



Dr. Robert Lee Aston

August 21, 1924 - September 1, 2013

Dr. Robert Lee Aston passed away peacefully at his home, Aston Villa, in Elberton, Georgia, on the 1st day of September in the year of our Lord 2013 A.D. He was an attorney-at-law, mining engineer and geologist. Dr. Aston maintained a home and office in his native State at Rapidan, Virginia and Georgia.

He was born in Virginia in 1924, of a long line, maternally and paternally, of Virginians and Anglo-Saxon lineage, the first coming to the English Colony of Virginia in the early 1600's. He was also a direct descendant of Johann Kepler (1571-1630), the famous German astronomer and mathematician.

Dr. Aston received his early education in Georgia and Missouri. He volunteered for military service with the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942 and served on active duty from 1943 to 1945. During World War II, he flew 35 combat missions against Germany as a First Lieutenant, navigator, with the 67th Squadron of the 44th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, stationed in England. For meritorious and outstanding valor in combat on a mission to Hamburg, Germany, he received two Distinguished Flying Crosses. He was promoted to the rank of Captain for serving as the Deputy Squadron Navigator of the 67th Squadron. For other combat missions, he received the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf clusters. Following his tour of European combat in February 1945, he was returned to the U.S. and trained as a single engine pilot with the 2nd Air Force for a tour of duty in the Pacific theatre. He completed pilot training as the War ended with Japan and was separated from active duty October 1, 1945. He served with the Air Force reserves for 8 years thereafter and was discharged from the Air Force Reserves in 1953.

Aston was a highly educated man, earning eight university degrees in engineering and law. He graduated from the College of William & Mary in Virginia in 1948 in science and pre-engineering; in 1950 in mining engineering from the Missouri School of Mines, U. of Missouri; in 1984 in law with a Juris Doctor from Woodrow Wilson College of Law, Atlanta, Ga.; in 1985 with a Master of Laws degree from Atlanta Law School, Atlanta, Ga.; in 1992 with a Master of Geological Engineering from the University of Missouri-Rolla; in 1993 with

the professional engineer's degree of Engineer of Mines from the University of Missouri-Rolla; in 1996 with a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Civil Engineering-Law from the University of Aston, Birmingham, England; and in 2000 with a Doctor of Engineering (D.E. in engineering law) from the University of Missouri-Rolla. His Doctor of Engineering degree was the eighth such degree ever granted by UMR.

Dr. Aston was an Adjunct Professor at the University of Missouri-Rolla occasionally teaching Mining Law and Environmental Law. He authored three published law books on mining law and environmental law. Dr. Aston was a strong proponent and advocate of the full reclamation of surface mines by landfilling thereby restoring the mined land for surface re-use and conserving land. He had been a long time author of legal articles on the subject of minerals, mining and environmental law for several national and international mining and legal publications. He authored many articles under his own trade marked legal columns "Assays from the Legal Vein" and Aston's Mining Law Case Reviews. Dr. Aston was the Law Editor and a member of the Editorial Board for Mineral Resources Engineering Journal of the Imperial College, London, England.

As an attorney, he was admitted to law practice in the states of Georgia, Virginia, Indiana, and Montana. He was a member of the Bar of the United States Supreme Court, the bars of the 4th, 7th, 9th, and 11th Circuits of the U.S. Courts of Appeal. He had carried appeals to the Supreme Courts of Georgia, Montana and Missouri, and to the U.S. Supreme Court. He was a member of the American Bar Association, the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, the International Bar Association, the Australian Mining & Petroleum Law Association, the Rocky Mtn. Mineral Law Foundation, and the International Mining Professionals Society. Dr. Aston had been a member of the American Institute and Society of Mining Engineers (AIME-SME) since 1952 and was a member of its Legion of Merit. He was a charter member of the Georgia Geological Society, a registered Professional Geologist in the states of Georgia and Missouri.

