



Robert Ervin Barnett

November 14, 1947 - June 26, 2019

Robert Ervin Barnett, 71, died at his home in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, surrounded by family on June 26, 2019.

He was born on November 14, 1947, in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, to Ray and Laurine Barnett, the third of seven children. Robert grew up primarily in Colcord, Oklahoma, Gentry, Arkansas, and Siloam Springs, Arkansas, where he graduated in 1965. During those years he loved working, camping, and having fun at both his paternal Barnett grandparents' farm (now at the bottom of SWEPCO lake), and maternal Hardcastle grandparents' adjacent farm (Hardcastle Orchard, now Taylor Orchard), 3 ½ miles SW of Gentry. For several of those early years he also delivered newspapers to residents of Gentry.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret Barnett; sons, Robert Jeffrey Barnett of Pottersville, New Jersey; Carter Wyatt Barnett (wife, Hannah) of Fayetteville, Arkansas; Margaret's three children, John Padilla, Vincent Padilla, and Teresa Padilla, all of New Jersey; three grandchildren, Trevor Barnett, John Padilla and Vincent Padilla; mother, Laurine Barnett; brothers David Barnett, Jonathan Barnett (wife, Christy), James Barnett (wife, Marilyn), and sister Mary Boxx (husband, Randy), all of Siloam Springs, Arkansas; sister Jane Johnson (husband, Jerry) of Waco, Texas, and brother Mark Barnett (wife, Sandra) of Lawrence, Kansas. He is also survived by many aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends.

In the Fall of 1965 Robert went to Arkansas Tech on a full track scholarship

and graduated with a degree in Parks and Recreation in 1969. Nine years later he earned a Master's degree in Business Management from Central Michigan University.

He earned his military wings in the U.S. Air Force in 1971, and served in multiple assignments in the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. During his Air Force career he flew the T-37 "Tweet," T-38 "Talon," AC-130A "Gunship," and the C-141 "Starlifter."

In September, 1976, Robert was selected to fly the Secret Service staff of Henry Kissinger to Rhodesia for peace talks. Sometime in 1977, he was chosen to pilot a top-secret, highly dangerous mission into Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, after a military coup to get the families of our countrymen out alive. While surrounded by 300 troops and a number of tanks, he was on the radio to the War Room with top military leaders, including President Jimmy Carter, for five-and-a-half tense hours during that successful event.

After serving eight years active duty and 15 years in the Reserves, he retired with the rank of Lt. Colonel in 1993 with 23-years of service to his country, including being called up for two years full-time duty during the Persian Gulf War in 1991. During those years he won many medals, awards, and citations. Robert started his commercial aviation career with Ozark Airlines in 1979, flying the Douglas DC-9. Three years later he was hired by People Express to pilot their Boeing 737 from NY to Florida. Shortly thereafter, People Express became part of Continental Airlines, where he began flying the Boeing 757 and 767. During those 26 years he also worked as a Check Airman instructor on the 757 and 767. He was responsible for the training, standardization, and proficiency of approximately 700 Continental Airline pilots.

On his 60th birthday, Robert faced FAA mandatory retirement from flying commercially. Ten days later that age was raised to age 65, but not "grandfathered" in for previously retired pilots. Still wanting to fly, he landed a job as the personal pilot for Sheikh Abdullah Kamel, a Saudi international businessman with over 60,000 employees (Dallah Al-Baraka). Eight years later, at the age of 68, Robert permanently retired to reside in his hometown of

Siloam Springs, where he loved to play golf and travel.

All-in-all, Robert had accumulated over 29,000 flying hours. During that time he never had any flight violations, accidents, or incidents, and had flown into almost every major city in the U.S., Europe, Middle East, Caribbean, South America, and parts of Asia and Africa.

Robert publicly made his confession in Christ as his Savior at the age of five. Wanting to know more about God, he read his Bible completely through while in Junior High. But his relationship with God became close and intense while flying 18 missions in Vietnam during 1973-74, piloting a Lockheed AC-130A four-engine turboprop plane providing armed air support for search and rescue missions and friendly ground forces. Originally designed as a transport aircraft, it was transformed into a gunship during the Vietnam war. Five AC-130A planes in Robert's squadron were shot down, killing all 14-crew members on board. He said he prayed 20 out of 24 hours every day during that time, and it had a powerful impact on his spiritual life from that point forward.

