

REP. RON WRIGHT • 1953-2021

# Representative is first member of Congress to die of COVID-19

**GROMER JEFFERS JR. AND TOM BENNING**  
The Dallas Morning News

DALLAS — Rep. Ron Wright of Texas died Sunday night less than three weeks after contracting COVID-19. He was 67.

His family and a spokesperson confirmed Wright's death due to the coronavirus Monday morning. The Republican congressman from Arlington, who was reelected in November, also had been battling lung cancer.

Wright is the first member of Congress to die of COVID-19.

"Congressman Wright will be remembered as a constitutional conservative. He was a statesman, not an ideologue," according to a statement released by Wright's office. "Ron and Susan dedicated their lives to fighting for individual freedom, Texas values, and above all, the lives of the unborn. As friends, family, and many of his constituents will know, Ron maintained his quick wit and optimism until the very end. Despite years of painful, sometimes debilitating treatment for cancer, Ron never lacked the desire to get up and go to work, to motivate those around him, or to offer fatherly advice."

According to the statement, Wright had been keeping a vigorous work schedule before contracting the virus. Two weeks ago Wright and his wife, Susan, were admitted to Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas because of COVID-19 side-effects.



Shaban Athuman/Dallas Morning News/TNS  
**U.S. Rep. Ron Wright speaks in Midlothian, Texas, in 2019.**

Wright announced Jan. 21 that he had tested positive "after coming in contact with an individual with the virus last week." He had been in quarantine since Jan. 15 and said he would remain in isolation until doctors cleared him to return to work.

"I am experiencing minor symptoms, but overall, I feel okay and will continue working for the people of the 6th District from home this week," he said at the time in a statement issued by his office. "I encourage everyone to keep following CDC guidelines and want to thank all

the medical professionals on the front lines who fight this virus head-on every single day."

The quarantine began two days after the House voted to impeach then-President Donald Trump. Wright voted against the impeachment, as did all but 10 Republicans.

That was his final House vote, congressional records show.

Wright, given his age and health complications, stayed away from Washington for stretches at a time over the last 11 months, House voting records show. While congressional leaders have taken steps to stop COVID-19's spread, several lawmakers have still contracted the virus.

Wright had not received a vaccination, unlike many House members. But Wright had just received the OK from his doctors to get the two-shot program before he contracted COVID-19, his office had said, and was planning to do so in the near future.

Although the pandemic had not claimed the life of any other sitting member of Congress, Rep.-elect Luke Letlow, a Louisiana Republican, died from coronavirus complications just five days before he would have been sworn in.

## Cop

**Continued from A1**

The 22-page lawsuit names as defendants several Redmond Police supervisors, including Chief Dave Tarbet, Lt. Eric Beckwith, former president of the Redmond officers union Garland Hicks and administrative Lt. Jesse Petersen, who serves as department spokesman.

Petersen deferred a request for comment on Monday to the city's communication director, who cited a policy against commenting on pending litigation.

Fraker contends the alleged campaign against him began in late 2018 after he reported a Bend Police officer to supervisors for aggressive behavior observed at a local firing range. Petersen and the officer are members of the region's interagency SWAT team, the Central Oregon Emergency Response Team, and, according to the suit, are friends.

After Fraker went to the Bend officer's bosses, Petersen asked Fraker to not interfere with his friends on SWAT again, Fraker says in the suit.

Several months later, Petersen called Fraker into his office and told him "you're either with me or against me, and if Fraker was against him, it would 'make his D' come out," Petersen allegedly told him.

"Plaintiff took this to mean Lt. Petersen intended to become more aggressive towards him if he continued to

*Donald "Ryan" Fraker contends the alleged campaign against him began in late 2018 after he reported a Bend Police officer to supervisors for aggressive behavior observed at a local firing range.*

push back against the conduct described above," Fraker's lawyer wrote in the suit.

In another incident in the summer of 2019, Fraker hosted a 911 dispatcher as a ride-along. He told the woman she could park in the department parking lot, but Redmond Lt. Curtis Chambers allegedly issued her a parking citation during the ride-along. Fraker explained the situation to Chambers, but Fraker claims he was laughed at and told Chambers didn't care if the woman had permission.

Following this incident, the lawsuit states every lieutenant in the department began treating Fraker poorly and the mistreatment of plaintiff became increasingly more "formal," the lawsuit states. The suit describes a party involving SWAT team members where officers presented Beckwith with a custom screen-printed pillow adorned with a large picture of Fraker's face.

"Beckwith began berating the pillow and yelling profanity at it," the lawsuit states.

