



## Obituary

**Born:** Sunday, July 1, 1934

**Died:** Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Obituary for Ronald William Whiteford

Ron Whiteford, 85, of Buchanan, Michigan, passed away at Memorial Hospital, South Bend, Indiana, surrounded by family on Wednesday morning, November 20.

He was born July 1, 1934, in Detroit, Michigan, the son of the late David & Naomi Whiteford. Ron's father, David, began the family trucking business in 1929 with a 1929 Reo. Under Ron's leadership, Whiteford Companies subsequently became a top-100 transport company in the U.S., and the largest privately-held transportation company in the state of Indiana, of which Whiteford Nationalease grew to become the 7th largest full maintenance leasing company in the U.S. Ron also served for multiple years as the president of Nationalease and TRALA. Ron was proud that his son, Ron II, also entered into the business with him. Ron always reminded his staff of an important life and faith principle: "Don't worry; leave it up to God."

Because of Ron's love for "big trucks," he began driving for his dad when he was 16. When Ron went to Wheaton College, he drove their bus while a student, and that's how he met the love of his life, Florence Stoesz. On August 2, 1958, Ron married Florence (Flo) Stoesz. They were married for 61 years.

Ron also believed in civic involvement. He was a member of many professional associations and served on several boards, including the South Bend/Mishawaka Chamber of Commerce, Goodwill Industries, the IMTA (Indiana Motor Trucking Association), and Transport for Christ. Ron also served on the President's Council at Purdue University and the President's Advisory Council on Excellence for Houghton College.

However, Ron's deepest passion project was Life Action Ministries, and he served on the Board of Directors or Advisory Council for well over 40 years. From the inception of the ministry, Ron supported and encouraged the founder of Life Action, Del Fehsenfeld Jr, and made the same investment in its subsequent present President/CEO/Executive Director, Byron Paulus. Ron challenged Life Action with vision, urgency, and diligence, and provided a high level of leadership and continuity over decades that will be impossible to fully replace. He also generously invested his own resources in this mission, for many years providing all the trucks and semi-trailers the ministry needed to take the message of revival all across North America.

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## Service Summary

### Visitation

2:00 PM to 4:00 PM, Mon Nov 25, 2019

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Mon Nov 25, 2019

### Cleveland Rd. Location

17033 Cleveland Road  
South Bend, IN 46635

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### Funeral Service

10:00 AM Tue Nov 26, 2019

### Redeemer Church (formerly Fulkerson Park Baptist Church)

1234 Fulkerson Road  
Niles, MI

Ron is remembered as a man of deep and genuine faith, inspiration, wise counsel, encouragement, generous spirit, positive outlook, entrepreneurial spirit, and sacrificial giving with his time, life, and resources. He also exhibited a willingness to take God at His Word and extraordinary trust in the greatness of God. He loved God's kingdom work and the spreading of the gospel, as well as his local church.

Many also knew Ron for his contagious laughter and recognized him immediately for his turquoise paraphernalia (his belt buckle, bolo tie, and turquoise ring). He treasured every generation of his family and loved to tell the story of his dad's Chris Craft boat which was restored by his son, Ron II, for a surprise ride last year.

Ron was a faithful son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, greatgrandfather, business owner, co-laborer, and community leader. He fulfilled so many life-giving roles to so many that listing them all is impossible. He will be greatly missed.

Ron is preceded in death by his parents and by his brother and sister-in-law, Larry and Bonnie, and survived by his wife, Flo; two children, Cynthia Wood and Ronald W. (Wendy) Whiteford II; 10 grandchildren, Stacie (Danny) Bote, Jay Whiteford, Josh (Sheena) Wood, Ronald W. (Ayaka) Whiteford III, Drew (Erin) Good, Stephen (Kinsey) Wood, Grace (Isaac) Blosser, Kyle (Shirley) Gibbons, Brett Gibbons, Braelynn Whiteford; 9 great grandchildren; and 2 brothers, David (Sallie) Whiteford and Dean (Anne) Whiteford; and many other relatives.

A time of visitation will be held from 2:00-4:00 PM & 6:00-8:00 PM on Monday, November 25, at Welsheimer Funeral Home (North), 17033 Cleveland Road, South Bend, IN. A brief visitation will take place from 9:00-9:40 AM on Tuesday, November 26, just prior to the service at 10:00 AM at Redeemer Church (formerly Fulkerson Park Baptist Church), 1234 Fulkerson Road, Niles, MI. Burial will take place following the service at St. Joseph Valley Memorial Park, 375 W. Cleveland Road, Granger, IN (across from University Park Mall).

Those wishing to make a memorial contribution may do so to: Life Action Ministries, P. O. Box 31, Buchanan, MI 49107. Family and friends may leave email condolences at [www.welsheimer.com](http://www.welsheimer.com).

Charitable donations may be made in Ronald's memory to the following organization:

**Life Action Ministries**  
P. O. Box 31, Buchanan, MI 49107