

Obituary: Al Pessarra

March 25, 2019

Albert Edward Pessarra of Houston, longtime minister of activities and director of recreation in Baptist churches, died Oct. 31. He was 84. Pessarra was born Jan. 27, 1934, in Port Arthur to Bert Charles and Kate Perkins Pessarra. After he graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in Port Arthur, where he lettered in football and baseball, he went on to earn degrees from Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He married LaJuan Johnson, whom he met at Baylor, on Aug. 29, 1958. He served more than 40 years on the staffs of churches, including South Main Baptist in Houston, Tarrytown Baptist in Austin, First Baptist in Waco and Tallowood Baptist in Houston, where he retired in 1999 after 24 years there. He also held a civil service appointment to the U.S. Army at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., as director of religious education. He delighted in mentoring young people and senior citizens alike. He was founder of the Kingdom Basketball League and served on the board of Trinity Pines Encampment. He led backpacking, white-water canoeing, skiing and construction mission trips to Alaska, Germany, the Czech Republic, Canada, Belize, Panama, Colombia and Mexico. After retirement, the *Houston Chronicle* named him a [Houston Hero](#) for being a helpful neighbor. He is survived by his wife, LaJuan; daughter Tamara Pessarra Henderson and her husband Lee of Montgomery; daughter Trish Pessarra of Houston; daughter Tanya Pessarra Phelps and her husband Shannon of Newman, Ga.; four grandchildren; and a brother, Carl Pessarra of Shreveport, La.

