritzell*



Liz - March 27, 2020 at 02:43 PM

MP

“ Margaret & Peter lit a candle in memory of Alec D. Ritzell



Margaret & Peter - March 21, 2020 at 11:49 PM

Laurie Ann

“ Laurie Ann lit a candle in memory of Alec D. Ritzell



Laurie Ann - March 18, 2020 at 12:07 PM

Jill Williams

“ I will never forget the day I met Alec, Nic and Jackie; we were at a Bulldog specialty show in Fort Worth. When help was needed to clean up and clear out the show area both boys eagerly volunteered to get the job done. Jackie and I talked about Bulldogs and Boxers and she noticed my infinity tattoo. I told her I got it as a symbol for my kids so they would know my love for them was never ending; years later Jackie got her infinity tattoo and it's just perfect.



Jill Williams - March 17, 2020 at 10:04 AM

JR

“ *Hunting in the sam Houston national forest*



Jackie Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:54 AM

JN

“ *One of my favorite memories of Alec. He had two girls on his side for this dance. You are loved and will be missed by many. ❤️💔*



jill NeelySmith - March 17, 2020 at 08:44 AM

JN

“ *Jill NeelySmith lit a candle in memory of Alec D. Ritzell*



jill NeelySmith - March 17, 2020 at 08:42 AM

JR

“ 23 files added to the tribute wall



Jackie Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:38 AM

NR

“ Alec and his Redfish, On our fishing trip together in June, 2019.



Nicolas Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:35 AM

JR



Jackie Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:46 AM

NR

“ Me, Casper & Alec



Nicolas Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:34 AM

JR

On our way to Austin and then to Schlitterbahn

Jackie Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:46 AM

NR

“ Alec and I, Thanksgiving 2018



Nicolas Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:34 AM

JR



Jackie Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:45 AM

JR

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jackie Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:29 AM

JR

“ Jackie Ritzell lit a candle in memory of Alec D. Ritzell



Jackie Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:26 AM

JR

“ *Son, I miss you more each day but I know you're watching over us and your legacy will live on forever...just one more thing* ❤️

Jackie Ritzell - March 17, 2020 at 08:15 AM