



Robert "Bob" Franklin Smith

May 22, 1924 - January 17, 2014

Robert "Bob" Franklin Smith went to live with his loving Savior Jesus Christ on Friday, January 17, 2014. Bob was born in Benton, Louisiana, on May 22, 1924, to the late James Ray and Susan Faircloth Smith. He was preceded in death by his two brothers, James and Marshall Smith, and sister Emily Smith. Bob's life was built around his love of God, his country, his family, and the outdoors. He always extended his hand in friendship to everyone he met, and he had trust in his fellow man. He was faithful at all times to God, his church, and his family, and he had a generous and kind nature. Bob Smith never met a man he didn't like.

Immediately following his graduation from Benton High School in May 1942, Bob was accepted into the U.S. Naval Aviation Cadet training program and received his wings at Corpus Christi Naval Air Station. Bob was then assigned to several multi-engine training bases, including American Airlines in Fort Worth, where he was schooled in transport service. Upon completion of his American Airlines training, Bob was transferred to Alameda Naval Air Station in California, and he was assigned to Squadron VR-2, a naval air transport squadron (NATS). NATS was involved in transporting priority staff, mail, fuse heads for bombs, high-priority cargo to the South Pacific, and wounded servicemen back to the mainland. At age 19 Bob became the commanding officer aboard PB2Y planes for the duration of World War II, flying throughout the Pacific to various ports, including Espiritu Santo, Noumea, Efate Island, Kwajalein, Sydney, Auckland, Honolulu, Manus Island, Saipan, and Johnston

Atoll. Bob considered it his duty and an honor to serve his country, and he was always appreciative of what he learned while in the Navy and the opportunities and doors the military opened for him. He enjoyed visiting with fellow veterans and willingly shared his war experiences with area students who interviewed him for school projects for Veterans Day.

After the war, Bob was given the opportunity to remain in the military as a test pilot; however, he instead chose to be released to inactive duty in the Naval Reserves. Bob enrolled in Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge in 1946 and majored in geology. He valued his education from LSU and was always proud to be an LSU Tiger. Bob enjoyed nothing better than attending LSU football games in Baton Rouge, but he also enjoyed watching his LSU Tigers play football, basketball, and baseball on television.

While a college freshman at LSU, Bob met the love of his life, Frankie Celeste Stevens, at the Baptist Student Union. They dated throughout college and married on February 11, 1950, after his graduation.

Upon graduating from LSU with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology, Bob went to work as a Sales Engineer for Lane Wells Company, which later became Dresser Atlas. While working for Lane Wells, he and Frankie lived in Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado, and he eventually ended his career in Tyler, where he retired as a Senior Sales Engineer in 1986. Always a lover of the great outdoors, Bob became an avid gardener, growing beautiful vegetables which he loved to share with friends, neighbors, and family.

Bob was an active member of Colonial Hills Baptist Church, and he served as a deacon, Sunday School teacher, choir member, and leader among senior adults. Bob always kept his eyes on his walk with Christ and his service for Him. It can be said of Bob, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Bob is survived by Frankie, his wife of 63 years, and his daughter Celeste Craig and her husband Robert; sisters-in-law Jean Smith, Mary Freda Simpson, and Nell Stevens; and cousins, nieces, and nephews throughout the country.

A memorial service will be held at Colonial Hills Baptist Church, 7330 South

Broadway, Tyler, TX, 75703, on Saturday, January 25, 2:00 p.m., with Pastor Robert Carter officiating. Honorary pallbearers will be the deacons of Colonial Hills Baptist Church and the Joy Sunday School Class. A private burial with military honors will be in Rose Hill Cemetery in Tyler under the direction of Stewart Family Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers please consider a contribution to the East Texas Crisis Center, P.O. Box 7060, Tyler, TX 75711 (www.etcc.org); The Hospice of East Texas Foundation, 4111 University Blvd., Tyler, 75701 (www.hospiceofeasttexas.org); or Colonial Hills Baptist Church.

Cemetery Details

Rose Hill Cemetery

2400 S. Donnybrook
Tyler, TX 75702

Tribute Wall

CB

“ Both Dave and I are sick and will not make the funeral. Sorry, but Frankie will see you in a week or two. Will call you at home. Is that where you will be?
Dave and Carolyn Halbrooks Bain

Carolyn Bain - January 25, 2014 at 01:05 PM

BT

“ Frankie and Celeste, It was a joy for me to have had Bob as a good friend for many years. I was saddened to learn of Bob's going Home, because he will be missed by many of his friends. Praying God will surround you with His loving arms and give you comfort, healing and peace.
With love and sorrow for you loss.
Brenda Taliaferro

Brenda Taliaferro - January 21, 2014 at 07:54 PM

MT

“ We are so sorry for your loss, Bob was a great freind to me and my family and I was so honored to know him. Please accept our deepest sympathy.

The Mike Taliaferro family.

Mike Taliaferro - January 21, 2014 at 01:34 PM