



## Mr. Robert Whitson Clifford

March 17, 1921 - July 26, 2018

Robert W. “Bob” Clifford was born in Superior, Wisconsin on March 17, 1921, the second son of Herbert and Louise Clifford. Moving at an early age, he spent most of his early in St. Paul, Minnesota where he attended public schools graduating from Central High School in 1939. His college education was interrupted by a desire and opportunity to work locally at the First National Bank and in 1942, with World War II heating up, he applied for acceptance as an Aviation Cadet with the US Army Air Corp. After being accepted for and successfully completing training, he was commissioned a Second Lt. in the class of ‘43C and assigned to duty with the US Air Transport Command. After service which included flying the “Hump” between India and China, training flight crews in Reno, Nevada, flying DC-4’s from San Francisco to destinations in the Pacific theater and receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross with clusters as well as Air Medal with clusters, he retired in 1946.

He achieved his desire to become a commercial airline pilot through employment briefly as a co-pilot with Northwest Airlines. Fellow Hump pilots formed a new airline, Air Freight, Inc. and Bob flew as a pilot with them primarily from New York to Puerto Rico until a chance meeting developed into an aviation career which lasted until 1968. Starting as pilot/chief pilot with Nationwide Air Transport, successive years found him in Detroit flying to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, General Manager of a large repair station and flight operation at Frontier Air Motive in Brownsville, Texas, and first employee and Vice President-Operations of Turner Airlines (later named Lake Central Airlines) in Indianapolis, Indiana. At Lake Central, he was a director and instrumental in the achievement of it’s becoming the first employee owned scheduled airline.

In 1968 he was called as Vice President-Operations of a relatively new airline, Air California headquartered in Newport Beach, California. Through the positions of General Manager, President and CEO, he guided the airline into a substantial position in the West. The airline was subsequently acquired by American Airlines and he joined a veteran public affairs person in the formation of Thomas Wilck Associates, a highly respected firm in the field. Additionally, he became an advisor to the chairman of a newly formed National

Bank of Southern California. He was very active and visible in the Southern California area: Chairman of three Chambers of Commerce, Chairman of the US Olympic Committee, Chairman of the Orange County Centennial Committee and numerous club affiliations. He retired from active business positions in 1992 and moved to Gulf Shores, Alabama.

Married in 1948 to his flight attendant wife, Del, together they cut a wide path in whatever city, community or activity they found themselves in. Both confirmed and involved Christians, they were active as choir members, teachers, workers and for piano/saxophone duets. He was active in Mission Aviation Fellowship and Chairman of the Board for some time. They have enjoyed playing golf at many wonderful golf courses throughout the world. They enjoy a close relationship with their only child, Gail, who, together with her two cats, lives a few miles away in the same town. Del and Bob moved from their golf course home in Gulf Shores to beautiful Fairhope, Alabama in May, 2003.

All of the above was written by Bob Clifford himself. The rest of his life was a continuation of what he had already started.

He and Del played their duets, helped where it was needed, supported the church and other charities.

The motor home was always ready to go somewhere. Visits to family, friends, and new adventures continued to happen across the country. He encouraged anyone he met by his positive attitude and his ever present smile.

In 2014, his wife of 65 years, Delma, went home to be with the Lord. His homecoming was on July 26, 2018.

His daughter, Gail, many nieces and nephews, and friends will cherish the memories until together again.

In lieu of flowers please make a donation in Mr Bob Clifford's name to either [salvationarmyusa.org](http://salvationarmyusa.org) or donate to the "Mission Aviation Fellowship" at P.O. Box 47, Nampa, ID 83653.

# Cemetery

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## **Pine Rest Memorial Park**

16541 US Hwy 98

Foley, AL, 36535

# Events

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**AUG** **Visitation** 01:00PM - 02:00PM

**6**

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Pine Rest Memorial Park

16541 US-98, Foley, AL, US, 36535

**AUG** **Memorial Service** 02:00PM

**6**

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Pine Rest Memorial Park

16541 US-98, Foley, AL, US, 36535

# Comments

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“ I remember Bob from when I began my career at Lake Central Airlines. It was my privilege to have crossed paths with him. R. I. P. Bob

**Charlie Pyles** - September 02, 2018 at 05:16 PM

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“ Mr. Clifford hired me at during the changeover from Turner Airlines to Lake central. I started as a male flight attendant 2/1/51 but 3 months later we were replaced by female attendants. I then moved to Flight Dispatch his office was 2 doors down. I was transferred to Pittsburgh during the merger with Allegheny Airlines and only saw him again at the annual Lake Central Parties. Bob was a real gentleman even during heated union negotiations I'm happy he had such a full life after the merged we all missed him at Allegheny.  
Jim Sullivan.

jimsullivan5953@att.net

**Jim Sullivan** - August 19, 2018 at 04:45 PM



“ Thank you for sharing your memories. Gail

**Gail** - August 23, 2018 at 12:47 PM

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“ 5 files added to the album LifeTributes



**Pine Rest Funeral Home and Memorial Park, LLC** - August 06, 2018 at 06:33 AM

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“ 48 files added to the album LifeTributes



Pine Rest Funeral Home and Memorial Park, LLC - August 05, 2018 at 06:07 PM

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“ Gail, I didn't know him well, but I spent many years with you. Of the short times I did meet your Dad, I can honestly say that his gusto, kindness, and vibrant enthusiasm for life was palpable and impressive, even to the young "whippersnapper" that I was. Knowing you as I do, I can say that you carry that part of his legacy on as you always have; both as an admirable quality and tribute to your father.

Kyla Calhoun - August 01, 2018 at 11:04 PM

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“ Bruce Clifford purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Mr. Robert Whitson Clifford.



Bruce Clifford - July 30, 2018 at 09:23 AM

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“ What a wonderful legacy your dad leaves behind, Gail. Robert sends along a big hug, as do I. With love,  
Brucie

Brucie Campbell - July 29, 2018 at 11:56 AM

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“ Charles Clifford purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mr. Robert Whitson Clifford.



Charles Clifford - July 28, 2018 at 03:14 PM