He was super athletic, excelling in every sport he participated in, especially basketball, track, football, and baseball while growing up. He held the track record in the 440-dash for Siloam's District for 25-years. In basketball, he made All-Tourney team in the Northwest Arkansas Invitational and Springdale Tournament, received All-Conference and All-District honors, and was elected Outstanding Basketball Player of the year even though he only played his senior year in Siloam after transferring from Gentry the year before.

Robert will be remembered by his gentle and soft spirit, humility, kindness, caring and compassion for others, being a good listener, slow to anger, and his honorableness. Everyone was at ease and felt good being around Robert, who was always interested in other people's lives. He became a great friend to everyone he encountered. Some of his last words were to a hospice chaplain when asked if there was anything he'd like to share with the family and friends. He replied that he wished all of them would accept Christ as their

Savior and be saved, and he stayed on that theme when other questions were asked.

Having six siblings, he is the first to pass away. There will be an immense void in the Barnett family. However, the memory of who Robert was, the stories he told, and the honorable life he lived will go far to inspire the rest of us to achieve the greatest victory of all, the salvation of our souls through Jesus Christ, our Lord. “. . . and having done everything, to stand firm to the end.” Ephesians 6:13. Robert did just that – he stood firm in his Christian faith to the end.

Visitation will be from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday night, July 1, at Wasson Funeral Chapel in Siloam Springs. A Celebration Service will be held at First Baptist Church, Siloam Springs, starting at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 2, followed by a burial service with military honors at Oak Hill Cemetery in Siloam Springs. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Fellowship Bible Church, 1051 W. Pleasant Grove Rd, Rogers, AR 72758. Donations will be designated for a prayer room fund.

Cemetery Details

Oak Hill Cemetery

2122 W. University St.
Siloam Springs, AR 72761

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 1. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Wasson Funeral Home
441 U.S. 412
Siloam Springs, AR 72761
(479) 524-5131
wasson@wassonfuneralhome.com
<https://www.wassonfuneralhome.com>

Service

JUL 2. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church
2000 Dawn Hill Rd.
Siloam Springs, AR 72761
<http://www.fbcsiloam.com>

Tribute Wall

MK

“ I was in the 732nd MAS with Bob from 1981 until he retired. I was flight management for the squadron. Bob was always patient, kind and funny. He had a wonderful gentle demeanor. I enjoyed working with him. My heartfelt condolences to your family. He is home now with Heavenly Father and may Bob Rest In Peace in Heavenly Father's arms for Eternity.

Maggie Koller - November 01, 2024 at 11:47 AM

SU

“ Susan lit a candle in memory of Robert Ervin Barnett



Susan - August 27, 2020 at 09:44 PM

JK

“ Bob and I flew many times together while in the 732nd at McGuire. I don't remember him without a smile, which he always shared with the rest of the crew.
Please accept my most sincere condolences. He will be missed.
Eternal Memory!
Joe Kollar

Joe Kollar - July 18, 2019 at 05:46 PM



“ I am sorry for your great loss, but so glad for Robert. My "Robert" went home to see Jesus in May. These were truly great men of the Lord and I am so confident that they now have no more pain or sorrow. This life was hard on them, but we were all so blessed to have them in our lives. The Barnett family holds a very special place in the Andrews family and I cherish the years we were able to spend together growing up. We were blessed to have Godly parents and siblings. Sandra Andrews Brandon.

Sandy Brandon - July 01, 2019 at 05:43 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Robert Ervin Barnett.



