

# Michael D. Kaufman

**March 23, 1951 - May 11, 2020**

Michael D. Kaufman  
Lt Col, USAF (Retired)

Michael D. Kaufman of Midland, TX passed peacefully into the arms of his Lord & Savior on Monday, May 11, 2020.

Mike was born March 23, 1951, in Wichita, KS, to Robert Bernhard Kaufman and Betty Jean Young Kaufman. He was raised in Augusta, KS, graduating from Augusta High School. Mike received his acceptance to the United States Air Force Academy on March 13, 1969. He graduated from the USAFA with a double major in History and Western European Studies, and entered active duty Air Force service on June 6, 1973. While serving at Vance Air Force Base, Enid, OK, Mike completed his master's degree in Political Science (International Relations) at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, May 1982.

Mike married Lela Joan Seago Kaufman on June 10, 1973, and together they entered the Air Force life. Mike was selected for pilot training in August 1973 and began his lifelong love of flying. During his 20 years in the service he flew the T-37, T-38, T-33, F-106, and F-15, and served in Oklahoma, Virginia, Texas, Florida, Arizona, Germany, Iceland, and Saudi Arabia. Mike served as a fighter pilot, flight instructor, class commander, air operations officer, IG Team officer, squadron commander, and also as a night mission commander during Operation Desert Storm, receiving multiple citations and decorations.

After retirement from the Air Force, Mike moved his family to Midland, TX, where he began a second career as a financial planner, eventually establishing MWA Financial Group. He was active at First Baptist Church and served as a deacon, Sunday School teacher, and moderator. He sang in the choir, small ensembles, and played handbells. Mike was a member of Rotary and served on several boards, including Midland Central Appraisal District and MARC. He served as President of the Permian Basin Chapter of the Air Force Association, and was a member of the Air Force Academy Alumni Association.

Mike's love for family was evident in his participation in his children's activities, being actively involved in the band, choir, and orchestra booster clubs – serving as a truck driver, pit coordinator, set designer, Vice-President, and President. He was also active with FBC youth group activities and mission trips.

Mike's love of history and politics led him to be very active in the local Republican party, serving as delegate to the local and state conventions, and to two national conventions. He served on the Resolution Committee, several years as Chairman, and loved helping to shape the political platform.

Mike enjoyed all sports, but golf was his passion. For several years, Friday afternoons were reserved for golf, and he so enjoyed the camaraderie with all his golfing buddies.

Mike is survived by his wife Lela; son John Kaufman of Katy, TX; daughter Beth Kaufman Garza and husband Beau Garza of Midland, TX; son Mark Kaufman and wife Michelle Tate of Midland, TX; grandchildren Katy, Carli, and Terri Kaufman, and Tommy, Andrew, and Aubrey Garza. He is also survived by brother Bob Kaufman and wife Carol Kaufman of Carrollton, TX; brother Ken Kaufman and wife Tara Kaufman of Rathdrum, ID; and multiple in-laws, cousins, nephews, and nieces.

The family would like to express their gratitude to Dr. Raghov, Dr. Royal, and staff at MD Anderson; Dr. Chae and the infusion room staff at Allison Cancer Center; and the nurses and staff at Home Hospice.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to First Baptist Church Benevolence Fund, His Cherished Ones, The Field's Edge, or MD Anderson.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 from 5-7 pm at The Branch at Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory, 3800 N Big Spring St, Midland, TX 79705.

Due to the current restrictions from COVID-19, a private family service will be Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 11 am. Livestream will be available at [www.npwelch.com](http://www.npwelch.com).

Burial will be in the Columbarium at the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO, at a later date. Honorary pallbearers will be the members of Cadet Squadron 30, Class of '73, USAFA.

Arrangements are under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Midland. Online condolences may be made at [www.npwelch.com](http://www.npwelch.com).

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4:7 (NIV)

High Flight

By John Gillespie Magee, Jr.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds –  
and done a hundred things You have not dreamed of –  
wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence.  
Hovering there I've chased the shouting wind along  
and flung my eager craft through the footless halls of air.  
Up, up the long delirious burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,  
where never lark, or even eagle, flew;  
and, while with silent lifting mind I've trod  
the high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
put out my hand and touched the face of God.