



Sterling Davis Hays

October 8, 1931 - March 14, 2024

Sterling Davis Hays

On March 14, 2024, the United States Air Force, the Texas Pharmacy Association, Austin Northwest Hills United Methodist Church communities and his family, lost a beloved man. USAF Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Sterling Davis Hays and a fourth generation Texan passed from a tragic accident while exiting a play he attended with his dear wife, Barbara Hoell Hays. Davis's deep love for his family and friends leaves an unforgettable impact.

Davis was born on October 8, 1931 in Dallas, Texas. His parents, Sterling O Hays, and Addie Matilda Blacklock raised a strong, kind, and adventurous man. Ever since he was a young boy, he demonstrated a strong love for adventure, traveling, his country and most importantly his family. He was particularly protective of his brother, John Hays, who passed away almost a year ago, and considered him his best friend. Davis graduated from Barstow High School as an accomplished tennis player and marching band trombone member. Davis fondly recounted Rose Bowl marching band memories. Davis attended flight school in Waco and went on to become a radar observer in F89's in Portland, Oregon. He transitioned to the military airlift command. On August 8, 1957, Davis was the copilot of a C97 transport aircraft en-route to Honolulu over the Pacific Ocean when the number 1 propeller caused the engine assembly to overheat and explode. Then the propeller broke loose and struck the number 2 propeller. With both engines out, the airplane rolled and

descended to just above the surface of the ocean. To lose weight, the crew jettisoned bags of mail and the passengers' baggage from the airplane. The pilots diverted the airplane to Hilo and arrived after almost six hours. The pilot and copilot Davis miraculously controlled the aircraft over sixty feet above the ocean. Davis's tenacious skills resulted in a safe landing and the survival of all sixty passengers. Davis was recognized by being awarded the Air Medal for Valor in the Sky and became known as a national hero. Davis humbly spoke of Telephone Time, the American anthology drama series aired on CBS and later on ABC, depicting his C97 flight, titled Flight for Life. Davis went on to become a pilot in the Rome Flight Service and later served in Saudi Arabia. While on active duty in Saudi Arabia, he became the Men's Single and Double Tennis Champion in 1967. Davis later flew troops, heavy equipment, and materials to Vietnam. Davis became Deputy Commander of the 89th wing of the United States Air Force and he served as primary pilot of Air Force 2 and secondary pilot of Air Force 1. Davis flew Vice President Agnew, diplomats, was Henry Kissinger's designated pilot and was a member for President Nixon and entourage to historic missions to Moscow and Beijing. Davis flew many of the Apollo astronauts on their victory tours until his retirement from the Air Force in 1972. Retirement was not a word in Davis's vocabulary. After "retiring" he attended the University of Texas at Austin and became a well-known pharmacist. During Desert Storm he served as head pharmacist for Fort Hood as a civilian for the United States Army. Known as "Sterling" he was recognized as a top Pharmacist with a passion for the field, an unwavering commitment to serving the soldiers of Fort Hood and was described as a prime example of a true leader in health care. After retiring from pharmacy, he became an actor, taking roles as an extra. At 92 years of age, family and friends fondly remember Davis and Barbara happily dancing at their grandson's wedding. Davis continued to operate his co-owner cruise company, Beyond the Seas, regularly go to the gym, travel, and enjoy time with his family. Most importantly, he never stopped being his wife's caretaker. Davis is survived by his wife, Barbra Hoell Hays, his daughter USN Lieutenant

Commander (Retired) Ellen Adrienne Hays, his son Sterling Howard Hays, wife Maria Jose Angelelli, and three grandchildren, Lavinia Hays Angelelli, Sterling Dezio Hays Angelelli, wife Naomi Zycha and Giuliana Hays Angelelli. Also surviving are his niece Robin Steele, husband Chris Steele, nephews Kurt Hoell, Dale Ashley and wife Anne Ashley, great nieces, Brooklyn Ann Steele, Allisyn Munoz, husband Joe Munoz, and Jaclyn Lacey, husband, Thomas Lacey, Kirstyn Steele, Katelyn Steele and great grand nieces and nephews Ezra Munoz, Ever Mae Munoz, Grayson Sims, and Weslynn Steele. Davis is also survived by numerous cousins that he dearly cherished. Memorial Services will be held on March 23, 2024, at Northwest Hills United Methodist Church at 5 pm with reception following at the church.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR **23**. 5:00 PM (CT)

Northwest Hills United Methodist Church
7050 Village Center Drive
Austin, TX 78731
nwhillsumc.org

Tribute Wall



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Sterling Davis Hays.*



March 22, 2024 at 10:13 PM



“ *Dr. Mann, Donna, Tish, and Patty planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Sterling Davis Hays.*

Dr. Mann, Donna, Tish, and Patty - March 22, 2024 at 10:13 PM



“ *my sweet sister shirley was married to his brother john hays, and i got to visit with them several times and family , plus his mother , sweet family .*

jw burke - March 22, 2024 at 08:22 AM