

WITH DEEP SORROW

Obituary submissions are only accepted from family members. We will accept online Funeral obituaries or newspaper obituaries if family submissions are not received by the *Canal Record* deadlines. Obituary pictures may be emailed to record@pancanalsociety.org or mailed to the Panama Canal Society office. Emailed pictures must be submitted in a jpeg or tif format in 300 DPI or higher.



Michael Jerry Brannon, age 62, passed away surrounded by his loved ones after a three-year battle with cancer on December 1, 2022. He was a resident of Gainesville, Florida the past 13 years.

Michael was born August 31, 1960, in Crestview, Florida, to Willie Jerry Brannon Jr. and Elvia Rose Tweedy Brannon. Michael spent his early years growing up in Niceville, Florida, enjoying many friendships,

family gatherings, and sports activities such as baseball and football. He also found a love for music by playing the trumpet in the school band at Ruckle Jr. High. Michael spent his teenage years in the Republic of Panama, experiencing the cultures and traditions. The family resided in Balboa, Canal Zone, and Michael graduated with the Balboa High School class of 1978. During that time, he enjoyed being part of the school band, taking karate classes, and doing long-distance running just for fun.

Michael attended the University of Florida, home of the Gators, to study finance and mathematics. Here he found his love for Gainesville, Florida. To further his training, he joined the United States Air Force. During this time, he trained in Rome, N.Y., where he met and married Hope Otterson and later had two amazing children, Jonathan and Kristin. They resided in Rinteln, Germany, fulfilling his Air Force commitment, where he gained unique technical training. This valuable training and managerial experience led to a highly successful career as a Systems Management Manager with the FAA for over 35 years. He took pride in his work with the FAA, including working at airports in Denver, Colorado; Fairbanks, Alaska; Orlando, Florida; and Gainesville, Florida.

Michael loved his family and life itself. He was an avid reader and enjoyed reading many genres of books. He enjoyed watching action-packed movies, listening to rock n roll music, attending the Daytona 500, watching his Gators play football, spending holidays with his family, and practicing and studying more about martial arts. Michael was quite happy that he could make two critical trips in his life. First, he took his mother back to her birthplace - Panama- for her 60th birthday, and second to visit China, where he experienced firsthand its beauty and learned more about martial arts, particularly Bagua. But most of all, Michael loved the beach and spent many memorable vacations with his dearly loved family. The beach is where he found peace and relaxed, and as he called it ...a place to "decompress" and truly be happy. He was a member of the Panama Canal Society.

Michael is preceded in death by his mother, Elvia Rose Brannon. He is survived by his son Jonathan Michael Brannon; daughter, Kristin Michelle Brannon; former wife, Hope Otterson Brannon; father, Willie Jerry Brannon Jr; sister, Myra Ann Brannon Grimison; brother-in-law, Patrick

Eugene Grimison; nephew, Brandon Patrick Grimison; and niece, Chelsea Rose Grimison. He is also survived by the extended family of aunts, uncles, cousins, and cherished friends he met throughout his life journey. Michael will always be remembered for his infectious smile and great sense of humor. His memory will forever be in our hearts. May he finally be at peace here at the beach and eternally in the grace of God's love.



Wayne E. Brassey, 75, of Tampa, Florida, passed away on March 1, 2023. He was born in Casper, Wyoming, and moved to Tampa from Clearwater in 2015. He also served in the Army and later became a regional manager for Cruise America. His favorite pastime was golfing, where he was a member of the Paradise Golf

Association.

Wayne was the only son of Ed and Frances Brassey. In his youth, Wayne moved quite a bit, as his dad worked for several oil companies. In 1960 they moved to Panama, where his dad took on the job of Comptroller for the Panamanian Refinery for 25 years. Wayne spent the next six years collecting many cherished memories and friends before going to Stetson University. He excelled at golf, playing on the university team, and afterward became an assistant coach to the Georgia Tech Golf team for a period of time. He shot his age several times in his early seventies. Wayne made many extraordinary friends along the way. His love for golf was exceeded only by his love for his wife of eight years and his adopted family. Wayne was a member of the Panama Canal Society.

