



Randall Davis Rankin

January 8, 1938 - February 3, 2019

Randall Davis Rankin, age 81, of Piedmont, Alabama, passed away Sunday, February 3, 2019, at Gadsden Baptist Medical Center. He was born on a farm, four miles west of Piedmont, January 8, 1938; the second child of John Melvin and Ophelia Davis Rankin. Randall graduated from Piedmont High School in 1958 and attended Jacksonville State University where he met his future wife, Julie Nadine Boggs from Wedowee, Alabama. The newly married couple moved to Los Angeles, California, where Autonetics, a division of North American Aviation, employed him for twelve years in the aircraft industry. During this time, the Army Reserve gave him an honorably discharged, April 30, 1964. Randall soon proved to be exceptional at anything he focused his mind. He started in production, was promoted to lead man and later gained a supervisor position requiring US government top secret clearance. Randall demonstrated high credibility and was expected to maintain trust. By age 29, Randall became the quality control supervisor of four departments spearheading the construction and testing of the LGM-30 Minuteman III ICBL missile program from 1966-1970. His decisions influenced the success of the program. Not only was he the youngest person to serve in such a position, up to that time, but the success of the program became an integral part of National Security as well as American and Cold War era history. After the successful completion of the LGM-30, Randall returned with his family to his native Alabama. He built his family home, earned a BS of Science degree at Jacksonville State University, 1972, and established several entrepreneur

enterprises, such as rock masonry and contracting work in Alabama and metro-Atlanta. Randall became a supervisor at the Standard Cosa Thatcher Mill in Piedmont. While working there, he designed the doffing cards inside the 'twister room'. Additionally, he served as an assistant manager of the Research and Development program at Blue Mountain Industries in Anniston, Alabama before becoming a respected independent life insurance agent for Liberty National, Life of Alabama and American Amicable. In 1984, he became Regional Vice president of State Life Reserve Insurance Company, in Lake Fort, Texas, the largest life insurance company in the state at the time, and managed the companies' offices from Texas to Alabama. In 1987, he became Vice President of Alliance Life insurance in Wichita, Kansas. In the early 1980s, Randall became afflicted with trigeminal neurology and endured unspeakable pain. He received variations of treatments and operations but was forever fated to face the residual ramifications of the conditions. Rather than give into the affliction, Randall supported his wife and aging mother as well as provide advocacy to others who endure the disease. Then in the late 1990s, after the Collapse of the Soviet System, he became actively involved in the lives of post-Soviet believers. Although Randall kept his faith personal and private, he was extraordinarily involved in advocating for the assistance of churches and religious leaders in Russia. He used his influence to help provide places for Russian pastors to speak about their experiences of suppression during the Soviet. Because of his influence, these Russian pastors gained access to the United States and had a voice from the Carolinas to California. Today, Nemchinovka Baptist Church, just outside of Moscow, Russia, not only has a large thriving church but has international outreach ministries throughout the former Soviet Union, South Korea, and Brazil. Additionally, Randall, along with Thomas Arnold and Jack Nevills at Artificial Limb and Braced, helped twelve-year-old Igor Shmorgun, come to the USA from Moscow, Russia and gain new legs and new opportunities in life. Because of this intervention, Dr. Shmorgun went on to become a licensed medical doctor as well as a national and international Paralympic upper body

weightlifting champion. In recent years, Randall wrote and published three books under the pseudonym Steelyard Scales: Protecting Carson Buffet, The Pursued, and The Word Keeper. He loved building and remodeling homes. In addition to his place, he built his aunt's, Electa Welsh, house and his cousins' Stanley, and Rita Davis's place, twice. Years later, he helped rebuild his son's, Randy, home after a destructive tornado. The most meaningful home he built, from the ground up, his next door neighbor's place, the McCain homestead where he developed a longstanding and close relationship with Bill and Evellyn; Jay and Sandra; Mark and Donna; and Jared and Jayden. Over the years McCains and Rankins grew to become family so much they placed their cemetery lots side by side at Littlejohn. Mr. Rankin is survived by his two sons: Kerry John (Maria 'Blanca') and Randy Jackson Rankin; two granddaughters: Maria Nadine and Amy Miranda; one brother, Carlton Rankin (Donna), and two sisters, Ellen June Smith (Mac) and Theresa Kisor (Waylan). He leaves behind numerous close cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends. Those who knew him best, recall his deep sense of humor, quick wit, and sarcasm, his multitude of stories, and his love of playing practical, and sometimes amusingly pestering, jokes on loved ones. Randall had a deep love and fascination with geology, paleogeology, archeology, ancient history, writing, rocks of any kind, shape or form, and anything he could construct with his mind and hands. In his final days, his neighbors could hear him working on what became his final project: a large shed, the size of a small house, in his backyard. At 80 years of age, Randall Rankin purchased a Harbor Freight portable sawmill, 'downed' every tree needed for his project, and skated each with his tractor. He sawed the wood for the frame, joists, floors, siding, doors, and windows and then roofed it himself with perfection. Those closest to him understood that Randall loved his family with all his soul. He dedicated his entire life and being to his wife, children, and grandchildren. In his 61 years of marriage to Nadine, he made it his purpose in life 'to take such great care of her. Visitation for Randall Davis Rankin will be from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, Saturday,

February 9th, at Thompson Funeral Home, Piedmont, Alabama. His remembrance service will be held Sunday, February 10th at Thompson's at 2:00 pm with the Reverend Michael Yates officiating. Services conclude, graveside, at Littlejohn's Cemetery near his homestead in the Knighten's Crossroads community. Pallbearers include Jay McCain, Roger Young, Jeff Kisor, Tim Davis, Scott Maddox, Michael Twilley, Ronnie Wayne Ledbetter, and David Ledbetter. Honorary pallbearers include Thomas Arnold, Wayne Rankin, Dr. Park Chittom, Joel Ledbetter, and Buddy Davis. Special music provided by Jeffery Rogers and Michael Yates. Although the family will receive flowers, the family requests individuals send donations to the John Melvin and Ophelia Davis Rankin Scholarship Fund, Piedmont Education Trust, P.O. Box 819, Piedmont, Alabama 36272.

Cemetery Details

Littlejohn Cemetery

684 Sulphur Springs Road North
Piedmont, AL 36272

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **9**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Thompson Funeral Home & Crematory
6340 Old Piedmont-Gadsden Hwy
Piedmont, AL 36272
(256) 447-7113
<https://www.thompsonfuneralhomepiedmont.com>

Service

FEB **10**. 2:00 PM (CT)

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Tribute Wall

HP

“ *Hilda P. purchased a sympathy card for the family of Randall Davis Rankin.* ”



Hilda P. - February 04, 2019 at 09:06 PM

HP

“ *Hilda Parris lit a candle in memory of Randall Davis Rankin* ”



Hilda Parris - February 04, 2019 at 08:20 PM



Condolences..Piedmont community has lost another great man..

Roy Beecham - February 09, 2019 at 10:29 AM