



## Joseph Myles Simpson, Jr.

August 1, 1937 - November 26, 2024

Joseph Myles Simpson Jr., DDS, Colonel US Air Force (Retired) - aka Dink, Myles, Fireball and Joe - passed away peacefully on November 26, 2024, after a short illness. Joe was a longtime resident of Montgomery, AL. He was a resident of Fort Collins CO since 1975 and a regular visitor since 1965. Joe was preceded in death by his parents, Colonel Joseph Myles Simpson, US Army Retired and Virginia Mahone Simpson of Montgomery, AL; his wife, Ingrid Gassner Simpson, RN of Ft Collins; and his son, Joseph Myles Simpson III, DDS of Gig Harbor, WA. He is survived by his daughter Melissa Maria Simpson, JD of Arlington, VA and by many friendships far too numerous to count. He was born in Birmingham, AL, August 1st, 1937. During his mother's pregnancy, his father's World War 1, 42nd "Rainbow Division" friends, would pat her baby bump and ask, quoting the catchy refrain from the popular WW 1 song, "Mademoiselle from Armentières", "How is Hinky Dinky?" After his birth, his nick name was shortened to "Dinky" and then followed by a lifetime of being known as "Dink" to his family and best friends. Joe's father was activated in 1940 and the family moved to Montgomery, where his dad was instrumental in establishing the World War 2 Alabama Selective Service System. Joe attended The Saint Mary of Loretto Parochial School in Montgomery through the 9th grade. Due to the large number of "Josephs" in attendance at that Catholic School, the nuns renamed him to his middle name, "Myles", for his school years. When he began High School, he transferred to, and later graduated in May 1955 from, Sidney Lanier High

School. During high school, he avidly rode, modified and raced Harley Davidson and Indian motorcycles; built and "street raced" hot rods; and worked as a lifeguard at the swimming pools of The Woodley Country Club and Gunter Air Force Base Officer's Club. After graduation, he attended the Virginia Military Institute for his freshman year. While being marched to church every Sunday morning and observing the Washington and Lee students leisurely enjoying each other and their Bloody Marys, it was just too tempting for him to continue to tolerate the cadet life. The next year he transferred to the University of Florida, followed by attending Florida State University. Joe became a member of the National Chi Phi Fraternity. He was a very eager, active participant and strong supporter of the popular "Frat Rat" program of the day, as opposed to maintaining a university acceptable 2.0 grade point. After being dis-enrolled from those two well-known party schools, due to his low-grade point, he returned to Montgomery in December 1958 where he was employed for several years by the State Highway Department as a cartographic draftsman, helping to plan the new Alabama Interstate System. He had an exceptionally quick reaction time, so he began his "First Lifetime Career", in simi-pro and pro-racing, as a drag racer and dragster driver, successfully racing throughout the South, the Southeast, and the West Coast under his racing nickname "Fireball". To avoid the draft in March 1960, he enlisted in the Alabama Air National Guard and went to Basic Training at Lackland AFB, TX. In November 1961, he volunteered for active duty with the Air Force and began flight training in the Air Force Aviation Cadet Program at James Connelly AFB, TX. Joe received his Commission as a 2nd Lieutenant and was awarded the rating of Navigator in October 1962, beginning his "Second Lifetime Career" as an Air Force officer. After completing Survival Training at Stead AFB, NV, Joe was assigned to the Military Air Transport Service, Dover AFB, DE, flying worldwide missions in the C-133 heavy transport aircraft, which, at that time, was the largest aircraft in the Air Force inventory. During his assignment to Dover, he flew completely around the world two times; had numerous missions to the top of the world (Thule AFB,

Greenland); and several missions almost to the bottom of the world in New Zealand and Australia. Well before Satellite navigation, Joe used sextant and celestial navigation techniques with three-star fixes and sun lines, Loran, Dead Reckoning, and his personal expertise to safely and successively guide his aircraft all over the world on numerous classified and unclassified missions. In December 1964 he transferred to Denver, CO and entered the Air Force's "Boot Strap Program", where he FINALLY, in December 1965, earned his bachelor's degree in computer science and mathematics at the University of Denver. While there he met his future wife, Ingrid. They were married in Fort Collins, on December 11, 1965. Returning to Dover AFB in January 1966, he resumed flying worldwide missions in the C-133. Joe received a designated and individually selected combat assignment to a new and highly classified project utilizing his specialized background in computers. After Combat Crew Training in Louisiana and Florida and Jungle Survival School at Clark AFB, the Philippines, Joe was assigned to the 7th Air Force, Nha Trang AFB, South Viet Nam, flying EC-47 aircraft. He completed an extended Viet Nam combat tour in March 1968. On his return to the United States, he was assigned to the Air Training Command, Mather AFB, CA, as an instructor and lecturer in the T-29 aircraft. Over time, due to its mechanical aspects, Joe became interested in dentistry. He rode his Harley to Sacramento State University and completed several required pre dental courses. In August 1970, upon notice of a possible upcoming additional Viet Nam tour, Joe resigned from active duty and enrolled at the Creighton University School of Dentistry, Omaha, NE, where he began dental training and his "Third Lifetime Career". He actively continued in his "Second Lifetime Career" with the Air Force flying C-124 transport aircraft for the Air Force Reserve at Kansas City, MO. Later he transferred to the Missouri Air National Guard, Saint Joseph, MO, flying refueling missions in the KC-97 aircraft. After moving to CO, in January 1975, he transferred to the Air Force Reserves and became the Air Force Academy Liaison Officer for Northern Colorado. Later he assumed