Fraker was ultimately fired in February 2020 after an internal investigation into his handling of a Nov. 19, 2019,

vehicle-and-foot pursuit that he supervised as a sergeant. He claims Beckwith and others "blindsided" him with an extensive three-hour interview and more than 100 questions in an effort to catch him making inconsistent statements.

The 2019 pursuit incident led to a so-called Brady hearing with Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel.

In Oregon, district attorneys keep lists of police officers determined to have been untrustworthy in the past, also called Brady lists for the landmark U.S. Supreme court case, *Brady v. Maryland*.

Hummel opted to add Fraker's name to his Tier II Brady list, rather than Tier I, meaning that although Fraker's department considered him untruthful, Hummel did not.

In 2019, former officer Craig McClure sued Redmond for enabling a culture of bullying encouraged by Tarbet, Beckwith and others. His suit, which cited age discrimination against the 42-year-old rookie, settled out of court last year.

■ Reporter: 541-383-0325, gandrews@bendbulletin.com

## Salem

**Continued from A1**

The impeachment, the equivalent of an indictment, passed 232-197. The trial of Trump, now out of office, begins Tuesday.

Angry Trump loyalists wanted Cheney removed from the No. 3 post in House GOP leadership. But she won the conference vote 145-61. Cheney, the eldest daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney, did not back down from her vote.

Asked about the conference challenge, Cheney said on Fox News Sunday that she had no apologies.

"The oath that I took to the Constitution compelled me to vote for impeachment and it doesn't bend to partisanship, it doesn't bend to political pressure," she said. "It's the most important oath that we take."

During a break in the debate, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., had signaled that he backed Cheney.

"Liz has the right to vote her conscience," McCarthy said. "At the end of the day, we'll get united."

Bentz said late Friday that though he opposed impeachment, he backed retaining Cheney after she told the conference her vote was an individual choice, not as a party leader reflecting the GOP consensus on the issue.

The tally was secret, but members were free to make public how they voted.

## Hernandez expulsion vote possible Feb. 16

Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, said Monday that Rep. Diego Hernandez, D-Portland, would likely face a Feb. 16 vote to expel him from the House.

Five women have accused Hernandez of using his position as a state lawmaker to sexually harass them. The House Conduct Committee voted 4-0 Friday to sustain 18 findings of violation of House rules.

As of Monday, Gov. Kate Brown, Treasurer Tobias Read, Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, Kotek and 26 of 37 House Democrats have called on Hernandez to resign, which he has refused to do. The Feb. 16 vote would require votes of two-thirds of the House — 40 members — to expel him. Hernandez was seen as a potential political star when he was elected to the House in 2016 at age 29.

## Salem security under discussion

The plywood boards that covered the lower level windows of the Oregon Capitol in case of violent demonstrations around the Jan. 20 inauguration of President Joe Biden in Washington, D.C., are being removed.

The boards were put up after a Department of Homeland Security alert to states that right-wing groups that back Trump might attack state capitols. The Oregon Capitol was assaulted by

groups on Dec. 21 during a special session of the Legislature. They used lower level side doors and windows in an attempt to enter the rotunda area.

After fighting with state police, they were ejected.

Hardware is being installed to make it easier and faster to put up the boards if necessary in the future.

## Nearman investigation continues

The Marion County District Attorney's office has been sent the Oregon State Police investigative report on the alleged role of Rep. Mike Nearman, R-Independence, in aiding the Dec. 21 rioters to enter the Capitol, Kotek said Monday.

Security video shows Nearman exiting a locked side door of the Capitol during the demonstration outside, which remained open and was soon used by rioters to get into the building.

Kotek said any action against Nearman by the House would most likely await the decision of the district attorney's office on whether to prosecute.

## Unemployment, right-wing threats top Fagan agenda

Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan, elected in November, released her 2021-22 Audit Plan last week. One of the office's jobs is to internally investigate the performance of state agencies.

"This year's audit plan is directed at many of those most

pressing issues with an eye toward building a better Oregon for everyone," Fagan said in a statement. Planned audits include:

- An analysis of the Oregon Unemployment Insurance Program's chaotic performance during a historic rise in unemployment in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The audit would identify ways that the monthslong wait for benefits would not happen during a future crisis.
- Emergency response issues during the 2020 wildfires.
- Oregon's COVID-19 vaccine distribution program, which has been criticized for its pace and priorities.
- Contamination risks of rural water supplies.
- Oregon law enforcement's handling of violent domestic terrorist groups that have included violent attacks at the Oregon State Capitol.
- Fairness of licensing and regulation of legal cannabis business.
- The performance of state and local 911 emergency calling systems.
- Cybersecurity at state agencies and local governments, some of which use antiquated systems.
- Mortgage interest deduction and its relationship to impacts on homeless services.

