



Herbert "Herb" Jordan

October 23, 1929 - February 18, 2019

Services honoring the life of Herbert "Herb" Rosco Jordan will be 10:00 a.m., Thursday, February 21, 2019 at Tulsa Christian Fellowship. Viewing will take place at the church on Thursday, prior to the service from 9:00 a.m. until service time. Burial will be Thursday at 1:15 p.m. at Floral Haven Memorial Gardens. Herbert Roscoe Jordan was born October 23, 1929 in Quincy, Florida, the son of Charles and Beatrice Jordan.

He was raised in a tiny town in southwestern Alabama called Fulton, north of Mobile. It was very rural, and it was a lumber town. Literally – it was pretty much a company town of Scotch Lumber Company, where his dad worked. He grew up there, played football for his county high school, and then went to a prep school, Gulf Coast Military Academy in Mobile, to burnish his grades and his football skills in hopes of playing college football. At GCMA he got his first exposure to a military environment, but also did well enough to garner the attention of coaches at Georgia Tech, where he attended and played for a year before transferring to Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama.

There, he played football for three years, while earning a degree from the Auburn school of engineering. He was a defensive back, and played with Vince Dooley, who went on to coach Georgia to a national championship. He and Vince kept in touch through the years, and Vince visited their home in Rogers a few times when he was in town as Athletic Director of Georgia there

to play the Arkansas Razorbacks in nearby Fayetteville.

One story from Herb's football career was about the time he tackled Max McGee in a game against Tulane, which was then in the Southeastern Conference. McGee went on to a career with the Green Bay Packers and is famous for scoring two touchdowns in the first Super Bowl. Herb notes that he made the tackle, but was knocked unconscious when he hit McGee, who was then a fullback, and much larger than Herb. He told the Tulsa World, in a story the newspaper did about Herb in 2018, that when McGee hit him, "he went out like a light."

After college graduation, he entered the Air Force, and completed basic training at the now-defunct Webb Air Force Base in Big Spring, Texas. Herb first learned to fly while at Columbus Air Force Base in Columbus, Mississippi, despite never having ambition to become a pilot. But he quickly took to flying, and advanced rapidly, flying several different kinds of planes during his Air Force career before settling in to flying B52s. While stationed there, he met Virginia "Gigi" Avery, who would a few years later become his wife. They were married in June, 1955, and were married for 62 years before Gigi's death in 2018.

During the various inevitable transfers that come with military life, Herb worked as an air controller and then pilot instructor for various planes. He soon was promoted to the rank of Major and was stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City, South Dakota, from 1963 to 1969. It was during that time he was deployed to Guam, where he flew B-52 missions over Vietnam.

From 1969 to 1972, Herb was stationed at March Air Force Base near Riverside, California, where he was promoted to lieutenant colonel, and then to Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, Washington.

During his years posted at Fairchild, he was involved in a strategic and controversial campaign called Operation Linebacker II, known popularly as “The Christmas Bombings.” Then-president Richard Nixon decided with his military advisers that something dramatic must be done to bring the North Vietnamese back to the peace talk table in Paris. An eleven-day campaign to bomb Hanoi was undertaken, and Herb flew three of those eleven nights in his B52, commanding a squadron each time. Usually commanded by a lieutenant colonel, squadrons range in size from 30 to 500 personnel depending upon the mission. Fighter squadrons typically are assigned 18-24 aircraft. He remembers that Christmas as the hardest of his life, with the dangerous missions, and away from his family. His daughter Barbara turned 15 on the third night of that campaign in December 1972 – one of the nights Herb flew.

Herb was promoted to full Colonel in 1973, and was transferred to the Pentagon. His two oldest children, Barb and her brother Russell, were in high school during those years, and Barb graduated from high school while Herb was stationed at the Pentagon for 3 years, while youngest son Peter was in grade school.

He then spent two years at Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, New York, where he was base commander. He finished his military career from 1978 to 1981 as director of safety for the 8th Air Force at Barksdale Air Force Base near Shreveport, Louisiana.

When he retired from the Air Force in 1981, they moved to Rogers, Arkansas, where Gigi’s mother lived. Herb worked for 15 more years after retiring from the Air Force. He was director of safety for the trucking company J.B. Hunt, where he made many friends. He and Gigi were active in Immanuel Baptist Church in Rogers, and Herb attended men’s Bible studies there and at other

venues. He grew close to their pastor, Tom Hatley. He visited those in nursing homes, and like Gigi, served with the crisis pregnancy center there in Rogers, Loving Choices.

