



JOSEPH REAGAN THOMAS

Joseph Reagan Thomas, 80, of Wellington, FL and Nashville, AR passed away on October 19, 2011.

Joe, also known as "Buddy" to his friends in Arkansas, was born December 21, 1930 in Glenwood, AR to Dr. Joseph E. Thomas and Catherine R. Thomas. He grew up in country learning to camp, hunt, fish and ride horses. He graduated from Nashville High School where he served as Class President and played as defensive tackle on the football team. He attended Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Southern Arkansas University and Graduate of the Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology.

Aside from his love of family and the outdoors, he loved aviation. Joe enlisted in the Air Force in 1951 and served during the Korean War. After leaving the Air Force he completed college and joined Eastern Airlines. He left Eastern during a strike as he refused to cross a picket line. Leaving Eastern gave him an opportunity to move to Japan and fly as a pilot throughout Asia with Southern Air Transport and Air America. As both these airlines were operated by the Central Intelligence Agency, his missions included flights to Vietnam during the Vietnam War. He joined Pan American World Airways in 1966. His career with Pan American spanned over 25 years; he joined as a Flight Engineer was promoted to Captain. He was based in Hong Kong, San Francisco, Berlin, New York, Washington D.C. and Miami.

Joe was a Civil Air Patrol Volunteer and Flight Instructor. He taught many young people to fly, never charging for his time, as he enjoyed sharing his love of flying with others. He supported many charitable organizations including The Child's Fund, Public Broadcasting, Habitat for Humanity and UNICEF.

Joe loved spending time on his farm in Arkansas and visiting his friends in Nashville. The friendships he formed growing up in Nashville lasted his entire life. He was blessed to have his childhood friend, Bob Balch, who traveled many times to visit him while he was in the hospital prior to his death. He was a member of the Nashville High School Good Ole Boys. He adored his granddaughter, Laura. His favorite writing, *Desiderata*, sums up his philosophy on life.

He is survived by his wife, Joan M. Thomas; his children from his first marriage, Joseph Brannen Thomas and Mary Ellen Thomas Harrison; his granddaughter, Laura Helen Harrison and his sister-in-law, Eunice Thomas. He was preceded in death by his older brother, James Allen Thomas.

Memorial Services will be held at 2:00 PM November 5 at the funeral home. Joe will be laid to rest in at Restland Memorial Park in Nashville AR.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations are suggested to www.habitat.org, or inspiredgifts.unicefusa.org

His funeral arrangements have been entrusted to

Dorsey-E. Earl Smith
Memory Gardens Funeral Home
3041 Kirk Road
Lake Worth, FL 33461
www.dorsey-smithmemorygardens.com