Dr. Aston began his professional engineering career as a land surveyor in 1949 in Arlington and Fairfax Counties, Virginia, and in 1950 as a mining engineer and mine geologist for the Tennessee Copper Company, Ducktown, Tennessee. In December 1958, after a short stint as a plant engineer and assistant superintendent for Signal Mountain Portland Cement Company, Chattanooga, Tennessee, he entered private practice as a consulting mining engineer. He taught mining and petroleum geology at the University of Chattanooga (later U. Tenn at Chattanooga) from 1958-1959. In 1958 he opened a consulting mining engineering office in Signal Mountain, Tenn., subsequently moving his office in 1959 to Tate, Georgia, and then, to Elberton, Ga., in 1960. In April 1964, he started his own stone quarrying company in Virginia with the opening of a black granite

mine. He later opened two more granite quarries in Georgia and North Carolina. In 1987, after passing the bar exams in two states, he added the practice of law. Aston maintained law offices in Elberton, Georgia and in Rapidan, Virginia. He continued his Mineral Engineering and Law practice until his death.

Dr. Aston was a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and of the Sons of the American Revolution, and a Director of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association. He was a life-long member of the Methodist church and served as annual Head Usher for over 20 years at the First Methodist Church in Elberton, Georgia, and was a member of its Administrative Board.

Dr. Aston is survived by his beloved wife, Mary Ellen Pierce Aston, of the home; four children by a former marriage: Laurie Lee Aston of California, Gary Lee Aston, an attorney of Elberton, Georgia and his wife Linda, Roger Aston and his wife, Grace, of California, and Robin Lee Aston of Elberton, Georgia; four grandchildren: Derek David Aston and his wife, Katy, of Elberton, Charlotte N. Aston of Elberton, Ashley Morgan of California, and Ryan Aston of California; and two great-grandchildren: Hayleigh Jo Aston and Brady Anthony Smith. He is also survived by a step-daughter, Katherine and her husband, Tony, and granddaughter, Cortnee Smith, all of Fredericksburg, VA.; and special caregivers: Ms. Celecia Tate, Ms. Theodosia Brunson, and Mrs. Barbara Fleming.

A service to celebrate Dr. Aston's life was held on Thursday, September 5, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. at First United Methodist Church, Elberton, with Rev. Dr. Wallace Wheelles and Rev. Joe Watson officiating. Visitation was at 10:00 a.m. in The Fellowship Hall just prior to the service. Interment was at Waterloo Cemetery in Waterloo, Indiana on September 8, 2013.

You may express condolences to the family at www.hicksfuneral.com.

Arrangements for Dr. Robert Lee Aston were in the care of Hicks Funeral Home of Elberton.

Comments



“ I will cherish the memory of story-swapping with Dr. Aston. I'm glad to have known him.

Casey Colburn, Sarasota, FL

Casey Colburn - March 21, 2014 at 05:12 PM



“ We did not know Dr. Aston, but want the family to know his final resting place in the Waterloo Cemetery is a beautiful place. We are so sorry for your loss. The Fee's. Waterloo, Indiana

Robert and Coleen Fee - October 30, 2013 at 08:20 AM



“ Rest in peace Sir. I did not know you, but I saw you on Fast And Loud. My father was also in the Air Corps. You are all heroes to me and were my inspiration to enlist. I served in the Army Field Artillery for 4 years. God bless.

Robert Brooks - October 21, 2013 at 07:25 PM



“ I am only on this page because I saw him on fast and loud to and just wanted to pay it forward. Thank you for your service

1451663 - May 21, 2016 at 12:13 PM



“ I saw that dude on Fast n Loud!

Aston - October 02, 2013 at 11:23 PM



“ Roger, Gary, Robin, Laurie,
I have fond memories of your Dad and your whole family, your home on Cardinal Drive, and the wooden airplane propeller and Army Air Corps officers cap I can still envision on the wall of your house. I seem to remember a two-week stay at "The Station" in Rapidan with a paintbrush and scraper, no doubt as much of a learning experience for your Dad as it was for a couple of young teenagers. You are all in my thoughts.
--Arnie Lingle

Arnold Lingle - September 28, 2013 at 10:44 AM



“ Dear Mary,
We were so sorry to know of death of Lee. He is in our memories and hearts. We are praying for you and the family.
Love,
,Lynn and Irina Webster



Lynn and Irina Webster - September 11, 2013 at 12:14 PM



“ I am so sorry to hear about your loss. My thoughts are with you.
Patricia Griffith

Patricia Griffith - September 10, 2013 at 04:06 PM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Charles and Doris Fortson

Judy Fortson Howell - September 06, 2013 at 03:15 PM



“ Laurel Lee Aston was added to the Family Tree.

I aston - September 05, 2013 at 09:15 AM



“ I aston is following this tribute.

