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Douglas Wilson Wingate

Jan. 31, 1931 - May 2, 2026

Douglas Wilson Wingate passed early on a Saturday, the 2nd of May. He left this green earth with a little sadness, still desiring –- as he hinted -- more days to see the sun rise and set, and to feel a warm spring breeze, another cool autumn day, and talk in leisure (in complete sentences) with any number of his fellow humans.

Little Doug was born in Charlotte, NC on January 31, 1931 to Inis (Wilson) Wingate and her husband Ernest Luther ('Jube') Wingate. He was the first born of five children with only his brother John now surviving him. (Brother Benjamin, sister Vivian, and brother Victor having all passed to the great beyond.) As a precocious young boy, Doug received an unusual amount of attention paid to him by his mother and doting maternal aunties; though he received nothing special from his daddy: no leniency from household chores, or duties expected of a growing first-born. After graduating from Hudson High School (NC) in 1949, young Doug attended Belmont Abbey College for a brief time before enlisting in the US Air Force. It was a key move for the 19-year-old. Strangely suited for military life, Doug was encouraged as a 'grunt' to test for officer training school, and, two years later, took his wings as a second lieutenant, a pilot, in the Force.

With a proper career in hand by '56, a proper and lasting romance seemed a next great adventure. Enter Doug's future bride, his pride Gwendolyn Knight of the Union

great adventure. Enter Doug's future bride, his pride Gwendolyn Knight of the Union Grove Road in rural Caldwell Co. (NC). In no-time sparks flew, cupid hit his mark, and true love soon showed its face. After a fine N. Carolina joining in wedlock, Doug and Gwen, eventually, hurried to far-off Big Spring, TX and Lt. Wingate's first permanent assignment at Webb AFB. In short order, in three years' time at Webb, Gwen bore her new pilot a cheerful, cherub-like daughter (Lisa Elizabeth) and two loving, searching, boundless boys (Doug, Jr. and Charles E.).

Though always around, the serious nature of a military man's life was held mostly in obscurity (to Doug's family) until formal orders from Uncle Sam, in early '68, prompted the now Maj. Wingate to Southeast Asia and war maneuvers. Discharging his direct martial duties in October '70, Doug and the Wingates relocated, first to much-loved San Antonio (Randolph AFB) and lastly to Sacramento, CA (Mather AFB). Two years later Papa Doug, a full bird Colonel in 1977, hung up his flight-boots a final time in May and gently headed back to his native Carolina and retirement. Most of the nearly fifty years hence were spent in a rare happiness, happy times(!), and frugal pursuits –- the welcoming of three grandsons in the 1990s an especial treat. Before the death of his beloved Gwen ('the Madame') in 2016, the Colonel spent decades trying to understand the sharp decline of our compulsory school system; and, to a greater extent, earnestly tried to perfect both his (golf) backswing and the annual yield of his large family garden. His final personal thought on life and living (told to his last surviving child) was simple, direct – much an adaptation of the Hippocratic oath. "Never leave behind a false impression with others, with students, etc. Much like the oath a doctor's bound to take – and one teachers should take: at the very least 'do no harm'." A nicely set idea to cherish in our 'Sky King's' absence.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

Having married and spending 23 years of my adult life as a member of the Knight family, Doug was my brother-in- law, my friend, and neighbor. In spite of many years of separation during his military career, circumstances allowed us to reconnect as friends during his last year in a shared community called Grace Ridge. I am grateful for the short visits and the in- depth conversations he shared. He was admired by all who made his acquaintance in a short span of eight months.

–Brenda Kanipe