command of the Colorado Liaison Officer Group. During his Air Force career, Joe completed Squadron Officer's School, Air Command and Staff College, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. He attended several professional courses at the Air War College, Maxwell AFB, in his hometown of Montgomery and at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA. Due to the shortage of Dentists in the Air Force at that time, Joe concealed his dental degree to avoid being transferred into the Air Force Dental Corps. He served in various assignments with the Air Force Academy. After being promoted to Colonel, in December 1988, he was assigned as the Air Force Liaison Officer to the 1st Continental Army - FEMA, at the Presidio, San Francisco, CA where he worked extensively on the emergency of the San Francisco earthquake in 1989. His final Air Force assignment was in February 1990, when he became the Mobilization Assistant to the Commanding General, Lowery Technical Training Center, CO. He retired from The Air Force, in March 1993, as a Colonel with 33 years' service (2 enlisted and 31 commissioned) and the Aeronautical Rating of Master Navigator with 5500 flying hours including over 800 combat hours. His decorations include: the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal with 6 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal with OLC, and a number of others. After graduating from Dental School in May 1974 and completing a General Practice Residency, Joe began to pursue his "Third Lifetime Career" of Dentistry. The family, now including Melissa and Joe III, moved to his wife's hometown, Fort Collins, CO in July 1975. He established the first tradition breaking, "Family Dental Practice" with the unusual and eye-catching phone number of "484-JAWS" and a 90-degree rotation of his full-page ad in the Yellow Pages. A year later Joe opened a second office location. In September 1978, he combined his two practice locations into his newly constructed office building on South College Avenue and established Alpine Dental Health. He practiced dentistry there until retiring from his 30-year dental career in December 2005. During this period, he was awarded a Fellowship in the Academy of General Dentistry. Joe was very

active in the Fort Collins community. He was a Charter Member and president of the Foothills Rotary Club, held leadership positions in the Larimer County Dental Society, and worked extensively with various service organizations and veteran's groups. Joe was a member of the American and Colorado Dental Associations, the Elks, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion. He was also a very active member in the National Associations of the Air Force, the National Guard, the Reserve Officers, the Retired Officers Association, and the Military Officers of America. Throughout his life, he continued to pursue and enjoy his "First Lifetime Career" with enthusiastic interest and participation in drag racing, building and racing hot rods, custom cars, and riding motorcycles. Joe was a member of the National Hot Rod Association; the Goodguys Rod & Custom Association, and the National Street Rod Association. Joe will be joining his wife Ingrid and laid to rest, close to his parents' gravesite, with full military honors, at Arlington National Cemetery, VA. He had concerns about being so close to his parents, since his mother would criticize what he wore every day. Joe was very outgoing and a really nice individual. He will be forever missed and never forgotten by those who knew him. An incredible man who was a friend to all; an understanding and supportive brother to some; a wonderful father to two; and a loving husband to one. We will all sadly miss him. But he will always remain in our hearts and our memories --- forever.

Celebrations of Joe's life will be held in Fort Collins, Colorado:

Thursday, December 19th from 4:00-6:00 PM at the Fort Collins Country Club

Saturday, December 28th from 2:00-4:00 PM at the VFW Post 1781

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Joe's name to the VFW Post 1781.

Honorary Pallbearers: Don May, Don Woeber, Terry Walsh, Bob Dibble, Willie McCraney, Bill Evans, Jim Lyle, Wayne Bagwell, Bibb Howard, Tom Brantley.

# Tribute Wall

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“ *The Buckley SFB military Retiree Activities Office (RAO) would like to offer our sincere condolences and our gratitude for Col Simpson’s 33 years of distinguished service to our country in the Air Force. If you would like help with any matters related to casualty assistance, Defense Finance & Accounting Service, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), Veterans Affairs (VA), etc. you can contact our office on Buckley SFB at 720-847-6693 or raobuckley@gmail.com. The RAO is staffed by volunteers, all military retirees themselves, and our sole purpose is to provide assistance to any military retirees and surviving spouses/family members with anything related to their military service and/or benefits, in particular during difficult times such as this. We are deeply sorry for your loss.*

*Steve Young  
Lt Col, USAF, Ret  
Director, Buckley SFB RAO*

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**Steve Young** - December 03, 2024 at 04:33 PM