Wayne is preceded in death by his parents, Ed and Frances Brassey. He is survived by his wife, Dody Gwinn Brassey; stepsons, Jimmy (Heidi), John, and Kevin (Pilar) Gwinn; and his five step-grandchildren.

His constant companions in life were his dry sense of humor, intellect, and quick wit. The expression most heard when describing him was, "He was just the sweetest man!". He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.



Roger R. Conley, age 87, passed away on March 1, 2023. He was born in the Panama Canal Zone on September 30, 1935, the son of Richard F. Conley, who worked as a Canal Zone Policeman. His mother was Harriet R. Rogers, a bookkeeper by profession, who worked as a secretary for the Balboa Union Church. His grandfather, William H. Conley,

moved to Panama in 1908 and was a railroad engineer who

helped build the Panama Canal. He earned a Roosevelt Medal with three two-year bars for six years of service building the canal.

In 1947, the Conley family moved to Saint Paul, Minn., and then to Atlanta, Ga. As a young man, Roger Conley worked with the airlines in Atlanta as an aircraft cargo loadmaster, and in 1959, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and served three years, during which he spent some time in Korea as a medic. While stationed at Fort Benning, he met Carol Beth Rogers, and they were married in 1963. They moved to Panama in 1965, and two children were born there: Richard F. Conley in 1966 and William R. Conley in 1968.

While in Panama, Roger Conley worked as an x-ray technician in Gorgas and later as a Customs and Immigration officer for the Canal Zone. He often took his sons to work at the customs office in the port of Balboa and even took them aboard ships. He was a Balboa First Baptist church member and faithfully took his family to church.

Roger loved to fish and hunt. He used to cook many exotic animals hunted from the jungles of Panama. He would hunt by jack-lighting, which is illegal in the U.S. but not in the Canal Zone. You shine a light in the animal's eyes and then shoot them. He hunted conejo pintado, ñeque, and the paisano, the South American turkey.

Roger remarried in 1980 to Olga Yolanda Johnston. He retired from the U.S. government in 1983 and moved back to Atlanta. Roger loved classical music and opera and sang in a church choir as a young man in Georgia. He had a great voice and often could be heard singing opera around the house to two sons who couldn't appreciate his singing at the time.

In 2005, he moved to Albuquerque, N.M., and enjoyed the outdoors. He appreciated the beauty in God's creation and loved photography and collecting rocks. My dad's good friend Victor Brown was the chief reason he moved to New Mexico. They often explored the many beautiful landscapes found there.

Roger is survived by his wife, Olga Yolanda Conley, and her son, Louis Griffith; his sons, Richard Conley and William Conley, and his 12 grandchildren; second cousins, Marsha Sprague (Al) of Louisiana, Lisa Barnett (John) of Texas. Roger's son William still lives in Panama and works as a Panama Canal Pilot. William married Cresta Marie Ganser, another family from the Canal Zone, and they have three children Liam, Caroline, and Anna. Overall, there is a 115-year history of the Conleys in Panama. Roger was a member of the Panama Canal Society.



Katherine Creel, 88, passed away on October 23, 2022 in Midlothian, Virginia. Mary was born on April 29, 1934, in Laurel, Mississippi. She was preceded in death by her husband Beverly L. Creel.

Mary and Beverly met in Mississippi and married on May 31, 1954. They left Mississippi in 1956 for an adventure that would last almost 30 years. They moved to Panama and soon found jobs in the Canal Zone. There they raised their two children and

experienced many adventures exploring Panama and the countries of Central America. Many wonderful experiences and memories for the whole family! Mary worked for FAA until her retirement in 1979 when they retired moved to Mobile, Alabama.

She is survived by her sister Carolyn Rorie; and her children Connie Gambini and Colin Creel (Karen) of Allen, Texas. She leaves behind four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



Jeannie Graham Hemphill Hickman, 82, of Ormond Beach, Florida, passed away on March 29, 2023. She was born to parents Thomas and Frances Hemphill on May 2, 1940, in Glasgow, Scotland.

Jeannie spent her childhood with a large, happy family in Glasgow, Scotland, with siblings Robina (Rena), Thomas, Robert, Joseph, George, Francis (Frank), and Albert.

