



Paul Robert Hays

July 27, 1954 - August 13, 2025

Paul Robert Hays of Richmond, Texas died on August 13, 2025, at the age of 71. Paul was known for his sharp mind, quick wit, and his love of outdoor adventures. He poured his intellect into many pursuits, including writing a math book he, unfortunately, did not have the chance to finish. Paul loved a spirited debate and could discuss topics ranging from world events to everyday curiosities with energy and insight.

Paul was born in Chicago, Illinois, on July 27, 1954. He was raised in Champaign with his 3 brothers by parents, Althea and Robert Hays. He graduated from high school and started at University of Illinois a year early. Paul earned a Bachelor's in aeronautical engineering. He then earned a Ph.D in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics. He later earned a Master's in finance at University of Houston.

While Paul was at University of Illinois, he started hanging out with the gymnastics team and became skilled at pommel horse and rings. He even bought and built gymnastics equipment, such as a pommel horse and rings that were set up in the backyard and upset the architectural control in the neighborhood. He also enjoyed many winter camping adventures with his cousin Mark in Wisconsin in their late teens and early twenties.

Paul had a long career in global subsea technologies in offshore oil and gas. He and his wife Laura first moved to Fort Worth, Texas to work for General Dynamics, an aerospace engineering company. Then after a year they moved to Houston to join Getty Oil, which became Texaco and finally Chevron. He received accolades for developing new subsea technology applications for oil riser platforms. When Paul worked for Texaco and Chevron Texaco, he was the Project Manager/Lead of Deepstar which focused on cutting edge riser design teams in the Gulf of Mexico. He was also a riser fabrication engineer for specialty components employed for drilling, production, and water injection at a water depth of 5185 feet. He designed fairings for drilling risers so drilling infrastructure on the seabed could be flexible in the ocean but still withstand hurricane forces.

A skilled woodworker, Paul built beautiful furniture by hand, including a stand-up desk with his son Eric. He and Eric installed hardwood flooring together in his house. He stayed

active, walking seven miles every other day, which he continued to do for as long as he could. Even after his diagnosis impacted his ability to walk that far, he walked as far as he could as long as he was able to. Paul's appreciation for a more rugged lifestyle continued to lead him into the wild. He took his children Sarah, Daniel, and Eric on canoe trips into the wilderness on rivers in Wisconsin and Canada. For a good number of years, he liked to spend vacations hiking up multiple mountains in Colorado (including the tallest one, Mount Elbert) either alone or with his son Eric or daughter Sarah, frequently having more stamina than his daughter Sarah. More recently he went on backpacking trips in Greenland in 2014 and Alaska in 2019 with his daughter Ellen. He hiked 200 miles for 20 days on the John Muir trail by himself in 2017 when he was 63, a marked accomplishment.

Paul's life was marked by his dedication to learning, his appreciation for being in nature, and his ability to turn even casual conversation into a lively exchange of ideas. He will be remembered for his intelligence, determination, and playful language.

Paul loved his wife and children, and only grandchild so much; they were the center of his life. He enjoyed the companionship of his dogs over the years, most recently Blaze and Lily, who were blue heelers, along with numerous cats his wife and daughters rescued that he grew to love.

Paul is survived by his wife Laura Hays, daughters Sarah and Ellen, his son Eric, and grandson Kian Mercado, brothers Christopher Hays and Carl Hays, and cousins Mark Kot, Leslie Noyes, Christine Kot, and Ann Adkins.

Paul is preceded in death by his son Daniel Hays, parents Robert and Althea Hays, and brother Jonathan Hays.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, SmileTrain or UNICEF.

For service information please contact the family.

Expressions of remembrance and condolences are welcome and may be left for the family at www.davisgreenlawnfh.com.

Arrangements are under the direction of Davis-Greenlawn Funeral Home, 3900 B.F. Terry Blvd. (Hwy 59 South @ FM 2218), Rosenberg, Texas 77471, Phone: 281-341-8800.

Cemetery Details

Greenlawn Memorial Park

3900 B.F. Terry Blvd.
Rosenberg, TX 77471

Tribute Wall

KH

“ Paul was such a funny and interesting guy, a great guy to have as a brother-in-law. I still remember him sharing engineering thoughts with me on the blackboard in his parents basement, ideas way over my head, perhaps to see how long I could take it ! His kindness, humor and incredible mind will be greatly missed. His love of his children and Laura was unmatched. I will miss him. My deepest condolences to the family.

Kimberly Hays - August 18, 2025 at 04:21 PM

GB

“ George B. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul Robert Hays.

George B. - August 18, 2025 at 11:46 AM

GB

“ I and my parents were friends with the Hays Family back in Illinois. Jonathan and I were best buds back then, and we often included Paul in our antics. We would take long bicycle rides together, and were always chasing around in the neighborhood when we were hanging out together. One time, Paul and I rode our bicycles out into the country west of Garden Hills. Paul had acquired some topographical maps of that area and we used them for our exploration of the area. One early episode in my friendship with Paul was when we were living on S. Randolph St. in Champaign IL. The Hays Children had just viewed "The 3 Stooges in Orbit". Paul "acquired" wooden crates from the old Eisner store across the way. He built a flying saucer in his front yard. He took me on a "flight' through the solar system, and he was dressed up as a Martian. Good Times!

My name is George Bienek, I will miss Paul, may he Rest In Peace. Sorry for the loss.

George bienek - August 18, 2025 at 11:40 AM