



Lester Merle Garrigues

May 7, 1914 - January 27, 2012

Lester M. Garrigues Lt. Col., USAF Ret. "It's been a wonderful life and I've loved every minute of it!" This was the frequent declaration of Lester Merle Garrigues during the last years of that eventful life. Les was born on May 7, 1914, in Springfield, Missouri to Bertha Morgan and Clyde Lee Garrigues. His father worked as a train engineer for the Joplin lead and zinc mines and in 1936 the family moved to the small rural town of Slaton, Texas. From his early years picking cotton and playing pranks with his buddies to his extensive world travels, Les embraced life with enthusiasm, curiosity and energy. In Slaton his father was an engineer for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad and his mother worked as one of the early "Harvey Girls". In high school Les played clarinet in the marching band, worked as the night cashier at the local Harvey House, and as a projectionist for the movie theatre. He served in the Civilian Military Training Corps for four years, and upon graduation from high school in 1932, was commissioned in the US Army as an infantry Second Lieutenant. While stationed in Woodville, Texas, the dashing young lieutenant met his future bride, school teacher Helen Nicks, on a blind date. They were married on Friday the 13th of November, 1940, beginning 70 years of adventure and a tradition of celebrating every Friday the Thirteenth as a lucky day. Les' military career included the US Army, Army Air Corps, US Armed Air Force and US Air Force. During WWII he served in the 792nd Bomb Squadron in Algeria, India, Burma, Tinian, Guam and Saipan. He never forgot the airmen who gave their lives while serving in his unit, nor the sorrow

of writing to their families. From 1947 to 1949, Les and Helen, with their young son, Steve, lived in Nanking, Peking and Shanghai, China, where Les served as Personnel Advisor to the Chinese Air Force. Les and his family were evacuated to Japan on the last ship to leave Shanghai as the Chinese communists took over the country from the north. Those exciting years were the beginning of their life-long passion for travel. In 1957-1959, after numerous postings around the US, Lt. Col. Garrigues was again stationed in Asia, this time in Japan and Okinawa, serving as Executive Officer at Ashiya, Shiroy and Kadena Air Force Bases. While in Japan, the family, which now included their daughter, Margie, traveled whenever possible to neighboring countries, including Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines. Les retired from the Air Force Aug. 31, 1961, and moved to Fort Collins, where he completed his life-long pursuit of college education, graduating from Colorado State University with a BA in Business Administration. In 1962 he opened the gift shop Imports by Garrigues, which he owned until 1974. After selling the gift shop, Les worked as manager of Security Title Company and then of Chicago Title Company. Retiring a second time in 1979, Les and Helen began 25 years of serious international travel. They estimated visiting over 100 countries, traveling around the world numerous times. Whether exploring small back roads by car, seeing the world from the deck of a ship or window of a train, from the top of a Ferris wheel or back of a camel or elephant, the world was their home. Favorite memories included Easter Island, Machu Picchu, Tonga, China, New Zealand and Antarctica. Les was a staunch supporter of the Bahá'í Faith since 1967, officially becoming a member in July 2011. His life exemplified the Baha'i principles of an unfettered search for truth, belief in the essential unity of all mankind, elimination of prejudice in all its forms and the conviction that God has shed His endless bounty and love upon the entire world. Dignified and soft spoken with sharp sense of humor, the embodiment of honesty and truthfulness, Les loved music and the natural beauty of the world, especially the mountains and flaming sunsets of Colorado. Les' beloved wife, Helen preceded him in death October 9, 2011. His family has been

blessed by his presence, his laughter, his encouragement and his unfailing good nature: son, Stephen Garrigues and wife, Machiko of Daegu, South Korea; daughter, Margie Brown and husband, Stephen of Fort Collins; granddaughters, Layla Garrigues of Portland, Oregon, Shinobu Garrigues-Pula and husband, Va'a of Brussels, Belgium, Eären Leaf Hummel of St. Louis, Missouri; great-grandchildren, Wolfgang Songhurst of Fort Collins, Isabella Garrigues McHenry of Portland, Oregon; nephew, Tracy Crawford and wife, Nancy of Tyler, Texas; niece, Judy Riley and husband, Don of Plano, Texas; Gwen Garrigues of Kansas City, Missouri; and extended family members, Jerry and Connie Hummel, Yolanda and Stephen Brown Jr., Emily and Cameron Shinn, Jacob Brown, Gregory Brown, Giana Brown, Rachel Sharp. The family extends its deepest appreciation to the Visiting Angels who provided so much companionship to Lester, playing countless games of cards and Turkey Train over the years, and to Front Range Hospice, who brought comfort to his last months.. His family and friends around the world salute him as he continues his journey in the next world, to a life that he believed would be more beautiful and wondrous than this. A service celebrating his life will be held on Friday, February 3rd, at 1:30 pm at Bohlender Funeral Chapel, with Military Honors by the Fort Collins All Veterans Honor Guard at Grandview Cemetery. A reception will follow at the Baha'i Center of Northern Colorado, 504 West 69th Street, Loveland; CO.

Tribute Wall

DP

“ *Les was a Funny man. I am honored to have met him and known him. I am sure he will be missed. Back with Helen again.* ”

Doug Prince - February 01, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LK

“ *Sorry for your loss. I was just thinking about Lester last week Luise* ”

Luise Kirby - January 31, 2012 at 12:00 AM