

OBITUARY OF JAMES ROLAND BROWN

James Roland Brown died peacefully surrounded by family and friends on September 3, 2026, in Austin, Texas. Roland, as everyone knew him, was born on March 3, 1936, as the Great Depression was still evident across the U.S. Born in Washington D.C. to Norma Powell Brown and James Algie Brown, Roland quickly began to show the traits that were evident throughout his life. He was curious, adventurous, and always kind. His sister Elouise, born three years later, remembers him as her big brother, her hero. The adventures they had foreshadowed Roland's lifetime of adventures as a pilot.

Other adventures occurred before he began to fly. He went into business for himself as a paperboy; he won the State of Mississippi Soapbox Derby as a teenager; he began to accumulate bikes, motorbikes, vehicles while still in high school, and he loved any machine that could move him faster.

After high school, he entered the U.S. Army and was assigned to Intelligence, married Bobbie Jean Coke and began a family quickly. His sons, James R. Brown Jr. (grandchildren Charity, Natalie, and Sheya), Mike Brown and his wife Pamela (grandchildren Amber, Shelby, Tanya), and Billy Brown and his wife Kitty (grandchildren Heather, Clinton) gave him the sense of purpose and belonging he had wanted throughout his childhood.

Driven by a lifelong habit of total effort, Roland seized every opportunity the military offered, eventually transitioning to the U.S. Air Force for pilot training. As a captain he flew many international missions and then served as a commercial pilot for almost 30 years. As an Air Force pilot some of his missions took him to Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Conflict putting him directly in harm's way and earning him the Airman's Medal for valor under enemy fire. A total of 40 years as a pilot, he routinely claimed his greatest achievement was that "he never lost a passenger."

A later long and devoted marriage to Ann Cwiklik blessed him with two more sons and a daughter-in-law Scott Brown, Jennifer Howard-Brown, and Glen Brown (grandchildren, Milo and Ethan). Roland had achieved the life he had dreamed of so many years previously. A later marriage to Judy Pendergraft brought him companionship in his retirement.

Retirement opened other opportunities for achievement: steady and consistent volunteer work, especially in Masonic events including becoming a Worshipful Master; entering college at the age of 68 and graduating with honors from St. Edward's University at 72; serving as president of the Continental Airlines Golden Eagles Retired Pilots Association; driving Austin-area families to Shriners Children's Hospital in the Houston-area; volunteering with Welcome Table at St. James. Retirement also included a touring motorcycle and riding cross-country. A late marriage at 80 to De Sellers gave him another life to live, another adventure.

A word that is his just epitaph is kind. Throughout a long life of 90 years he was consistently kind to friend, family, stranger – to everyone.