



Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess

October 15, 1939 - May 1, 2021

Conway, SC...

Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess, 81, a retiree of both the United States Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency, died at Conway Medical Center on May 1, 2021.

He was born in Chapmanville, West Virginia to Thomas Clay and Lillie Mae (Curry) Dingess, and attended Chapmanville High School in Chapmanville, West Virginia where he was better known as "Catbird." He attended two years at Marshall University and is a graduate of West Virginia State University.

His military specialty was in Telecommunications Operations. During his military career he received the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon with Four Oak Leaf Clusters, a National Defense Service Medal, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the Air Force Conduct Medal with Five Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal with One Oak Leaf Cluster, and a Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon. During his career with the USAF he served in Portugal, Turkey, Italy and Thailand, as well as many bases across the United States.

After retiring from the United States Air Force in 1980, he enjoyed a career with the Central Intelligence Agency where he served in Bangladesh, The

Philippines, and India.

Mr. Dingess was a competitive athlete and an avid sports fan and outdoorsman; he played fast-pitch softball and golf, and enjoyed fishing in fresh and ocean waters. He also loved his great home state of West Virginia and was a loyal fan of all West Virginia University Mountaineer sports.

The discipline and patriotism he learned from years of service never left him as his family and friends will attest. Mr. Dingess always looked on the bright side of life, was a gentleman, and had a wonderful sense of humor - he kept everyone laughing until his very last days. His optimism and joie de vivre will be painfully missed.

He was predeceased by three brothers, Stanley "Bud" Dingess, Bernie Dingess, and James "Jim" Dingess; and two sisters, Sandra Lee Dingess and Sheila Ann Trader.

Survivors include his wife of 46 years, Panom T. Dingess of Conway, SC; three sons, David Dingess of High Point, NC, Brian Dingess (Amy) of Fort Worth, TX, and Christopher Dingess of Conway, SC; two daughters, Kimberly Dingess-MacLachlan (Alex) of Greensboro, NC and Michele Dingess Noma (Rob) of Atlanta, GA; thirteen grandchildren; and eleven great grandchildren.

A graveside service, with full military honors, will be held at 11:00 AM Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at Hillcrest Cemetery in Conway, SC. The family will receive friends immediately following the service at the graveside.

Memorials may be sent to Homes For Our Troops, 6 Main Street, Taunton, MA 02780 or online at www.hfotusa.org

Please sign an online guestbook at www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com

Goldfinch Funeral Home, Conway Chapel is in charge of arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Hillcrest Cemetery

1000 Hwy 544
Conway, SC 29526
(843) 347-4909
<https://www.hillcrestcemetery.com/>

Previous Events

Graveside Service

MAY 5. 11:00 AM (ET)

Hillcrest Cemetery
1000 Hwy 544
Conway, SC 29526

Visitation

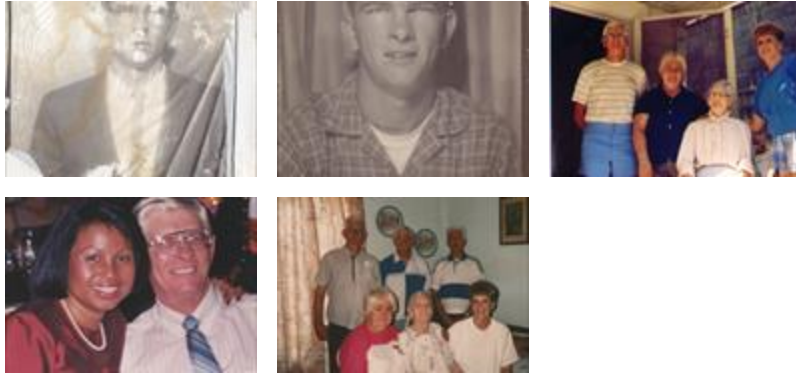
MAY 5. 11:45 AM (ET)

Hillcrest Cemetery
1000 Hwy 544
Conway, SC 29526

Tribute Wall



“ 7 files added to the album Family Photos



David Dingess - June 24, 2022 at 01:02 PM

RM

“ 1 file added to the album Family Photos



Reggie Murphy - May 05, 2021 at 02:21 PM



Thank you for sharing this photo, Reggie!

Michele Noma - May 08, 2021 at 08:48 PM

RM

“ I will sorely miss seeing Tom at our Saturday golf. We became good friends over the past 15 years. He and I loved picking on each other. What a wonderful life and legacy he leaves to his family, who I know he loved dearly, as they loved him. RIP my partner, and friend.

Reggie Murphy - May 05, 2021 at 02:18 PM

KR

“ Had the good fortune to serve with Tom in PI. We were on the same watch - we'd race to the watch wagon to drive. Played a lot of golf and bowled together in the Air Force league. Always up for a good time. Great family. Very sorry to hear of this loss. He was indeed a good man and a fine gentleman.
Kerry "Robby" Robinson

Kerry Robinson - May 05, 2021 at 11:06 AM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess.



May 04, 2021 at 10:59 PM

JJ

“ Mr.Dingess worked with my Dad and New Delhi at the US Embassy in the early 1990s. I remember Mr. Dingess as a very friendly guy who always said hello to means called me Ginny. Rest well.

Jenny Jensen - May 04, 2021 at 06:36 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess.



May 04, 2021 at 04:29 PM



“ Tom and I were Realtors together for many years. He was always a professional and a mentor to many. More than that, he was my friend. We spoke often of getting together and grabbing a bite and a cold brew. I so wish we had taken the time to do that. Rave on K.K. I shed a tear and raise my glass. You will be missed.

Grace Edwards - May 04, 2021 at 03:09 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess.



May 04, 2021 at 12:30 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess.*



May 04, 2021 at 12:26 PM



“ *It was a pleasure knowing you, a true patriot, even for a short while. You leave a great family behind to carry on your name. Thanks again for your friendship.*

Axel - May 04, 2021 at 11:47 AM



“ *We first met in New Delhi, in 1991. He and family were our next door neighbor in the embassy compound. We played softball together, and became good friends. Always willing to share a story or give you some advice. Our kids were all in school together, and they shared many good times together. Decades later we communicated via facebook and exchanged greetings.. He often ended his communications with KK .. which, in our communication language means ",i am done and now its your turn to type something " or keeping the door open..*

I loved him and will miss him, but will see him again as a soul. God Bless you TOM!

carl stefan - May 04, 2021 at 11:08 AM



“ *My prayers are with all of you. He was a great man . He will be missed by many. Hugs Brenda Hios*

Brenda Hios - May 04, 2021 at 10:53 AM

MM

“ So sorry to hear of Tom's passing. We were so fortunate to know Tom and his wonderful family Panom, Michele and Chris while on assignment in the Philippines. Doreen still uses Panom's Pad Thai recipe. I'll remember Tom most for his fiery competitive spirit in all sports and his patriotism and dedication to the mission. Our condolences to the family, he will be sorely missed!//Mike & Doreen Maher

Mike & Doreen Maher - May 04, 2021 at 10:37 AM

JF

“ Judy French lit a candle in memory of Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess



Judy French - May 04, 2021 at 09:48 AM

Michele Noma

“ 38 files added to the album Family Photos



Michele Noma - May 04, 2021 at 09:37 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess.*



May 04, 2021 at 09:34 AM



“ *Love Everlasting Bouquet was purchased for the family of Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess.*



May 04, 2021 at 08:13 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess.*



May 03, 2021 at 08:18 PM