

Golda Thomas Eldridge Sr joined our Lord August 12 at 6:59 AM after a short struggle with cancer. He died in his home with his wife of 48 years and daughter Deborah by his side. The funeral service is at Peace Lutheran Church in 9301 Panther Way, Waco, Texas at 9:00 a.m., Friday, August 18 with Pastor Garrett Smith officiating. Visitation will be on Thursday, August 17, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Oakcrest Funeral Home, 4520 Bosque Boulevard, Waco, Texas. He will be interred at noon, August 18 at the Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen.

Golda was born January 28, 1941, in Cropper Kentucky to Golda H. and Mary Eldridge. He grew up in Central Kentucky and graduated from Eastern High School in 1959 where he played on the football team. He attended college at the University of Louisville, graduating with a degree in business administration and completing the Air Force ROTC program commissioning as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the United States Air Force.

He fulfilled his lifelong dream of becoming a pilot with his first assignment to Air Force pilot training at Reese AFB in Lubbock Texas, graduating with the coveted silver wings in January, 1965. During his Air Force career, Golda flew a variety of aircraft and served in staff positions culminating with his command tours at Shemya AFB, Alaska and Offutt AFB, Nebraska, before retiring in 1987.

Following his military service, Golda continued to serve his country as a civilian, flying specialized electronic warfare aircraft training the U.S. Navy in how to defend against and defeat potential adversaries. After concluding his flying career Golda joined the staff at McClennan Community College where he served as a small business advisor, helping entrepreneurs make their dreams of business ownership and growth a reality.

Golda's life was dedicated to his god, his family, and his country. He was a faithful servant to all and his strong faith showed itself in every aspect of his life. His integrity was unassailable and he always fought for what he believed. Through his actions as much as his words he instilled those values in all those he loved. He was a staunch friend, a wise mentor, a courageous leader and a loving family man. He enjoyed reading, travel and spending time with family and friends. Despite his sometimes stern countenance, his smile and laughter were freely shared and is what everyone who knew him will remember.

Golda is survived by his wife Nancy Grueber Eldridge; five children, Ellen Gibson and husband Steve, Tom Eldridge and wife Stacy, Liz Bartlett and husband Brett, Deborah Eldridge and Greg Eldridge, thirteen grandchildren and sixteen grandchildren.