As a young woman, she emigrated to the United States and met the love of her life, Ernest Hickman, a graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point. They married and had a son, Dale Hickman. In 1972 the family moved to the Republic of Panama and worked for the U.S. Government; Ernest as an Engineer for the Panama Canal Company, and Jeannie for the U.S. Army as a Safety Specialist. She and Ernest retired to Ormond Beach, Florida.

Jeannie loved her career roles and the wonderful people she befriended. She also loved to travel and meet people. Her home was always full of friends, family, food, and music. She and Ernest were known throughout the Canal Zone for their frequent fish fries and Christmas parties. When the U.S. sent troops to Panama during Operation Just Cause, she opened her doors in a war zone and held a Thanksgiving meal for dozens of U.S. combat soldiers passing through. Jeannie loved arts and crafts, was amazingly creative, and enjoyed volunteering at local charities and social groups. She had many friends. Jeannie was a member of the Panama Canal Society.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Ernest Hickman, and her son, Glen Scot Hickman.

Jeannie is survived by her son Dale Edward Hickman, his wife Sandra, and her beloved grandson Nicholas Dale Hickman of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, and her brother Joseph Hemphill of Glasgow, Scotland, and many nieces and nephews.

Jeannie was an amazing spirit and a sense of humor, and her smile and kind heart would light up any room. She was a wonderful wife, mother, and grandmother; we were all fortunate to have her in our lives. She will be forever loved by many.

May she rest in peace where the sun meets the loch and the heather grows on the snowy mountains. "My heart's in the highlands, my heart is not here, My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer" (Robert Burns).



William "Billy" Charles Hutchings, 66, passed away on August 5, 2020. He was born to Alba Davis Hutchings Jr. and Vally Elsa Vallarino in Panama City, Panama. His adventures started early in the jungles of his backyard on "Bayano" Street in Ancon. He attended Saint Mary's Catholic school, Ancon and Balboa Elementary, and Curundu Junior High and graduated from Balboa High School in 1972. Billy's

love of the ocean would turn into an adventurous life of surfing and sailing.

Billy served four years in the U.S. Navy and was a competitive sailor and adventurer with love for the sea. He entered many sailing competitions - some internationally. His greatest joy was sailing his beloved catamarans, often through the Panama Canal, the islands, and around Florida. He had a fun-loving attitude, a free spirit, and a love for travel, adventure, and the sea.

He earned a B.S. and master's degree from the University of Florida. He continued his advanced studies in Hydrogeology at USF, receiving another master's degree and earning a Ph.D. in Geology. He was a licensed professional Geologist and worked with many engineering firms.

One of Billy's nicknames was "Cocobolo," which is a tropical hardwood known for its beauty, strength, and resiliency. He had all these qualities and many more. Billy will be remembered for his calm and quiet demeanor and resolute perseverance. And anyone that knew Billy would agree that he embodied these characteristics. He was a member of the Panama Canal Society.

Billy is preceded in death by his parents and his brother Buddy. He is survived by his sister, Michelle Isabelle Humphrey (Hutchings), his Aunt Dorita Vallarino, and many loving cousins. Billy was a beloved son, brother, uncle and friend. He will be greatly missed.



Lorraine Elizabeth Kirkland, a resident of Dothan, passed away on January 30, 2023. She was 76.

Lorraine was born on November 14, 1946, in Ancon, Republic of Panama. She was a 1964 graduate of Cristobal High School and attended college before entering the workforce. Lorraine was employed with the United States Army and the

Panama Canal Commission as an administrative assistant until her retirement. In her 25 years of service as an administrative assistant, she earned several awards for excellent performance and dedicated service.

Lorraine was preceded in death by her father, John Urey, her brother, Jeffrey Urey, and her first husband, Tom Dugan. Lorraine is survived by her husband, William "Bill" Kirkland; her children: Tricia (Christian) Margeson, Brian (Katie) Dugan, Cristina Kirkland, Carolina Kirkland (Jose Manuel Varela), William (Marianela) Kirkland; grandchil-

dren: Stephan (Sierra) Margeson, Alec Margeson, Nicole Margeson, Hannah Dugan, Thomas Dugan, Samantha Kirkland, William Kirkland, Maria Cristina Kirkland, and Jose Maria Varela; great-grandchildren: Gemma and Ellie Margeson; her mom, Mary Urey; her sisters: Suzanne Kleefkens and Michele Perez and a host of other relatives and friends. She was a Governor's Club member of the Panama Canal Society.