Herb had a very winning personality, and everybody seemed to like him in pretty much every circle in his life – his neighborhood, his church, his work, and his former Air Force colleagues and their families. He kept in touch with many, right up until he was moved to memory care. He was very generous with his friends and family. If you think in terms of “love languages,” Herb’s was definitely gift giving (and receiving). He agonized over the right gifts for people but loved giving people things. You would practically have to arm wrestle him to pay for a breakfast or lunch. He also greatly enjoyed receiving gifts – it was the primary way he expressed and received love.

He also had a winning sense of humor. He had all these wonderful southern colloquialisms. When it rained hard, it sounded like “a cow tinkling on a flat rock,” or he’d say, “you can’t swing a dead cat without hitting (whatever there was a lot of nearby).” He could tease with the best of them.

He lived and died with both his Auburn Tigers football teams, and Arkansas Razorbacks football and basketball. When the Hogs won the basketball NCAA national championship in 1994, he bought everybody gifts commemorating the win, from t-shirts to a gold hog pendant with a ruby eye for Gigi. Until near the end of his life, the months of the college football season were the high holy days for Herb, who would plant himself in a chair or on the couch, or on a bed with the TV on, and watch games from late morning into the night.

When he fully retired in 1996, they built their home on Beaver Lake, about 30 minutes from their Rogers home. He loved that property. He would go out there by himself when Gigi didn’t want to go with him. He had a boat, and would run around on the lake for a while, and loved to water ski when he had

someone there to drive the boat for him. He and Gigi would go to the lake house often in those early days, after 1997, when the house was completed. He loved to “putter” around, taking care of little things in and around the house. Gigi made him get a cell phone (which he barely learned to use) when she learned he was using the chain saw to cut wood around the house – she was worried about an accident when he was alone there. He got a lot of enjoyment out of that house – even more so than Gigi, whose dad had bought the property in the early 1960s before the lake was there (it was created when the White River was dammed by Beaver Dam). It remains his legacy as much as hers – even though the place is now referred to by family as Avery Acres (Avery was Gigi’s maiden name). You can rent a piece of Jordan/Avery history by staying at Avery Acres, which the family began renting as a vacation home part of the year in 2018.

In 2006, the family began noticing his shaky hand. When asked about it, Herb consulted a doctor, who initially told him that it was due to some medications he was taking. But soon, it became clear that it was something else, and he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s.

He did pretty well for several years after the diagnosis. He was 77 when the official diagnosis came, and for probably six or seven years after, he was still able to drive without difficulty, and do almost everything he had previously done. The tremors were a problem, but not debilitating, and the growing rigidity associated with Parkinson’s had yet to become a significant challenge.

Herb and Gigi moved to Broken Arrow, OK, to live with his daughter Barbara and her husband Bill in July 2015. He lived with them until just two and a half weeks before his death on February 18, 2019, when he was moved to a memory care home after developing Parkinson’s Disease Dementia.

He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend to many. This was

the real Herb Jordan, before Parkinson's began to take its terrible toll on his body, and eventually his mind.

He was preceded in death by parents, and by his wife of 62 years, Gigi. He is survived by his daughter, Barbara Sullivan and her husband, Bill, of Broken Arrow, OK, his son Russell Jordan and his wife Brenda, of Dallas, TX, his son Peter and his wife Kim, of Atlanta, GA; his sister, Janet Carlisle; and grandchildren Lisa Sullivan of Tulsa, Laura Embry and her husband Sam of Tulsa, David Jordan and his wife Janie of Houston, TX, Lenny Jordan and Heath Jordan of Atlanta, GA, along with many nieces and nephews.

Burial will be at Floral Haven in Broken Arrow, next to his late wife, Gigi.

