

## **WALTER B. CRAFT**

1933 - 2011 Walter B. Craft, 77, of Shalimar, Fla., passed away Tuesday, July 5, 2011. He was born September 21, 1933, in Gladewater, Texas, to Ernest G. and Ellen L. Craft, and he was raised in Barstow, California.

Mr. Craft enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1953 and then accepted his Officer's Commission in 1955. Mr. Craft was a pilot of C-130 and other aircraft for most of his Air Force career, and he served numerous tours of duty overseas including service in the Vietnam War. Mr. Craft's service decorations include the Bronze Star for heroic or meritorious service. Following his retirement from the Air Force in 1973 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, Mr. Craft earned his Masters of Business Administration degree from the University of West Florida. Mr. Craft joined the Fort Walton Beach staff of the UWF Small Business Development Center, where he served as a Director until his retirement in 1996. During his tenure at the SBDC, Mr. Craft helped countless entrepreneurs launch and manage their businesses.

Mr. Craft was a member of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), where he served as an Elder. He served in leadership positions with civic organizations including the Fort Walton Beach Lions Club, and he was a Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce Ambassador. Mr. Craft especially enjoyed sharing his beautiful tenor voice with his church and the community. He was a member of the Fort Walton Beach Community Chorus, and he performed for many years in the FWBCC Spring and Christmas productions. He also performed as a singer at civic and private events, and many people will remember Mr. Craft for his appearances as "Uncle Sam" at the annual Independence Day celebration at The Landing.

Mr. Craft was preceded in death by his parents and by siblings Ernest Craft, Jr., Eugene Craft, Frances C. Kraft, Cathleene Kessler, and Bettye Campbell. He is survived by his beloved wife of 56 years, Dorothy M. Craft; by his children Terrence W. Craft (Cynthia) of Omaha, Nebraska, Timothy W. Craft of Fort Walton Beach, and Elizabeth C. Brown (Kevin) of Gainesville, Fla.; by his grandchildren Kevin S. Craft (Angela) and Dorothy Grace Brown; and by great-grandchildren Mykal A. Craft and Vaughn T.

Craft. He is also survived by his brothers Charles R. Craft (Sharon) of Creswell, Oregon, and Kirby Craft (Santee) of Goodyear, Arizona, and by numerous nieces and nephews.

Mr. Craft will be interred with military honors at Barrancas National Cemetery on Friday, July 8, at 10:15 a.m., with Pastor R. Roger Peadro officiating. There will be a memorial service at a future date at the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Fort Walton Beach. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be made to the First Christian Church Building Fund, 201 Saint Mary Avenue/P.O. Box 2319, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. 32549; to the Fort Walton Beach Lions Club, P.O. Box 844, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. 32549; or to the Fort Walton Beach Community Chorus, P.O. Box 2221, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. 32549. Arrangements are under the direction of Davis- Watkins Funeral Home. To share memories, express condolences, and sign the guestbook please visit

[www.daviswatkins.com](http://www.daviswatkins.com).

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