Ray Calvin Lively, 74, of Spring Hill, Florida passed away December 4, 2022 following several years of declining health. He was born March 25, 1948 to the late Foye Mae and Leo Lively in LaFayette, Georgia, joining an older sister, Joan. The family moved to the south Chicago suburbs, where he grew up and graduated from Thornton Township High School in Harvey, Illinois; he later

substitute taught there.

Ray's father died suddenly shortly before he graduated from high school, and Ray assumed the responsibility for "pulling himself up by his own bootstraps" by earning money for college working in a shoe store and applying by himself. The first member of his family to go to college, he attended Illinois State University, where he obtained a B.S. in Psychology (1970) and an M.S. in Experimental Psychology (1971). While there, he also developed an interest in anthropology and archaeology, going to Nevada and Mexico on archaeological digs. He also had a longstanding interest in Native American history.

In 1970, Ray married Cathy (Tollkuhn), and in 1972 had a daughter, Jennifer. He accepted a teaching position at Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois, where he taught psychology, sociology, and anthropology. After three years there, he accepted a teaching offer from the Canal Zone Schools, and he and his family moved to Gamboa in 1974. A second daughter, Christine, was born in 1976 in Ancon. He taught psychology, sociology, and anthropology at Canal Zone College/Panama Canal College, and earned a second Master's Degree from the University of Oklahoma - Panama. He took pride in never changing a grade of any student, even when pressured by senior military officers to change a poor grade to a better one. Ray left a lasting impression on former students. If you could not remember if you had him as a teacher, you probably didn't!

During his time in Panama, Ray lived in Gamboa, Diablo Heights, Balboa, and Corozal. He frequented the Diablo tennis courts, and enjoyed playing tennis every week with his fellow CZC colleagues, Ken Tucker and Ted Corin. Ken and Martha Tucker, and Georgia and Ted Corin kindly extended invitations to Ray and his family to their spectacular beach houses at Santa Clara and San Carlos on numerous occasions, which Ray really enjoyed. Ray also enjoyed playing badminton with CZC colleagues Mike Smith and Mike Brown. He shared many laughs with longtime friend and colleague, Bob Ames. He was a huge Chicago Bears and University of Georgia fan. But one of his greatest pleasures was acting in

the local Theatre Guild and Surfside Theatre productions, where he took his roles very seriously and perfected the appropriate accents for each. Among other roles, he played in "Our Town" at Surfside, and in what some believe was type-casting, assumed the perfect role as Big Jule in "Guys and Dolls," playing the tough-guy part very convincingly. He loved the cast parties!

Ray was a member of the Elks Club in Balboa, rising to the position of Exalted Ruler, in which he took great pride. He appreciated fine furniture and fine art, and had an art collection which included Panamanian pieces and many works from a favorite gallery in New Orleans. Ray loved music, and had an extensive collection, which included early and current rock, country, and Motown. Ray used his vast knowledge of music to create a music appreciation class at PCC and very much enjoyed sharing his love for music with his students. He was a member of the Panama Canal Society.

Ray was proud of his southern roots, reflected in his love of southern cooking. No one appreciated a good biscuit with gravy more, not to mention his affinity for cornbread (not sweet), fried okra, Brunswick stew, and banana pudding. Every home leave vacation, he returned to Trion and Summerville, Georgia to visit his family.

Ray retired to Bradenton, Florida in 1999 and settled in Spring Hill a few years later.

Jenny and Christine fondly remember family vacations to Montreal, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Savannah with their dad. They also spent hours and hours playing spirited games of cards and backgammon with lots of laughter. Ray was an excellent conversationalist and was an especially good support when times were tough.

Ray is survived by his daughters, Jenny Loy, of Woodbridge, Va.; Christine Lively, of Orlando, Fla.; three grandchildren, Christopher, Emily, and Sarah Loy; and ex-wife Cathy Lively. Ray was buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in Gotha, Fla., following a family memorial service.



Gloria Jane Maisano, most recently of Covington, died unexpectedly on February 28, 2023, at age 82. Gloria was born to Catherine Bernadette Henry and Roger Joseph Sigl in 1941 in Manistique, Michigan. At age three, she moved with her parents and her older sister Judith (deceased) to the Panama Canal Zone. She graduated from Balboa High School in 1959.