To view the full 2021-22 audit plan, click here <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/230571>

■ gwarnier@eomediagroup.com

## Internet

**Continued from A1**

In Deschutes County, primary care providers will be contacting their patients who are 80 and older who qualify for the vaccine. According to 2018 U.S. Census data, there are an estimated 7,500 residents 80 and older living in Deschutes County, said Morgan Emerson, Deschutes County Health Services spokeswoman.

"These appointments most likely will be done over the phone," Emerson said. "Because of limited availability of the vaccine, people will get a call."

Last week, the governor outlined a plan to vaccinate Oregon's senior citizens, those 65 and older, who would be eligible by March 1 and receive the first dose by April.

Deschutes County received its first round of doses for seniors, 1,200 first-doses late last week. Meanwhile, residents can still receive their second doses at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center.

There's a lot of interest and confusion in this age group, said Elaine Knobbs-Seasholtz, Mosaic Medical director of strategy and development.

"We have lists pulled for each age group," Knobbs-Seasholtz said. "People are definitely interested. Many peo-

## Don't have internet?

Call 541-699-5109 to get help filling out the COVID-19 vaccine interest form 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. People can also call 211 or 866-698-6155 from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily including holidays. Wait times may be long, but there is an option to leave a message.

ple are very grateful and have already gotten their vaccine at the fairgrounds."

The state recognizes that not everyone can sign up for a COVID-19 vaccine online, said Jonathan Modie, Oregon Health Authority spokesman. Anyone calling the state's 211 system can get help accessing a county's website to obtain information about a public vaccination clinic. In five counties, Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah and Washington, residents who call 211 can book an appointment for a vaccine, Modie said.

"We know there are people who may not have access to the internet or are not comfortable with it, and we want to make sure that they have the same level of service as everyone else," Modie said. "We have options."

■ Reporter: 541-633-2117, sroig@bendbulletin.com

## DEATH NOTICES

**Robert "Bob" "Silver Eagle Bob" William Monson** of Bend, OR  
June 24, 1940 - Jan 31, 2021

**Arrangements:**  
Niswonger-Reynolds 541-382-2471 [www.bendfuneralhomes.com](http://www.bendfuneralhomes.com)  
**Services:**  
2/10/2021 10:00 am Recitation of Rosary 10:30 am Funeral Mass St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church 2450 Ne 27th St. Bend OR  
*Contributions may be made to:*  
Knights of Columbus Fr. Luke Sheehan Council 2450 Ne 27th St. Bend, OR 97701

**Philip John Sweet** of Redmond, OR  
December 30, 1961 - February 1, 2021

**Arrangements:**  
Autumn Funerals of Redmond is honored to serve the family. 541-504-9485 Memories and condolences may be expressed to the family on our website at [www.autumnfunerals.net](http://www.autumnfunerals.net)  
**Services:**  
A celebration of life will take place at a later date.

**Carol Joan Laite** of Redmond, OR  
Jan 01, 1940 - Jan 29, 2021

**Arrangements:**  
Arrangements Entrusted To: Redmond Memorial Chapel; 541.548.3219. Please visit [www.redmondmemorial.com](http://www.redmondmemorial.com) to sign the on-line guest book, or to leave a thought, memory or condolence for the family

**Services:**  
A Funeral Service is Scheduled to be held at Redmond Memorial Chapel; 717 SW 6th St., Redmond; on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021 at 2pm  
*Contributions may be made to:*  
VFW, American Legion, Band of Brothers, or Disabled Veterans Charity of Your Choice

## OBITUARY DEADLINE

Call to ask about our deadlines 541-385-5809

Monday - Friday, 10am - 3pm

No death notices or obituaries are published Mondays.

Email: [obits@bendbulletin.com](mailto:obits@bendbulletin.com)

We have had great results with Whiteboard Media's digital marketing program. I have a quarterly meeting with Makenna Frickey and Levi Durighello, where they cover everything in detail and help me make any adjustments. They are very thorough and helpful. Can't wait to see our results for this quarter!

Amy Remick  
Office Manager  
Gilmore Dental  
[www.gilmoredental.com](http://www.gilmoredental.com)

The Bulletin

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY  
[www.bendbulletin.com](http://www.bendbulletin.com)  
541.382.1811