



William Whittington

June 14, 1933 - October 26, 2018

William Andrew Whittington, 85

William Andrew Whittington, our “Papa”, peacefully finished his race in this world and moved on to his next adventure on Friday afternoon, October 26, 2018 surrounded by his family in Lakeland, Florida.

Mr. Whittington also known to many as “Bill” or “Whit” was born in Simpson County, Mississippi on June 14, 1933 to Charles and Della Whittington. Flag Day was an appropriate day of birth as he was a career veteran serving proudly in the United States Air Force.

Whit grew up in a raucous Mississippi farming home with 8 brothers and 2 sisters so when older brother “Jack” decided to join the military, at 17, he did too.

In 1955, Whit married the love of his life, Opal “Snooky” Loretta Whittington in Oklahoma. They welcomed three children into their love and after 20 years of service to our country, finally retired in 1971. Whit served his tenure in Alaska, Greenland and Thailand, bringing home beautiful pearls, a lovely treasured Noritake china set and adventure stories for his bride. Shortly thereafter, he settled his family in Lakeland, Florida, and began a new career with the U.S. Postal service where he worked for many more years.

Whit enjoyed all sports and was a daily 6-mile runner. Many will remember waving as he ran his daily route around Lake Hollingsworth. He kept in shape working in his yard as well. However, in 1982 a life-altering injury to his neck kept him from his daily run. He turned his attention to his love of books and began to read several a week. He continued to enjoy his yard and kept a close eye on sports and the next up and coming baseball, basketball and football stars. There was always lively conversation around the table during weekly Sunday Family dinners that included these sports tid-bits, a story from childhood, a new Cajun recipe to try and a commentary on the news of the day. With Papa, there was never a dull moment. His quick wit and dry humor kept us on our toes. Time with his family both local and abroad was frequent and joyous during these years as well, in spite of disability. The beach called.

With age and injury came a gradual decline in physical ability and in April of 2015 Whit moved into his new home with his beloved caregivers, Ester and Marston Rudder. Their care and close proximity to his family was an amazing blessing.

Whit leaves a legacy of his love for Opal, legendary storytelling, beautifully written prose, fierce love for his children and grandchildren, gardening and stubborn nature. All of which were adored.

Preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Opal, and his sisters Joy and Carolyn; He is survived by, his son, Joe W. Whittington (Ginger), daughter Cheryl Whittington (Kim) and daughter Melanie Whittington, grandchildren; Loren Woods (Branden), Andrew Whittington (Kirby), Samantha "Manthie" and Chloe Surrency and two great-granddaughters, Avery and Addison Woods. He also leaves behind, for our comfort, brothers Charles, Kenneth, Paul, Floyd, Keith, Mark and Markel Whittington, their spouses and many nieces and nephews who loved him dearly.

A viewing for family and friends will be Friday, November 2, 2018 at the Gentry-Morrison Funeral Home, 1727 Bartow Road in Lakeland Florida.

Tribute Wall

JF

“ Hi! I'm sorry to just be hearing about Bill and Snooky now. Bill is my first cousin. I haven't seen him since I was a kid really. My condolences to all the Whittington family, children, grandchildren, greats, brothers,...the other cousins who knew and loved him!

Jo Ann Xenofos Flynn daughter of Mary Nell Brassell Xenofos

Jo Ann Flynn - January 19, 2019 at 08:12 PM

JF

I know both Bill and Snooky will be greatly missed!!

Jo Ann Flynn - January 19, 2019 at 08:14 PM



“ Uncle Bill was just special. I hope this memory brings a little laughter.

Several years ago, I accompanied my dad to a family reunion. During the time of the Reunion, there was a Harrisville reunion and most of the family went. My dad, Uncle Bill & Snooks, a few more aunt's & uncles, and I were sitting and eating lunch at the Harrisville reunion. Uncle Charlie and Claudette were at the back of the room, standing and eating. My dad asked me to go get them and have them sit and eat with us, then he got up and walked away. Immediately, Uncle Bill says, "Rebecca, don't go get them, they're Baptists. Baptists can't sit while they eat." I thought it was strange, I'm not Baptist, but Uncle Bill did not miss a beat, didn't smirk or smile and I did not want to be disrespectful if true. Dad comes back and asks me "Where's your Uncle Charlie, I told you to go get them." Me: "Dad, Baptists can't sit when they eat?" Dad: "Who told you that?!?!?" Me: "Uncle Bill." (who never looked up from his plate) Dad: "Don't listen to your Uncle Bill and go get Charlie".

This memory has made me laugh for many years and when people ask what my family is like, this is the story I share. He will be greatly missed but at the same time- for me- I will always grin from ear to ear when I think of my Uncle Bill and him schooling me on "how Baptists eat".

Rebecca Richards - November 01, 2018 at 05:04 AM

CW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Cheryl Whittington - October 31, 2018 at 05:18 PM



Kimberly
Hess

“ 2 files added to the album Whit



Kimberly Hess - October 31, 2018 at 01:39 PM