



Thomas Anthony Lankes

July 30, 1937 - June 23, 2023

Thomas Anthony Lankes, so close to 86, passed peacefully in the arms and to the tears of his beloved family on June 23rd, 2023. Tom was born on July 30th, 1937 in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania to Frances "Sunny," Kubenik and Thomas Robert Lankes, both of immigrant families, who at 16 and 18 years old snuck off to marry. This love culminated in many children, including Tom, who went on to have eight children of his own. Love knows no bounds.

Tom joined the Navy where he was introduced to his life long joy, photography. In 1962, Tom married Barbara Sutherland of Austin, Texas and during their California honeymoon he won big money at the horse races during a lucky bet on a lucky horse. He took the winnings and was able to attend Brooks Institute to officially study his passion. They returned to Austin and started a family; Christopher Allan, Michael Andrew, Cathleen Frances, Matthew Thomas, Andrew Sutherland, and their dog Raindrop and cat Sunshine. In 1982, the couple amicably divorced and continued to have conversations about their children.

On April 17th, 1992, Tom married Leslie Kevin Bilton and who gifted him with; Jeremy Garrett, Erin Kathryn, and McKenna Ruth. They have lived a happy and fulfilling life together, full of fond memories and family trips to Port A.

Early in his career as a photojournalist, Tom worked for The Associated Press

and United Press International. In 1966, he rushed to the University of Texas campus and risked his life to capture an award-winning photo of the crisis unfolding during the UT Tower shooting. He went on to many decades at the Austin American-Statesman newspaper, respected and admired by colleagues. Besides the hundreds of thousands of amazing photos he ever created, he also captured Earl Campbell in full flight during the 1977 football season for which Campbell won the Heisman Memorial Trophy.

Besides a love of photography, Tom was an avid nature observer, music lover, and he delighted in spontaneously cutting a little jig across the living room floor. He might just now be spotted pulling a Fred Astaire on a stairway to Heaven.

He is predeceased by his parents; his siblings Gerald, Richard and Gertrude; his former wife Barbara. He has survived by his devoted wife Kevin Lankes; favorite and faithful dog Dazee; his 8 children; 6 grandchildren Emily, Autumn, Nicolette, Sinéad, Nicholas, and adorable Maliyah; 1 great-grandchild Julian; his sister Anita Lankes Parodi; and many nieces and nephews by whom he will be missed.

While he may not now be with us in body, he is forever with us in spirit.

His love remains.

Tribute Wall



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