



Fred Joseph Harper

September 5, 1939 - October 21, 2010

Fred “Sonny” Joseph Harper, 71, passed away Thursday, October 21 at the home of his daughter in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina following complications due to organ failure. Mr. Harper was born in San Antonio, Texas on September 5, 1939 to Fred Lee Harper and Lottie Bertha Janicek. Beginning in a Chriesman, Texas, one-room schoolhouse, he went on to graduate from Caldwell High School in 1957. He moved on to study Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Houston before embarking on an engineering career that spanned tenures at N.A.S.A., Texas Instruments, Control Data Corporation, and DuPont. While with N.A.S.A., Mr. Harper was a part of the engineering team responsible for the creation of the gold thermal foil encasing on the Apollo 11 Lunar Module used in 1969 to deliver Neil Armstrong and “Buzz” Aldrin to the moon. While with Control Data and DuPont, Mr. Harper served throughout North America but also the world with stops in Minnesota, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina and his home state of Texas. He held senior engineering positions as an expatriate living in Eindhoven, The Netherlands and Blackburn, England while also supporting operations in Tokyo, Japan. Mr. Harper retired from DuPont in 2005 and moved to Golfito, Costa Rica where he remained until June 2010. Mr. Harper was the epitome of the Renaissance man. He was an award-winning chef competing in numerous local competitions with his Greek specialty, Spanakopitta. His cooking talent, attributed entirely to his mother, with international cuisine was renowned amongst family and friends the world over.

He was a brilliant oil and canvas artist. He was an avid reader of Civil War and World War II history. He was Willie Nelson's biggest fan. A Texas Longhorn. He was a competitive softball player and salmon fisherman of Alaska's many streams. A gifted gardener of vegetables and herbs that many times landed in one of his dishes but more often found their way to the tables of neighbors. He was a man of God feeling no need to be in a pew each Sunday to prove it. He was a passionate traveler, made all the more special with his wife at his side, with a passport full of stops in Western and Central Europe, Asia, Mexico and Central America. But mostly he was a devoted husband, a deeply loved and respected father, a rock for many in times of need, a brother, an uncle, and a precious grandfather. He was, above all, a man who lived his life the way he wanted with few, if any, regrets. He was a man that inspired and touched many across the world. He will be a man truly missed. Son, Michael J. Harper and spouse Mirjam of Austin and daughter, Melinda Harper-Abee and spouse David of Myrtle Beach, S.C. survive Mr. Harper. Surviving brothers are Jimmy Harper and spouse Josephine of Houston and Bill Harper and spouse Peggy of Bryan. Grandchildren surviving Mr. Harper are Mariah and Mikaela Harper of Austin and Gabby and Colin Abee of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Surviving nieces and nephews are Paul Harper of Caldwell, Pam Podraza of Houston, Mitch Harper of College Station, Robin Carlson of Houston, Mendee Woodward of Bryan, Jennifer Travis and Jessica Harper of Houston. Mr. Harper is predeceased by his lovely wife of 34 years, Rena Kay Harper (August, 1995). His dear parents father Fred L. Harper (July, 1997) and mother Lottie B. Harper (Oct, 1999). Mr. Harper's Memorial Service will be held Friday, November 26th at the Chriesman United Methodist Church at 2:00 p.m. followed by the inurnment at the Chriesman Cemetery. A reception will follow the service. All family and friends are invited to share in this celebration of a special life. In lieu of flowers, the family requests all donations are sent to the Fred J. Harper Memorial Scholarship Fund. The fund is being established to provide scholarships to 2010/2011 graduating seniors of Caldwell Sr. High School. Please contact Michael Harper for additional

information at 512-431-8648 or michael@harper05.com. "...why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am waiting for you for an interval. Somewhere very near; just around the corner. All is well. Nothing is past; nothing is lost. One brief moment and all will be as it was before. How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again." -Canon Henry Scott-Holland, 1847-1919, St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

Tribute Wall

DA

“ Fred Joseph Harper

David Abee - November 14, 2010 at 04:38 PM

MA

“ Fred Joseph Harper

Melinda Harper Abee - November 12, 2010 at 07:54 PM

GH

“ Fred Joseph Harper

Glenda Harper - November 09, 2010 at 05:04 PM

VD

“ Fred Joseph Harper

Virginia Harper DiFrancesco - November 09, 2010 at 04:58 PM