

Douglas Trent Mears, age 80, died at home surrounded by his family on Saturday, April 6th. He was born in 1938 to parents, Glenn and Dolores (Pendleton) Mears of Elkhart, IN and was the younger of two children. Douglas graduated from Jimtown High School in 1956. He married his high school sweetheart, Michaleen Summers in 1958. In 1961, Douglas graduated from the University of Notre Dame, where he served in the ROTC. Following his graduation, he was one of the 250,000 reservists called to active duty by President John F. Kennedy. During his first assignment at Sandia Base, he completed an MBA at the University of New Mexico. After an honorable twenty year military career, during which he was awarded the Bronze Star during the Vietnam War, Douglas retired from the United States Army as a Lieutenant Colonel. He began a second career at Avco Lycoming, which later became Textron-Lycoming, in Stratford, CT. There he was responsible for the modernization of the manufacturing plant that produced the M1 Tank engine utilized in Desert Storm. Following retirement from Textron, Douglas worked as a consultant with the Merkel Mears Group, a company he co-founded. He moved to Orlando, Florida with Michaleen in 1996, and became active in St. Luke's Methodist Church and prison ministry. He was one of the founders of the Faith Re-entry Enterprise (FREE) Program, which assisted men upon their release from prison in an effort to reduce recidivism rates. He also founded the reading program at the Orange County Jail in Orlando. His greatest pleasure in retirement was spending time with his three children, their spouses, and six grandchildren.

His parents and sister, Phyllis Kauffman, preceded Douglas in death. He is survived by his wife of sixty-one years, Michaleen, his daughter, Ellyn (Mears) Gelman, son-in-law, Daniel Gelman, of Westport, CT. Daughter, Brenda Mears, of Winter Garden, FL. Son John Mears, daughter-in-law, Leslie (Sharp) Mears, of Warwick, NY. Granddaughters, Casey Mears, Emily Mears, Dayna Gelman, grandsons Keith Gelman, Craig Gelman, Kenton Mears. Nephew, Michael Kauffman, wife, Becky (Tweedy) Kauffman, of Elkhart, IN and niece, Barbara Kauffman, also of Elkhart.

A memorial service with military honors will take place on Wednesday, April 17th, at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Orlando, FL at 11:00 AM.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to one of the following:

Greater Good Scholarship Program
(The Douglas Mears Scholarship)
PO Box 2361
Windermere, FL 34768

This program helps provide life-sustaining careers through the Orange Technical College for those at risk and those released from prison.

OR
Residents Encounter Christ of Greater Orlando
PO Box 427
Goldenrod, FL 32733-0427

This program ministers to those in the Orlando Jail.