When Gloria was 18, she moved to New Orleans to attend Dominican College. In 1963, she graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Dietetics. While attending Dominican College, she met the love of her life on a blind date, and after a few years of dating, Gloria and Joseph Maisano married. They raised four children in River Ridge, where they lived for 50+ years.

Once their children were in high school and college, Gloria returned to one of her passions. In 1983, she graduated from Tulane University with her Master's in Public Health, specializing in Nutrition. Over the next 30 years, she provided nutrition support to elderly and disabled adults across New

Orleans while maintaining a private practice in the Metairie area. Gloria's children often said, "Mom could do anything she put her mind to." Gloria was a passionate cook, an avid baker, and a creative gardener. She had an astounding ability to accomplish challenging tasks like teaching herself French before a trip to Europe, challenging Skippy Garcia to a ceviche contest, and needlepointing a tapestry. Gloria was a member of the Panama Canal Society.

Gloria leaves behind her husband Joseph; daughter Page and husband Vashu; daughter Nancy and wife Laura; son Bo and wife Sue; and son Billy (William) and late wife Shannon; grandchildren Ken, Hannah, Connor, Lauren, Nicole, Kaye, Lucia, and Will; and great-grandchildren Oliver, Harvey, and August.



Thomas Daniel McFadden, 69, of Wellsburg, West Virginia, died peacefully on March 10, 2023, at Weirton Medical Center with his family by his side.

Tom was born on May 13, 1953, in Panama Canal Zone, a son of the late Edward P. and Sally J. (Williams) McFadden, Sr. In addition to his parents, Tom is preceded in death by his brother, Edward P. McFadden, Jr., and his mother and father-in-law, Alice Esther (Buchanan) and Louis Harris.

Tom graduated from Balboa High School in 1971 in the Panama Canal Zone and the Canal Zone College with a two-year Associate in Applied Sciences. He then received his bachelor's in Health Physical Education and Driver's Education from West Liberty University. Tom retired from the Army, where he was a Command Sergeant Major for the 82nd Airborne Division for 25 years, having served in Desert Storm, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Haiti, along with two tours in Germany and one in Korea. He was Catholic by faith, a member of the Wellsburg American Legion Post #34, and the Wellsburg Loyal Order of Moose # 1564. He was a member of the Panama Canal Society.

Tom is survived by his loving wife of 46 years, Valorie (Buchanan) McFadden; his devoted daughter Hopemarie McFadden and companion Josh McCoy; three grandchildren, Aiden, Amber, and Ava; two brothers, James (Janet) McFadden of Follansbee, W. V. and William McFadden of Atlanta, Ga., two sisters, Mary Shea (Jim) Rowley of Atlanta, Ga. and Margaret (Edward) Mulroy of Jacksonville, Fla.; a brother-in-law, Dave (Angela) Harris of Wellsburg, W.V.; two nephews, Paul and Ted, and five nieces, Rannveig, Dora, Collene, Kate, and Kelly; along with several cousins.

Private internment will be held in Bethany Community Cemetery in Bethany, W. V., with full Military Honors conducted by the Ohio Valley Veterans Memorial Squad and United States Army.



Helen Louise Mendenhall, 90, Williamston, North Carolina, passed peacefully in her sleep on March 11, 2023, in her home after a heroic battle against breast cancer. Louise was born November 5, 1932, in Salisbury, N. C., to Claire Rachel Hall and Roy Melton Keith. Louise was the youngest of three children and a graduate of Maury High School in Norfolk, Va.

On April 27, 1951, she married Captain Ralph "Whitey" Gray Mendenhall, Sr. Following his career, in 1961, they packed up their young family and relocated to the Canal Zone in the Republic of Panama, where Ralph served as a Tugboat Captain and a Ship Pilot in the Panama Canal until 1992. After his retirement, they returned to Bear Grass, North Carolina, to their beloved farm. They filled their days with hard work, family, and loving their grandchildren.

