

# *Celebration of Love & Life*



**MSgt. Richard Andrew Thomas, Jr., USAF (Ret.)**

March 17, 1957—October 1, 2023

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 | 11:00 a.m.

ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH

4245 Cascade Road | Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Dr. Craig L. Oliver, Sr., Senior Pastor

Reverend Leonard Patterson, Officiating

# *Order of Service*

**Reverend Leonard Patterson, Officiating**

## **PROCESSIONAL**

**Pastor and Family**

## **PRAYER & SCRIPTURE READINGS**

## **REFLECTIONS**

**Richard A. Thomas, III &  
Andricka Thomas Atkins**

## **MUSICAL SELECTION & VIDEO TRIBUTE**

## **WORDS OF COMFORT**

## **BENEDICTION & CLOSING PRAYER**

## **REPAST**

**Elizabeth Baptist Church**

## **COMMITTAL SERVICE**

**Georgia National Cemetery  
1080 Scott Hudgens Drive  
Canton, Georgia 30114**



# Reflections of a Beautiful Life



Master Sergeant Richard Andrew Thomas, Jr., U.S. Air Force, Ret., was born in Dayton, Ohio (Montgomery County) on March 17, 1957, to Richard Andrew Thomas Sr. (deceased September 11, 1993) and Willie Florence (Mattison) Thomas (deceased January 4, 1986). He departed this earth on October 1, 2023, to join the Lord in heaven where he now lives in peace.

He is loved and missed immensely by the love of his life, Patricia A. (Britton) Thomas, who steadfastly stood beside him and remained committed in love wherever they found themselves across the country during 43 years of marriage.

Richard, also known as "Dicky", and his wife share a daughter, Andricka Teresa (Thomas) Atkins (Harold Jr.), a son, Richard Andrew Thomas III (Jazmine), and two loving grandchildren, Akaya Richelle Thomas and Richard Andrew Thomas, IV. His family will forever treasure the value he brought to their lives from moments shared with him and wisdom gained as the result of his love, confidence, and guidance.

Affectionately nicknamed 'Afah' by his beloved granddaughter, Akaya, this name and role in life was among his most cherished; being a grandfather filled his heart with joy and was one of his life's proudest of honors.

He spent his very early childhood in Washington, D.C., where he began his life. In 1963, his family began their relocation to Dayton, Ohio where he spent the duration of his childhood and developed into adulthood with his 5 siblings whom he cherished and loved: Velerie (Thomas) Moreland (Victor), Kenneth W. Thomas (Tawana), William B. Thomas, Wendell G. Thomas, and Dexter L. Thomas.

Richard initially joined the United States Air Force in 1975, then re-enlisted on June 10, 1981 after the completion of his first term. During his 23-year career, he served in numerous leadership roles and capacities in aerospace jet engine propulsion and logistics career field, resulting from his experiences as an aircraft mechanic, master instructor, and logistician.

He served at duty locations all over the country, including: Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Air Force Base (AFB), Alaska; Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, Scott AFB, Missouri; Chanute, AFB, Illinois; Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio; Langley AFB, VA; and served on multiple deployments to overseas locations and American conflicts such as Operation Golden Pheasant (Honduras), the Gulf War, and Desert Storm.

Highly accomplished, Richard earned: the Meritorious Service Medal; the United States Air Force Commendation Medal; U.S. Air Force Achievement Medal; U.S. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 3 devices; U.S. Air Force Good Conduct Medal with 4 devices; Longevity Service Award with 3 devices; Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Professional Military Education Ribbon with 1 device.

Master Sergeant Thomas, Jr. (Ret.) retired honorably and with distinction on January 13, 1998, from Langley Air Force Base, Virginia.

Richard and his loving wife, Patricia, moved on to the next phase of their life's journey where he used his military experience to serve as a Regional Director with Pratt & Whitney. He was the lead logistician and liaison between the jet engine company and Robins AFB, Warner Robins, GA.

Richard was a loving husband, father, grandfather, son, brother, uncle, cousin, nephew, and dear friend to many, all who were blessed to have his affection. He loved his family dearly and enjoyed being an uncle, known for giving advice to 3 generations of more than 30 nieces and nephews each whom he loved dearly.

An insightful man, he raised his children to have foresight and confidence, to cultivate wisdom, exercise discipline, value education, operate truthfully and with honor, have dignity in all their accomplishments, along with having respect for themselves and others.

A natural leader and mentor, he had a giving heart and a huge capacity to love everyone around him. His willingness to sacrifice for the comfort of others was exemplary and indicative of the high-caliber person he was while on earth.

Richard leaves a legacy of unconditional love, strength, wisdom, and compassion for others.

His life centered on three things: Love, Family, and a focus to "begin with the end in mind." He was truly one-of-a-kind.

