

October 7, 2007

Houston County Courier

RICHARD E. LOONEY

Mr. Richard E. Looney, age 60, passed away Monday evening October 8, 2007, in Lufkin, as his family gathered. Mr. looney was born May 22, 1947 in Crockett, Texas to John E. and Nelwyn Morgan Looney, he was also the grandson of Everett and Gladys Morgan of Austonio, Texas and Robert and Bettie Looney of Nacogdoches, Texas.

Mr. Looney began his career with The Lufkin Daily News in Advertising in 1966 while attending Stephen F. Austin University. Working at The Lufkin News for 13 years, Richard worked under Cox Newspapers as Advertising Director for seven years when The Lufkin News received the 1977 Pulitzer Prize for Meritorious Public Service. Mr. Looney later went on to Advertising Director for Hartman Newspapers and Publisher for The Alvin Sun, in Alvin, Texas for seven years. Mr. Looney later formed the Lufkin Advertiser Newspaper and printing business in Lufkin.

An avid antique collector for many years, Mr. Looney spent the last 10 years traveling and living on the East Coast dealing in Antiques. Mr. Looney had resided in Hanover, PA for the last 4 years where his youngest son Robert and grandson Gavin live, before coming back to Lufkin.

While Mr. Looney's expertise in the newspaper industry is best known for his ability in the sales and marketing portion of that business, the unparalleled events in Alvin in 1979 demonstrated that he was a keen newspaper man as well.

That was the year that Tropical Storm Claudette literally dumped 43 inches of rain within 24 hours right above Alvin along with the 27 inches of rain within Alvin proper. Vast percentages of homes in the community suffered flooding and major roadways to and from the community were shut off to most highway traffic. It's a rainfall record for the North American continent that still stands.

Despite these conditions, Mr. Looney's relentless belief in the role of a community newspaper was never more evident. He personally guided the publication of his newspaper producing an initial edition that was only hours late off the original press time. Mr. Looney greatly expanded the distribution of the newspaper for several editions so that thousands of affected citizens could get the important news they needed. While his background was advertising, he personally wrote stories; interviewed police and other community leaders; took photographs and got the paper to the citizens of the community. Mr. Looney believed that it was never more important to get his newspaper on the street. That was well before the days that newspapers sent their pages to the press room electronically like today. The only vehicles moving in and out of Alvin during the early part of that community crisis were big 18-wheelers along with National Guard trucks. Mr. Looney 'hitchhiked' with his pages to a community 15 miles away and 'hitchhiked' back with his newspapers for local distribution. That was his commitment to the Newspaper Industry.

Survivors include his two sons Richard Scott Looney, of Lufkin and Robert Everett Looney, of Hanover, Pa.; Three Grandsons Christopher Scott Looney of Bend, Ore. and