Louise was a devoted wife and mother to her kids and many other children while in the Canal Zone. She served as Den Mother to the Cub Scouts and coach, for numerous years, to the Knights of Columbus girls basketball and softball leagues. She was also Past Matron of the Rebecca Lodge in the Canal Zone. During her lifetime Louise had multiple nicknames of Toots, Coach, Dirty Old Cop (from serving as a police crosswalk guard), Crazy Lady, and Old Woman (by her grandchildren).

Louise loved the outdoors, farming, traveling around the United States, and watching her grandchildren and great-grandchildren perform in their various extra-curricular activities. She thoroughly enjoyed attending the Panama Canal Reunions and catching up with all her friends. Louise was a member of the Panama Canal Society.

She is survived by her daughter Carol Williams (BHS'71) of Washington, N.C. and her son Ralph Gray Mendenhall, Jr (BHS'77) of Greenville, N.C., and stepsister Brenda Kay Forbes-Jones of Robersonville, N.C. She is also survived by seven grandchildren: Susan Matthews (Craig) of Grifton, N. C.; Matthew Wesley (Janelle) of Bear Grass, N.C.; Raymond Williams (Candice) of Washington, N.C.; Christina Ledbetter (Jason) of Waynesville, N.C.; Jami Brown (Eric) of Williamston, N.C.; and Lauren Mendenhall-Turner (Aleta) of Danielsville, Ga. She was blessed to have 13 great-grandchildren whom she adored: Ashley Hartman, Tyler Moore, Cadie Lewis, Trenton Moore, Maddie Lewis, Maci Williams, Mendy Westbrook, Chase Rodriguez, Wyatt Williams, Emmett Ledbetter, Roley Brown, Elizabeth Ledbetter, and Axel Brown.

She is preceded in death by her parents, brother Gene Keith of Norfolk, Va., sister Dorothy Cherry of Norfolk, Va., her husband Captain Ralph Mendenhall, daughter Janet Wesley Whitaker (BHS'76) of Williamston, N. C., and grandchild Carrie Williams Moore of Williamston, N. C.



Kathyleen R. Miller (Kay) of Sun City Center, Florida, passed away on February 28, 2023, at the age of 105 years old.

Kay was born on August 27, 1917, in Glendive, Mont., to Alice P. and Harley T. Reed and lived in Bloomfield, Mont. until the family moved to Springville, Wisc. She graduated from Viroqua High School in 1935. After graduation, Kay moved to the Panama Canal Zone with her Aunt, Uncle, and Cousin (Margaret, Charles, and Tom Peterson). After graduating from the Canal Zone Jr. College, Kay went to work with the Panama Canal U.S. Government in the Personnel Department for 26 years.

She married Allen K. Miller at Pedro Miguel Union Church in 1938. They had two daughters, Martha and Marjorie, both graduates of Balboa High School. After retirement, Allen and Kay moved to Sarasota, Florida, for 32 years. Allen passed away in 1998. In 2004, Kay moved to the Courtyards in Sun City Center, Fla, to enjoy her sunset years.

Kay was Past Matron of the Panama Canal Zone Orchid Chapter, OES, and was a member of the Panama Canal Society and the United Methodist Church of Sun City Center, Fla.

She is survived by her daughters Martha Hoskins of Tigard, Oregon, and Marjorie Scheiwe of Monument, Colo.; grandson Mike Hoskins and granddaughter Melinda Cope; and great-grandson Connor Cope.



Mildred (Millie) L. Reitz died peacefully on January 12, 2023, at the age of 98.

Born in Oskaloosa, Iowa, in 1924, she moved to the Republic of Panama in May of 1953 as part of a Methodist Missionary Couple with her husband, the Rev. Walter K. Reitz, who preceded her in death in January 1993, and her first two sons Paul and Philip. After working at the Pan American School, the largest by-lingual school complex in Panama City, the family moved to David near the Costa Rican Border.



In 1965 after a year of furlough in Atlanta, Georgia, the family, now with additional sons Peter and Perry 'aka' Sam, returned to Panama City, where her sons were enrolled in the Panama Canal School System. All her sons graduated from Balboa High School; Paul in 1969, Phil in 1970, Peter in 1973, and Sam in 1977.

Walter Reitz was asked to be the Minister of the Balboa Union Church in 1978, the Carter-Torrijos Treaty was signed in September 1979, and the exodus of Americans started from the Canal Zone. Walter was the Minister there for four years.

