



## Thomas Michael McGrath

December 18, 1925 - February 16, 2014

The world lost one of its last great men, Lt. Col. Thomas Michael McGrath, Ret. USAF, who passed away peacefully on February 16, 2014 at the age of 88. Surrounding him at the time of his passing was his oldest daughter, Kimberly McGrath; the two angels and daughters that unquestionably took care of him and dedicated their time to, never letting go of hope for their father, Karen McGrath and Lisa McGrath; his oldest grandson, Brandon Oliver and spouse Jennifer De La Rosa; and his beloved rescue dog, Sally.

Dad was preceded in death by his mother and father, John Joseph and Agnes McGrath; his wife, Charlotte; his brother, John McGrath; and his sisters Mary Evans "Sister" and Margaret Helton "Baby". He is survived by his son, Mark Thomas McGrath Leslie; his daughters, Kimberly Ann McGrath, Karen Marie McGrath, and Lisa Kay McGrath; his grandchildren, Brandon Lane Oliver Jennifer De La Rosa, Ryan Michael McGrath, and Lindsay Taylor Owen Ryan; his great-granddaughter, Madison Melissa Oliver; and his rescue dog, Sally.

He was born in Houston, Texas on December 18, 1925, the youngest of four children. His family moved to Dallas, Texas when he was a young child during the Great Depression. Dad worked jobs from the age of seven to help support his family. He graduated from North Dallas High School in 1943 and at age 17 he joined the Merchant Marines during World War II. After the War, he returned to Dallas and was the first in his family to graduate from college, Southern Methodist University, in 1951. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant which began his 20-year career in the U.S. Air Force. He met the

love of his life, Charlotte Hollingsworth, and they married in 1952. During his last tour of duty in Korea, Charlotte became ill and Dad retired so that he could take care of his family. He always remained extremely proud of his military service, and earned the nickname, "Colonel." Following his wife's death in 1972, Dad embraced the role of both mother and father to his four children. He took cooking classes the only gentleman in his class and enjoyed continuing the tradition of having Sunday dinner around the family table, complete with a centerpiece created by one of his children. Dad was always politically active and during this time campaigned for and served as a staff member for Congressman Bob Krueger. He continued his interest in civil responsibility serving as an election precinct judge for over ten years. He was so proud that all of his children went on to earn college degrees, as well as all of his grandchildren. Dad was the last of a great generation: they worked, loved their family, God and country. He never had an enemy; he could make a friend at the drop of a hat. He had a lot of sweethearts. He was self-made. There is no denying his generosity, his patriotism, and his love for his family. It's a cliché but it is very valid here. It's not about how long you live, but HOW you live. Very few people in this world have genuine respect and kindness for each other; sometimes barely acknowledging the other person - Dad was not like this at all. He was larger than life. In his later years, Dad took special joy in his three grandchildren. His first grandson, Brandon, lived with him until he was 8 years old, and the two remained very close throughout his life. Dad was overjoyed at the birth of his great-granddaughter, Madison Melissa Oliver, who spent the first three months of her life in the NICU. He visited her frequently in the NICU and marveled that she was so tiny that she fit in the palm of his hand. He was her "Papa Colonel." Dad had a wonderful, witty sense of humor. He always had a joke, a twinkle in his eye, and an adorable smile. He loved watching The Three Stooges with his grandson, Brandon. He loved westerns. He loved animals. And a spontaneous, soft shoe dance. He had a lot of sayings, but the one that most applies to him was this - to know him was to love him. And we always will, sweet Daddy. A private family burial with full

military honors will be held on February 20, 2014 at Ft. Sam Houston Cemetery. A wake celebrating Dad's life will be held at the Village in Oak Hills Clubhouse, 4322 Muirfield, at 6 p.m. on February 20, 2014 Friends are invited to stop by to eat, drink, and share memories of the "Colonel."