Services will be held October 24, 2023, at Elizabeth Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA at 4245 Cascade Rd, Atlanta, GA 30331, and will begin promptly at 11 am. Guests should be seated no later than 10:50 am. A repast will immediately follow the service from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Elizabeth Baptist Church.

Burial services will be held at the Georgia National Cemetery in Canton, GA at 1080 Scott Hudgens Drive in Canton, GA 30114 during a military commitment ceremony promptly at 3 pm.

The family will accept flowers or donations may be given in memory of Richard Thomas, Jr. to St. Jude Children's Hospital at 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105

# The Footprints Prayer

One night I had a dream...

I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord, and  
Across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene  
I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; One belonged to me,  
and the other to the Lord. When the last scene  
of my life flashed before us,

I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
noticed that many times along the path of my life,  
There was only one set of footprints.

I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest  
and saddest times in my life

This really bothered me, and I questioned the Lord about it.

“Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,  
You would walk with me all the way;

But I have noticed that during the  
most troublesome times in my life,  
There is only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why in times when I  
needed you the most, you should leave me.

The Lord replied, “My precious, precious  
child. I love you, and

I would never,  
never leave you during your times of  
trial and suffering.

When you saw only  
one set of footprints,

It was then that I carried you.

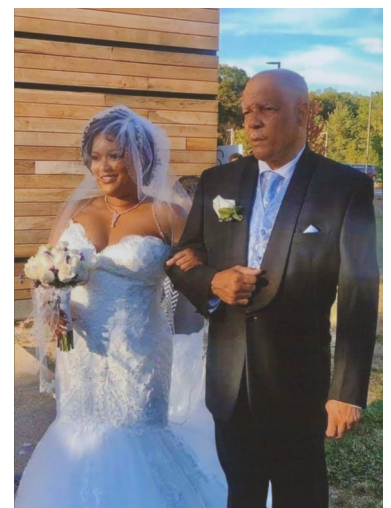
Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty  
waters, though your footprints were not seen.

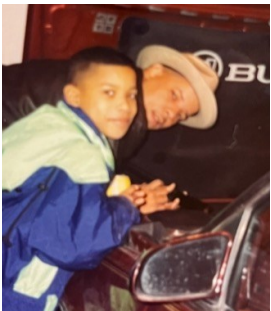
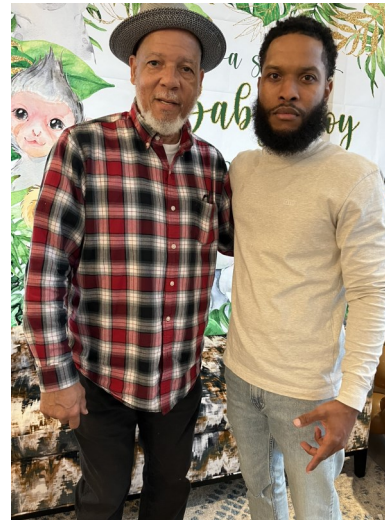
- Psalm 77:19



*"Yea, though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:  
for thou art with me; thy rod and thy  
staff they comfort me."  
Psalm 23:4*







# 46 Years of Love & Marriage







"Thank you for loving me unconditionally...

"Till we meet again."

Love,

Your Beloved Wife,

"Cakes"

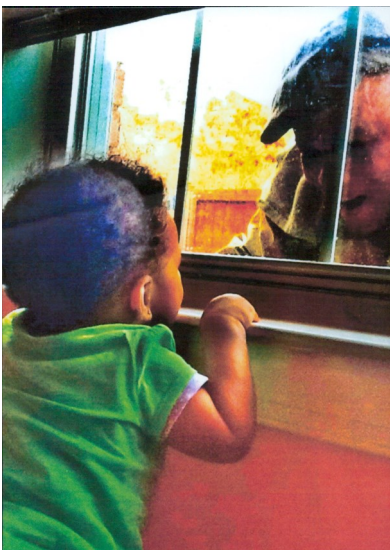








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# I WILL LOVE YOU FOREVER







## Acknowledgements

The Richard A. Thomas Jr., Family extends their gratitude to all the families and friends who attended the services and sent their condolences from afar. The Family sends their heartfelt thanks and blessings to McCullough Funeral Home and the Elizabeth Baptist Church Family and supporting staff and volunteers who gave their time, labor, and compassionate support to honor and send the family's beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle and cousin home to rest with the Lord, our heavenly Father.

Blessings to all,  
The Richard A. Thomas, Jr., Family

*A million times we'll miss you,*

*A million times we'll cry,*

*If love could have saved you,*

*You never would have died.*

*In life we all loved you dearly,*

*In death we love you still,*

*In our hearts you hold a place,*

*No other one can fill.*



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**McCULLOUGH**  
FUNERAL HOME



“ Begin with the end in mind. ”

- Dr. Stephen R. Covey