Later Millie also became the Minister of the Balboa Union Church from 2001 until 2004.

Among her many roles in education in Panama, Millie taught English and religion at the Pan American Institute. In 1984 she became the Director of the I.P.A. until 1987, a highly distinguished role. Additionally, she taught English at the Canal Zone Junior College in the '90s for several years. Mildred then worked with Nova (now Nova Southeastern) University of Fort Lauderdale. She set up an "English as a Second Language" program in Panama and became the program's Director. Other accomplishments were as a writer and exceptional speaker. Having attained a degree in English Literature from Asbury College in 1947, she also pursued and received a Master's in Spanish Literature from Georgia State University in 1970.

In 2002, the United States Embassy in Panama recognized her as one of the two outstanding Americans that year for her "Distinguished Service to a Host Country (Panama). It was only one of many awards and recognitions she was given throughout her almost 70 years in Panama.

Her third son Peter preceded her in death in 2010. She is survived by her other three sons: Paul (Trudy) Reitz, Philip (Beverly) Reitz, and grandchildren, Nicole, Leah, and Lucas; Sam (Sherry) Reitz and grandchildren Megan and Melisa; along with four great-grandchildren. Also surviving her is a long-time friend, colleague, and confidant Arminda Ferraud.

All three sons attended her funeral in Panama City in January, held at the Iglesia La Resurreccion in what was once called El Marañon, near the Cinco de Mayo Plaza, where the Reitz's were ministers in the mid-1960s. The retired Methodist Bishop of Panama, the Right Reverend Secundino Morales, traveled to the city to participate in the funeral along with many other dignitaries from I.P.A., the Balboa Union Church, and other Panamanian associations. Her ashes were scattered in the Bay of Panama according to her wishes.



Douglas Neal Roper, age 73, died on March 13, 2023, at Methodist Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, with his beloved wife Janet by his side.

Doug graduated from Balboa High School in the Panama Canal Zone. He moved to San Antonio, Texas, in 1969, where he met and married Janet Lee Van Sickle. Doug was an accomplished artist, and his love for art and history began with his childhood in Europe, Central America, and multiple states in the U.S.

He was encouraged to pursue his artistic talent by the noted sculptress Waldine Tauch, and his formal training began at the Warren Hunter School of Art in the 1970s. The first fifteen years were spent doing watercolors, commercial art, and architectural renderings. Then after taking a sculpting course with Louis Guzman, his first bronze was cast in 1988 at Stevens Art Foundry in Bulverde, Texas. Since then, he has created life-sized and large commissioned bronze sculptures.

As part of a cultural exchange exhibit in the early 1990s, Doug was selected as one of ten artists whose work was sent

to San Antonio's sister city, Kyoto, Japan. He was a life member of the Coppini Academy of Fine Arts.

Doug was one of the founding artists of the Carriage House Gallery in Boerne, Texas. He participated in that cooperative gallery for many years, loved working with the talented artists there, and truly enjoyed interacting with the public. Now some of his work can be seen at the Helotes Gallery in Helotes, Texas.

Some of his larger commissions include: "The Rattler" at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas; "Sandhill Cranes" at Sandhill Shores, Talveston Island, Texas; The 2004,2005,2006 Airforce Academy senior plaques in Colorado Springs, Colorado; "The War Dog Memorial" in front of the H. Lee Dennison Federal Building in Long Island, New York; "Taking Flight" at Morgan's Wonderland, San Antonio, Texas; "SuperFrog" at Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas; "Heart of UIW" at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas.

Doug believed that he had a responsibility to develop and refine his God-given talent, and as a personal statement of faith, he signed his worked with an Ichthus. His work can be viewed at www.dougroper.com.

He is survived by his wife Janet; their son Sean Roper; grandson Sean; and granddaughter, Serenity, of San Antonio, Texas. He is also survived by his brother Rev. Bert Roper of Madera, California; godparents Ruben and Mellonee Villalobos; niece Jennifer Roper Becker (Mike); nephew Michael Roper (Elizabeth); John and Jeanine Van Sickle; Kealy and Tracy Van Sickle; Taylor Van Sickle; Jordan and Tony Douthit; Gordan and Nancy Van Sickle; Alex Van Sickle; Mallory and Matt Selby; Mary Parker; Bruce Van Hoose; Samantha and Jared Olivier; Katie Parker; Amber O'Connell; numerous great-nieces and great-nephews; sister-in-law Norma Roper, cousins, Kay and Dick Melbert Tarsney and a wealth of friends who comprise his church and art families.