July 01, 2019 at 10:36 AM



“ Margaret,
So sorry to hear about Rob's passing, you and your family are in our thoughts and prayers.
Matt and Deb Simms

matt simms - June 30, 2019 at 09:38 PM

ST

“ We so fondly remember the days of pilot training in Valdosta, Georgia, where Susan and Robert shared a brand new Air Force Housing duplex with us and we all became great friends. When we got a new Irish Setter puppy (Maggie) Robert and Susan promptly went out and became owners of Maggie’s brother (Ryan) so the puppy siblings wouldn’t have to be separated! You know, after all these years I can say that I’ve never met another person whose wonderful smile would make his eyes crinkle and almost disappear. God speed, Robert! Sally and Dennis Teeter

Sally Teeter - June 29, 2019 at 08:01 AM

JS

“ Robert was one of the single finest men Bonnie and I have ever known. Always, without exception Robert was a gentlemen and a man you could trust no matter what the situation. We all went to school together in Gentry and Robert (Barney as I called him and he just called me Shankles) roomed together in Critz Hall our freshman year in college prior to Bonnie and I getting married. Our grades suffered that year to be sure, but we did have fun. Robert flew into Iceland during one of his reserve times while Bonnie and I were stationed at Keflavik in the Navy. If we were ever close to where he flew in during his reserve times, he always tried to come by and visit. It was a blessing to get to see him a couple of times when we were back in Arkansas and even in illness he was the same Ole Robert - smile and all. It is and always will be a privilege to call him friend and he will be sorely missed. He has now been welcomed to his new and best Home.
Our sincerest and deepest heartfelt sympathy to the Family of our Friend, Robert (Barney) Barnett.

Jack & Bonnie Shankles

Jack & Bonnie Shankles - June 28, 2019 at 09:16 PM

RS

“ Roger and Sally Schraye purchased the Days of Sunshine Bouquet for the family of Robert Ervin Barnett.



Roger and Sally Schraye - June 28, 2019 at 05:41 PM

NA

“ Robert was such a kind and humble person and we feel blessed to have known him. He had a such a gentle caring spirit and he always shined Gods love with anyone who was in his presence. Our thoughts and prayers are with the whole family and all of his friends at this difficult time. He was certainly loved by so many. We will miss him so much. Nancy, Zef Jocelyn And Saira Alam

Nancy Alam - June 28, 2019 at 04:55 PM



“ Sacred Garden Spray was purchased for the family of Robert Ervin Barnett.



June 28, 2019 at 03:54 PM

RS

“ Robert was a special friend of Sally and I. Our 1st vacation was in Florida when Robert was stationed at Eglin AFB. He and Susan had a beach apartment at Ft. Walton beach. Robert came to Dallas occasionally for training and simulator updates. He would always find time to meet us and often stayed overnight. I got the opportunity to fly with Robert, he was taking some training at Love Field in Dallas. Somehow he arranged for me to fly with him and the instructor in a Cessna Citation jet. We flew to Sherman where he made several touch and go's, and on the way back he talked the instructor into diverting over Lewisville and we flew right over our house.

He will be missed. my condolences to the Barnett family.

Roger Schrayner

Roger Schrayner - June 28, 2019 at 01:26 PM

SJ

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Stephen Jaros - June 28, 2019 at 01:19 PM

AW

“ Barnett family: We are so very sorry for your loss. You are all in our thoughts and prayers. The Lord bless you with His peace and comfort. Steve & Ann Woodruff

Ann Woodruff - June 28, 2019 at 12:12 PM

FW

“ *My sincerest condolences to Rob's family. I have so many wonderful memories of our many rounds of golf together. He will be missed by so many.*

Fred Wilcoxson - June 28, 2019 at 11:12 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Robert Ervin Barnett.*



June 28, 2019 at 10:53 AM

BV

“ *Robert was one of the nicest persons I have ever known. I thought so I'm 1965 and again at one of our reunions several years ago. My thoughts and prayers are with the family and many friends.*

Buddy Villines - June 28, 2019 at 10:28 AM

G1

“ *Gentry class of 1965 purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Robert Ervin Barnett.*



Gentry class of 1965 - June 27, 2019 at 08:10 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Robert Ervin Barnett.*



June 27, 2019 at 07:26 PM



“ *Robert, my cousin, my brother, my best friend.*

Henry Holland

Henry Holland - June 27, 2019 at 07:05 PM