



Colonel Leonard Leroy Melton Jr.

February 19, 1929 - January 24, 2024

On Tuesday evening, January 24, 2024, the clouds parted and Colonel Leonard Leroy Melton, Jr., (ret'd), took wing in his beloved F-4 Phantom to meet his Lord and Savior. He passed away peacefully at his home in Tallahassee, Florida at the age of 94, after living a full life dedicated to his family and country.

Born in Monroeville, AL, he lived with his family in Excel, AL until the age of 6, when his family moved to FL for better opportunities, ultimately settling in Tallahassee. He graduated from Leon High School in 1947, where he played varsity football and baseball. Following graduation, he joined the first returning co-ed class at Florida State University, where he played for the 1947-1950 football teams and was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. In late 1950, when news of the draft began to circulate, Leonard enlisted in the United States Air Force and was stationed first in Waco, TX, and then sent to Dover, DE in 1953. Before heading north, a quick visit back to Tallahassee and a routine stop at the bank led him to meet the love of his life, Patricia Gunnoe, a part-time teller and voice student at FSU. After just two dates, he proposed and they were soon married in a small ceremony in Presque Isle, ME. While in the military, he completed his studies at FSU and received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from FSU in 1957. He served his

country in the United States Air Force until 1974, in positions of great responsibility including Executive Officer with primary flight duties, Flight Commander and Academic and Flightline Instructor, Executive Officer and Assistant to the Wing Commander (Southeast Asia), Major Air Command Staff Officer, and Director of Long Range Plans. He fought in the Vietnam conflict and was highly decorated for his service. Awards received throughout his career included the Air Force Longevity Award with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal with 10 Oak Leaf Clusters, Combat Readiness Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Purple Heart, and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross, among others.

In 1975 he retired with the rank of Colonel and returned to Tallahassee to be closer to his parents and extended family. In 1976 he accepted a position as Assistant Executive Director of the Florida Department of General Services, and in 1983 became Interim Executive Director of the agency. During his time at DGS, he had numerous responsibilities, one of which was to oversee the construction of the new State Capitol building and restoration of the Historic State Capitol building. He concluded his State Government service of 17 years in 1992, as Chief of the Bureau of Titles and Registration with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, when he retired to spend more time with his beloved wife Patricia, their family and their many dogs, even managing to squeeze in a few rounds of golf.

He loved the Lord, cared deeply for his family, and cherished his friendships, many of which began in grade school. He was a decades-long member of the First Baptist Church of Tallahassee, belonged to the Tallahassee Colonels, the Tallahassee Rotary Club and was a Paul Harris Fellow with Rotary International.

He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Patricia A. Melton, and their four

children, Karen M. Stewart (Stan) of Columbia, MD, Dana M. Wiehle (Kevin) of Tallahassee, FL, Leonard L. Melton III of Lakewood, CO, and Audra Melton (Carlos Elgarrista) as well as grandson Felix Lucas Elgarrista of Atlanta, GA.

Leonard was preceded in death by his father, Leonard L. Melton, Sr., his mother Bessie Eliza Melton (Jones), brothers Ronald Melton, Lindy A. Melton, and Robert Brantley, and baby sister Catherine Melton. Special thanks to the Visiting Angels caregivers, whose attentiveness and love improved and extended his life. They will always be cherished family members.

A memorial service at Tallahassee National Cemetery will take place Monday, February 19, 2024 at 10:00AM.

In lieu of flowers, wishes are that donations be made to Big Bend Hospice (<https://bigbendhospice.charityproud.org/Donate>).

Dayne Parker of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 19. 10:00 AM (ET)

Tallahassee National Cemetery
5015 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, FL 32311

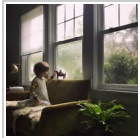
Tribute Wall

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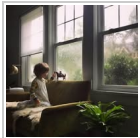
Audra Melton - October 04, 2024 at 06:59 AM



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Audra Melton - September 28, 2024 at 10:29 AM



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Audra Melton - September 28, 2024 at 10:16 AM



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Bevis Funeral Home - January 30, 2024 at 11:28 AM



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Bevis Funeral Home - January 29, 2024 at 02:08 PM