He was preceded in death by his parents, George and Shirley Roper, his sister Pam, his brother George and Jimmy and Laverne Melbert. He was a member of the Panama Canal Society.



John M. Sanders of Palm Harbor, Fla., beloved brother, uncle, cousin, and friend, passed away on March 25, 2023. He was 76 years old.

John was born and raised in the Panama Canal Zone. He graduated from Cristobal High School in 1964 and attended Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Ky. John was drafted into the US Army and attended NCO School, earning the rank of Sergeant E5. He was sent to Vietnam, was wounded in combat in 1969, and spent the rest of his life as a quadriplegic.

John's strength and positive outlook on life can be attributed to his



friends and family, who welcomed him home with excitement, inclusion, and love. Many days revolved around John getting him out and about. John's new life was an active one!

In 1979, John and his parents retired to Palm Harbor, Fla., where John continued to enjoy life with the care of his family and very special home health aides. In 2002, after John's parents had passed away, John's sister, Karen, and her husband, Bob, moved in to help John. Life was good with help from his brother, Jack, living nearby, and visits from his sister, Sheila, cousins, neighbors, and dear friends. He was a member of the Panama Canal Society.

However, after a few years of declining health and, more recently, several weeks in the hospital with heart and kidney issues, John passed away. He is survived by his sister, Karen (Bob), sister, Sheila, brother, Jack (Lisa), and several nieces, nephews, and cousins. A graveside service will be held in Glasgow, Ky., where John's parents are buried.



for 57 years. Barbara and Don built a beautiful life with their four children: Traci, Donnie, David, and Chris. She was happiest spending time with her family and friends. A loyal TCU parent of her four TCU alum children, one often saw Barbara dressed in her favorite color, purple, rooting for her beloved Frogs football and basketball teams.

Barbara, affectionately called Noni by her grandchildren, was loved by many for her maternal way of caring for others. She was intensely devoted to her faith and attended St. Paul Lutheran Church for over 50 years. Barbara dedicated much of her free time to the church community and its school. She also was a staple in the Dallas and Atlanta wholesale market showrooms helping retailers select décor, clothing, and houseware for their retail shops. Barbara had many talents, but family always came first. She was a pillar of strength and a cherished role model for her family.

Barbara is survived by her children, Traci Thomas Whittier, Donald Ray Thomas II (Lara), David Thomas (Monica), and Chris Thomas (Molly); her grandchildren, Thomas Whittier, Zachary Whittier, Carson Whittier, John Thomas, Charles Thomas, William Thomas, Henry Thomas, and Lillian Thomas; her sister, Joan Chieffalo Arend (daughter, Severine Arend); her brother, Robert Chieffalo (daughter, Victoria Chieffalo); her brother, Rodger Chieffalo and his wife, Jacqueline Prophit Chieffalo (children-Isabella and Alexander Chieffalo); and her brother, Russell Chieffalo (children-Sophia and Rusty Chieffalo).



Barbara Chieffalo Thomas passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by her loving family, on April 1, 2023, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Barbara was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on October 15, 1943, to Margaret Chieffalo and Lieutenant Colonel Frank Chieffalo. Raised in a military family, Barbara and her siblings moved to Panama, where she graduated from Balboa High School in 1961 and was voted Best Looking and Homecoming Queen. It is there Barbara met her beloved "Don," Major Donald Ray Thomas, to whom she was married



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<p><u>DEADLINES FOR ARTICLES, NEWS OR PHOTOS FOR THE CANAL RECORD:</u></p> <p>OCTOBER 2023 CANAL RECORD - DEADLINE AUGUST 5, 2023</p> <p>DECEMBER 2023 CANAL RECORD - DEADLINE OCTOBER 7, 2023</p> <p>MARCH 2024 CANAL RECORD - DEADLINE JANUARY 6, 2024</p> <p>JUNE 2024 CANAL RECORD - DEADLINE APRIL 6, 2024</p>
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