I aston - September 05, 2013 at 09:13 AM



“ Bobby And Susan Webb lit a candle in memory of Dr. Robert Lee Aston



bobby and susan webb - September 05, 2013 at 07:18 AM



“ Mary Ellen,

So sorry to hear of the death of Lee.....I always enjoyed talking with him at church.....My prayers are with you and your family.....

Ron Shuler

Ron Shuler - September 04, 2013 at 06:47 PM



“ Hello all,

I had my first real job with my Dad's business. One of my fondest memories of being with my dad is from about 1960-63, working for him on surveying trips, and in his office, helping with the math calculations he used to create topographical maps from the surveys. Sometimes we were gone for 2 or 3 days, and I had the experience of exploring places outside. I credit my dad with my love for discovery and my interest in the richness of earth and the natural environment.

We had a tender loving exchange when I last saw my dad in March 2012. He and I sat out on the bench in the front yard before I left. We appreciated this spot he called Aston Villa. (I saw him care for the yard on Cardinal Drive, for fifty years, planting all kinds of trees, and experimenting with what would grow, and sprinkling grass seed each year.) I have many fond memories of growing up there, from age 10 through my college years.

The last visit with my dad I raked the leaves in this front yard and remembered when Robin was little, and her 3 older siblings had raking duty, we all took turns letting her ride in the wheelbarrow in this very front yard. We played kick-the-cans, badminton and horseshoes in the back yard.

I have posted photos of my dad and his family, including his California grand-daughters, Ashley and Diana Morgan. Will add captions later.

We are having a service honoring my dad, here in California, on Friday morning outside.

Sincerely, Laurel Aston

Laurel Aston - September 04, 2013 at 02:21 PM



“ 19 files added to the album Memories Album



Laurel Aston & Ashley Morgan - September 04, 2013 at 01:59 PM



“

Mary,

Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Mr. Lee was a very interesting person who blessed us in many ways. God bless.

Tim and Cindy Cofer Rogers

The Aston Family,

Thank you for sharing your loved one with me. I have known Mr. Lee all of my life and he was a very interesting individual. I have been blessed by him in many ways!

My thoughts and prayers are with each of you. God bless.

Cindy Cofer Rogers

Cindy Cofer Rogers - September 03, 2013 at 03:08 PM



“

Eddy Morgan purchased the Rays of Light Spray for the family of Dr. Robert Lee Aston.



Eddy Morgan - September 03, 2013 at 11:31 AM



“

Grandpa will always be, to me, as Charlotte once said, someone to be proud of. He had many achievements in his life. I will always remember him singing to me and Diana, holding court in the kitchen, and being a generally good grandfather. He never failed to remember our birthdays or encourage us to have faith and pray. Every family is complicated and has challenges but I think I can speak at least for myself, my sister, and maybe even all of us when I say that Grandpa Lee set us a high bar in life for achievement and loved us and for that we will always be truly blessed and truly thankful. Grandpa, there will never be another one like you. You are loved and will be missed. Goodbye.

Ashley Morgan - September 03, 2013 at 11:08 AM



“ Ann Brown lit a candle in memory of Dr. Robert Lee Aston



Ann Brown - September 03, 2013 at 11:05 AM



“ Share a memory of Dr. Robert Lee Aston, or send a condolence to the family...

Ashley Morgan - September 03, 2013 at 11:00 AM



“ The members of the Elberton Bar Association send condolences to the family of Dr. Aston during their time of sorrow and reflection on the life of a great man. Elberton Bar Association

Jim Jenkins - September 03, 2013 at 09:38 AM



“ Dear Aston Family,
We are remembering all of you during this time of transition for Dr. Aston.
Dusty and Helene Rhodes

Helene Rhodes - September 03, 2013 at 08:12 AM



“ Patty and George Page purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Dr. Robert Lee Aston.



Patty and George Page - September 02, 2013 at 06:15 PM



“ Delree Bradford lit a candle in memory of Dr. Robert Lee Aston



delree bradford - September 02, 2013 at 02:39 PM



“ Gary, I am sorry to hear of your father's death. Please know I am holding you and your entire family in my prayers.

Curtis Veal - September 03, 2013 at 11:57 AM



“ Since i was 3 growing up in Rapidan Mr. Aston shook my hand and treated me as a gentleman. I hold him and his family in high regard. R Lee Aston was a true hero of WW2. Blue skies and tail winds.

Russ Dunn - March 13, 2018 at 04:12 AM