Cemetery Details

Floral Haven Memorial Gardens

6500 S. 129th E. Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74012
(918) 252-2518

Previous Events

Viewing

FEB 21. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Tulsa Christian Fellowship
2121 E. 3rd St.
Tulsa,, OK 74104

Service

FEB 21. 10:00 AM (CT)

Tulsa Christian Fellowship
2121 E. 3rd St.
Tulsa,, OK 74104

Tribute Wall



“ Herbert "Herb" Jordan

October 23, 2023 at 01:21 AM



“ I met Herb Jordan 29 years ago when he hired me at JB Hunt. I had the wonderful privilege of working for him for the next six years and remaining a friend for the next 23 years. He was a mentor, role model and a friend that I not only respected but greatly admired.

My own father was in the army for 26 years and my brother is a retired colonel from the Air Force. I had an automatic connection with Herb because of his extensive and impressive military career. I could appreciate his discipline, his sense of honor and his commitment to excellence in everything!! His commitment to his wonderful wife was inspiring. My Father's commitment to my Mom during her extended period of illness mirrored that of Herb's commitment to Gigi. I can't imagine having any more respect than I do for both of these important men in my life.

Herb's love for the Lord was also an inspiration for many. It impacted every area of his life. I know the Lord is rejoicing in having him home and the celebration continues. I was blessed to know him and honored to revere his memory. His impact on the lives of many will remain. What a legacy!!!

Karla Kasnicka - March 01, 2019 at 02:37 PM

“ I met Herb in 1988 when I interviewed for a night/weekend safety department position at J.B. Hunt. After looking at my application (seeing that I had good high school grades, but was not currently in college) he said “Partner, you need to be in school”. About a year later my father died, and Herb took me under his wing—the accountability and encouragement that followed was instrumental in me not only finishing college, but focusing on my career ...and growing up.

He and I later discovered our shared love of running (although his every-day running regiment was impossible to match), telling running stories in his cube-office while snacking on peanut M&Ms. I was a frequent tag-a-long guest of his to Razorback games, water skiing, and trips to inspect the progress of the lake house (now Avery Acres)—always with him humming along to KBVA oldies while breaking land speed records in his immaculately kept Town Car.

I had the privilege of working for Herb for eight years before his retirement from J.B. Hunt: and the success of that company, as well as my own are, in no small part, due to his incredible leadership and discipline. All the while, his humor was ever-present; his phraseology is renowned:

“We’re busy picking up thumbtacks while the elephants run us over.”

“That person can’t find their fanny with both hands.”

“Deer hunters come in on Monday bragging about the one deer they got over the weekend, and I look at our accident reports and see our drivers got 13 without firing a shot.”

“Now that you’re done blowin’ sand up my fanny, how ‘bout you tell me what really happened.”

“If you’re on the fourth floor, always carry a folder and walk briskly.”

His mentorship didn't stop at retirement—he continued to follow my career and challenge me—and all the while being an amazing Christian example to help me rediscover my faith walk.

I'm thankful to God for Herb Jordan.

Roger Crawford - February 22, 2019 at 11:42 PM

MF

“*“What a special man!” My family moved to Rogers in October 1992 and I started my career with J. B. Hunt, March of 1993 in the Cargo Claims department. Herb was one of the first friends I made as we worked closely with Safety. As the new girl in the building, Herb took me under his wings and helped mentor me into the JBH family!*

I was so impressed by his drive, dedication, loyalty and character that I knew I wanted to learn from him! He encouraged several of us to start running with him on our lunch hour that before you knew it we were up to 4 miles! On rainy cold days, he would ask Karla and I if we were going with him or turning into "candy butts"! What an inspiration!

Given Herb's highly successful Military Career I'm sure that when he gave orders, he expected follow through! Interesting enough, a lot of people at JBH were not aware of his past. He was a very patient, humble and encouraging Director! Never pompous or arrogant as one might expect.

As a new family to NWA, Herb and Gigi were so kind! On several occasions he offered both football and basketball tickets to see the Razorbacks play. We quickly became fans of calling the hogs!

During the summer we would come in Monday morning and talk about how beautiful Beaver lake was over the weekend. He would tease me that he looked for me on the lake, but I always told him with my wet hair and no makeup, he would never recognize me!

It was an honor and privilege to continue our friendship after Herb retired from JBH in 1996. He and Gigi would meet several of us for lunch and update us on the life of retirement! They were a special couple and a true gift from God!

Without a doubt, Herb Jordan was the most accomplished man I've ever known! Not just speaking of his lifetime career success, Herb walked the walk of a devoted servant to God!

