



## Col. Joe C. Williams (Ret.)

March 25, 1931 - August 29, 2016

Col. Joe C. Williams (Ret.)

“He’s such a kind and generous man.” Of all the ways Joe Williams was described by his friends, family and acquaintances, this was the phrase that so often came easily from those who knew and met him. Kind, generous, extremely intelligent, easy to talk to, full of stories about a rich and fulfilling life and those that he loved.

Born in Desdemona, Texas and growing up in Gatesville and Corpus Christi, Joe knew early that he wanted more out of life. He knew he wanted to be a pilot after flying in his brother-in-law, Mel Wheaton’s plane. He soon began flying lessons himself, worked hard delivering papers, running the switchboard at the Corpus Christi Caller-Times and eventually gained an appointment to West Point Military Academy. Moving to Cornwall-on-Hudson in New York for a year to prepare for entry into West Point was the first of his many journeys and his four years at West Point was, as he so often recalled, one of the experiences that best prepared him for his life in the military, but one that he would never wish on another soul.

It was while at West Point, on a trip to Asheville, North Carolina, that he met the love of his life, Ann Clarke. After four years of dating, they were married soon after graduation, in Asheville at St. Lawrence’s Basilica. Joe chose the

Air Force as his service branch and soon was back in Texas to begin flight training and Joe and Ann then began a wonderful life of travel and adventure. Within a few years they moved to France, living in the village of Senonche where Joe flew C-123 transport planes in often impossible weather, with little navigation equipment. He survived a plane crash with a broken back and spent 8 months in a brace, but still worked hard and continued his love of flying. The growing family, by then a son, Bob and daughter, Jo Ann, moved to Hampton Virginia, where son, Rene and daughter, Laura, were born. Then came Montgomery Alabama and eventually Bangkok, Thailand for three years in that amazing country. In 1968, the family moved back to Montgomery, while Joe returned to Vientiane, Laos for a yearlong unaccompanied tour. Their next station was Washington DC for a job at the Pentagon and then, Selma Alabama where he was the Base Commander at Craig AFB. By then Joe had transitioned into Air Force training and soon was in Spokane Washington as the Base Commander at Fairchild's Survival School wing. His last station was Rantoul, Illinois as Wing Commander at Chanute AFB, one of the prime training wings for new Air Force recruits.

Joe retired after 26 years of Air Force service and he and Ann returned to Austin in 1981, where he worked at the University of Texas' Office of Extension, developing courses for non-traditional students, while completing his Doctorate. After graduating with honors in 1984, he continued working for UT until retiring in 1995. He was a loyal Long Horn until the end, with season tickets for many years and eventually watching every game from the comfort of his favorite chair.

Throughout his life, Joe Williams loved living it. He loved West Point, the Air Force and his family, and made and kept an amazing array of friends across the world. He will be greatly missed by his wife of 63 years, Ann, by his children, Bob and wife, Inge, Jo Ann and husband, Jon Dossett, and Laura and wife, Crissy; by his grandchildren, Celeste Quesada and husband, Adrian,

Graham Williams and wife, Audrie, San Miguel, and Brandon Kingsbury; by their wonderful grandchildren, Morrison, Amelie, Marcelle, Garland, Harper and Atlee, and by so many other relatives and friends. Ever the optimist, even after losing his son Rene to cancer, he kept his bright spirit, even as his body grew frail and his life became more difficult. We were always greeted with a smile and a hug because, of course, he was a kind and generous man with so much to offer and so much to be thankful for. We're so thankful we got to know and love him.

The family will receive friends from 6:00 to 8:00 PM on Thursday, September 1, 2016, at Harrell Funeral Home, 4435 Frontier Trail, Austin, Texas. A rosary will be recited at 7:00 PM.

A funeral mass will be celebrated at 10:00 AM Friday, September 2, 2016, at St. Austin's Catholic Church, 2026 Guadalupe, Austin, Texas. Interment will be held at Riverside Cemetery in Asheville, North Carolina. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Austin's Catholic Church.

Arrangements for Asheville will be announced.

# Cemetery Details

## Riverside Cemetery

53 Birch Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

# Tribute Wall



“ *Col. Joe C. Williams (Ret.)* ”

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October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM