



George William "Bill" Hillyer III

July 18, 1934 - December 13, 2015

Bill Hillyer was born July 18, 1934 in Kilgore, Texas and died December 13, 2015 in Longview, having lived a courageous, honorable and loving life. While still in junior high school, Bill moved with his parents, the late George and Margaret Hillyer, to Tyler, Texas where he graduated from John Tyler High School in 1952. Enrolling at Texas A & M College, Bill joined the Corps of Cadets, became a squadron commander and began his love for the military. He graduated from A & M in 1956 with a degree in geology and in that same year married his college sweetheart, Marilyn Bennett. Together they began a 50-year marriage and a long career in the U.S. Air Force. Bill was an accomplished and decorated Hercules C-130 pilot, flying 525 combat missions during the Viet Nam War with over 2000 hours at the controls. His tremendous skill as a pilot was exemplified when, after direct attack, he flew his compromised transport plane back to base with rescued soldiers and crash-landed with no casualties.

Following the war Bill was stationed at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii where he served in the Air Rescue and Recovery Unit, participating in numerous Apollo space program recoveries. His last Air Force assignment was Base Commander of Norton Air Force Base in California. While Air Force assignments took him away for long stretches and involved many moves, his love for family was always evident. He was a cherished husband to Marilyn and loving father to daughters Susan and Frances. After 30 years of military service, he and Marilyn returned to Tyler where he worked for Prudential

Insurance until his retirement.

His time in Tyler was full with activities at the First Baptist Church, golf, hunting and fishing with friends, and fun times with children and grandchildren. Following Marilyn's death in 2006, Bill met and married Sarah Baird Sides in 2010. Both had experienced long, happy first marriages and treasured this unexpected opportunity for companionship, travel and spirited times together.

In addition to Sarah, Bill is survived by daughters Susan Mouser (Kip) of Tyler; Frances Ridlehoover (Roger) of Los Angeles; sister Mary Harter (Charlie) of Houston; and grandchildren Laura Ridlehoover of Seattle, Dan (Lillian) Ridlehoover of California, Will Ridlehoover of Panama, Katie Mouser of Tyler; and Sarah's sons Billy Sides of Houston and Kirk Sides of Houston.

Visitation will be Thursday, December 17, 5:00-7:00 pm at Stewart Family Funeral Home, 7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy, Tyler. Bill's life will be celebrated and honored Friday, December 18th at 11:00 am at First Baptist Church, Tyler, following a private family graveside service. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Kyle Lake Foundation, P O Box 6776, Tyler, TX 75711 in honor of Bill.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 17. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Stewart Family Funeral Home
7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy
Tyler, TX 75703
(903) 581-2008

Mem. Service

DEC 18. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church
301 W. Ferguson
Tyler, TX 75702

Tribute Wall

BH

“ *Every time I ever saw Colonel Hillyer he always talked about his family - his children or his grand children - he was so proud of them and his devotion and love to his family was a great influence on me. He was a great man and will be missed. My deepest sympathy to the family.*

Bill Hebb

Bill Hebb - December 19, 2015 at 05:53 PM

TC

“ *Bill Hillyer was an officer and a gentleman. He was a fine example of what a Christian ought to be . He conducted himself with the highest of decorum and demeanor. He was a credit to whatever he contributed his resources. He never engaged anything less than one hundred percent. He was articulate, fair-minded, optimistic and a good thinker. Bill loved the Lord in a very real and effective way. He was an encourager of others, especially those of faith. He called me during a difficult period of my life and prayed with me over the phone for over an hour, using scripture to encourage me. He followed up in person seeking to help me until I could say I had full resolution. He was the best of being a brother in Christ. He was a long time supporter of the ministries of First Baptist Church. He is one of the best men I have ever known. He was always polite, well groomed and affable. He liked golf a little....*

We are better for knowing him and will surely miss him.

Terry Cooper

Terry Cooper - December 16, 2015 at 05:06 PM

JA

“ Bill Hillyer III was a friend, fellow Sunday School member, fellow First Baptist Church member, and also, a fellow Air Force Officer.

Bill and I were at Sewart Air Force Base, Tennessee, at the same time. I was a personnel officer, and was also in charge of the Mobility Processing Unit. Bill was a C-130 pilot. When I met Bill at First Baptist Church, Tyler, Bill related to me that he was stationed at Sewart Air Force Base, and as we discussed the dates he was there, I discovered that Bill probably went through the processing line on a mission when Chief Master Sergeant Shelley and I were there supervising the processing out of the C-130 crews. Bill was very proud of his military service and was one of the finest patriots I have ever known.

Bill was devoted to Christ, his family, and his country. I will miss Bill in Sunday School and Church.

David Couch

James - December 15, 2015 at 10:20 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of George William "Bill" Hillyer III.*



December 15, 2015 at 10:07 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of George William "Bill" Hillyer III.*



December 15, 2015 at 05:28 PM