*I was grateful to celebrate his life yesterday with family and friends
and know he was accepted into the heavenly kingdom on Feb. 18th!
What a party in heaven!*

*Blessings to the Jordan family and thank you for sharing this special
man with us!*

Sincerely,

*Melissa Foley
but I let Herb call me Missy!*

Melissa Foley - February 22, 2019 at 10:26 AM

MC

“ Great Guy! He was a mentor to me as I started in safety in my training. Great first impression of JBH because of him. What a leader too, lead by example and was so humble especially with his accomplishments in the Air Force. A Colonel too. I stayed in touch with Herb. We talked mainly Auburn/Arkansas Football as Herb played at Auburn.

He moved to Tulsa in 2015 to be with his daughter and son-in-law to care for his wife and him. Both of their health were failing. Herb had Parkinson's Disease and in Mid December 2019 he went down hill fast . He was a man of God and I am sure he is in a better place with his wife and all his team mates from the military and Auburn . I know he and his wife, Gigi are in heaven. I hope to see him again and if I do I am sure Herb would say to me " I did not expect to see you here" with that grin as he had a great sense of humor.

I have great memories as I will cherish them . He is famous at JB Hunt for calling a male fellow employee "Partner" if he did not know his name or "Little Lady" if you were female and did not know your name , all in that loving Alabama accent. I was proud he knew my name and proud to call him a friend and mentor .

God Bless The Jordan Family and I am sure you are who you are today because of Herb and Gigi . I know I am better because of Herb

Prayers Are With You All,

Mark Calcagni

Friend and Fellow JB Hunt Team Mate

Mark Calcagni - February 22, 2019 at 08:33 AM

“ I came to know Herb as we attended church together in Rogers, AR. Every Monday for over a decade we would gather on Monday mornings to count the tithes and offerings given on Sunday. In this small group setting, Herb and I quickly became friends. My husband, Brian and I had served in the Air Force so we shared common AF experiences and memories and many laughs. It quickly became evident how much Herb loved sports My youngest son played basketball in high school, college and then professionally in Germany for several seasons. Herb followed every game of his, it seemed and I was amazed how he knew his stats from games played the previous week. He never failed to ask about my 2 sons, whenever we saw each other. My oldest son interviewed Herb for a high school assignment. I can't remember what the criteria was supposed to be...but I think most students interviewed a grandfather. My son, Russell didn't have a living grandfather, so asked Herb if he would do the honors. Of course he graciously did.

Herb loved the local farms in our area and for several years we would make visits to the u-pick strawberry and blueberry fields. Herb LOVED the bounty and we had a lot of fun even in the heat and humidity of NW Arkansas. Many mornings he and Gigi ate those blueberries for breakfast and we always compared how many gallons we still had in the freezer throughout the year.

When driving and walking became more difficult for Herb, I would often drive Herb to Dr appointments or to check the lake house, of which he was so proud to show. I always said I was “ driving Miss Daisy”. I remember how he loved talking of all of Gigi's paintings on the walls and how beautiful they were. He would stand on the deck and you could just see the memories he was reliving as he gazed at the beautiful lake. He would talk of all the fun family times with the kids and grandkids with such fondness.

Herb often reminisced of his friends. I was not surprised at the number he remained in contact with, especially from the Air Force. He even called spouses after husbands had passed away. He truly

knew how to be a friend.

Herb and Gigi loved being involved with our local Crisis Pregnancy Center and remained so as long as they could. Whatever they were involved with they seemed to do so with all their hearts.

I am blessed to have known Herb and to call him my friend. I will miss him greatly but know I will see him again. His love for our Lord was evident and he knew the assurance of a life in eternity with Jesus. To his family...may your memories of this great man bring you comfort, during this time of loss. We are praying for you all....With love, Joni Cline

Joni Cline - February 21, 2019 at 07:52 AM

KE

“*Herb was the epitome of a true Southern Gentleman. He was one of the finest men I ever had the privilege to know and work with. I loved to listen to him talk and his wonderful Southern accent. If you listened to him, you always learned something of value. Heaven just got a lot brighter when he arrived.*”

Kimberly Erstine - February 20, 2019 at 12:43 PM

HH

“*It is our honor and privilege to serve the Jordan family and to provide this permanent tribute website in memory of Herb.*”



Hayhurst Funeral Home - February 18, 2019 at 12:36 PM