



## Mr. Thomas Edward Best

April 19, 1948 - January 22, 2022

Thomas Edward Best, passed away peacefully in his sleep Saturday, January 22, 2022, at his Shreveport, Louisiana home. We are sure this was a shock to him at the young age of 73 years, as he often quipped, he planned to live forever.

Born April 19, 1948, in Huntsville, Alabama, Tom was the last child born to James Joseph and Eva Mae Maples Best, Jr. Ever the “humble” man, he would probably tell you that was because they stopped when they reached perfection. As they have survived him, his elder siblings, Carol Butler and James “Jim” Best, are probably rolling their eyes in agreement to that statement.

To the surprise of many, in 1967, Tom graduated Broadmoor High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Then after beating PGA golfer “Chi-Chi” Rodriguez in a game of golf, Tom joined the US Navy and volunteered for three tours in Vietnam, partly from a sense of duty, but mostly because he was crazy. Before shipping off, he met Valerie Langford, the woman who would turn out to be his soulmate. When he returned, they had a whirlwind romance and married five weeks later on June 7, 1974. He was a dedicated Navy man for twenty years. He retired a Naval Chief in 1987. Tom spent his life traveling the earth and never thinking there was anything he couldn’t do. He was a PADI scuba instructor and enjoyed diving trips with his wife. He was a decorated rodeo cowboy but got his most enjoyment from his time as a rodeo clown. In 1988, Tom was Shreveport Police Department’s first

fully retired military hire; a fact that gave him great pride during his time in their academy. He retired a Sergeant in 2006. During his retirement, he filled his time beside other gun enthusiasts in the Single Action Shooting Society, Long Range Shooters of Louisiana, and ArkLaTex Gun Collectors Association. Tom left behind his wife, Valerie, who put up with him for 47 years. He also left behind his daughter, Vicki, who shocked him when she followed his footsteps into law enforcement, then shocked him more when she finally got married to his son-in-law, Mark Masters. His son, Michael survives him, alongside his daughter-in-law, Brandie Best. Michael provided him his greatest happiness in life with his two granddaughters, Kaylee and Kendyl. His stepmother, Betty Best also survives him, as do a host of other family and friends.

Funeral services will be held 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 29, 2022 at Hawthorn Funeral Home. Burial with military honors will follow in the Odd Fellows Cemetery under the direction of Hawthorn Funeral Home. Visitation will be 1-2:00 p.m. Saturday at Hawthorn Funeral Home prior to the service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park Fund, 1235 S. Clark St., Ste. 910, Arlington, VA 22202.

Pallbearers will be: Rickye Welton, Sr., Carnie Burcham, Robert Rogers, Ric Clarke, Lester Lanford, and Kevin Brevard.

An online guestbook may be signed at [www.hawthornfuneralhome.com](http://www.hawthornfuneralhome.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Odd Fellows Cemtery

Carthage, TX

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 29. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Hawthorn Funeral Home Chapel  
307 W Wellington St.  
Carthage, Tx

## Service

JAN 29. 2:00 PM (CT)

Hawthorn Funeral Home Chapel  
307 W Wellington St.  
Carthage, Tx

# Tribute Wall

SR

“ Valerie, Vickie, Micheal family and friends y'all are in my thoughts and prayers. I would've posted sooner I was in Hospital.



Shellia Bice Rayborn - May 15, 2022 at 02:07 AM

CM

“ CR & Linda McPherson sent a virtual gift in memory of Mr. Thomas Edward Best



CR & Linda McPherson - January 26, 2022 at 07:45 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mr. Thomas Edward Best.



January 25, 2022 at 01:09 PM

SO

“ Shreveport District Office purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of Mr. Thomas Edward Best.



Shreveport District Office - January 25, 2022 at 12:53 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Mr. Thomas Edward Best.*



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January 24, 2022 at 10:09 PM