Douglas Robertson
July 10, 1932 - April 25, 2014

Obituary

Douglas Gene Robertson was born July 10, 1932, in his grandmother's boarding house in Wichita Falls, Texas, the first born to his parents, Anna Bell Fourniquet Robertson and Lynn William Robertson. He spent the first two years of his life on a tour bus as his father, a talented musician, played the Kansas City Big Easy and held the young family together through Depression times. Moving to Houston, they were soon joined by three boys, James Warren, Victor Allen, Robert Lynn, and, last, one beautiful girl, Barbara Lynne.

Doug grew up in Spring Branch and knew what it was to keep a cow out back and shoot for the pot. He played football and baseball and took a pitch to the nose a time or two. A member of the first graduating class of Spring Branch High School (1950), he entered the University of Houston, majoring in music. Upon volunteering for the army during the Korean War conflict, he was stationed in San Antonio, a member of the Fourth Army Band, playing flute and a fierce piccolo. While there, he joined the First Presbyterian Church choir, lured by, first, the free meal on choir practice nights, but then because there was also there a charming young soloist, Gay Terrell, only 17. They soon fell in love and were married June 1, 1957. They would be married fifty-one and a half years. They settled in Houston, both attending the University of Houston, Gay singing and Dad playing the gigs of the time, most notably with the Southwest's popular Ed Gerlach Orchestra. Their first born, a tiny red-headed girl, Helen Joy, made them a family. The times were momentous. Doug saw that he could make a difference in the world, and he decided his part was to join the thinkers and dreamers newly challenged with sending a man to the moon. Changing his major to math and graduating in 1960, he was immediately hired by Boeing's Apollo Program, with a job waiting for him in Seattle, Washington. He and Gay packed up their household, said goodbye to their families, and set off in their little Lloyd to travel westward and up the coast to their new home, exciting but poignant times in those days of limited communication.

Doug found his place as a designer of the computers and programs that built the ships that took men to the moon. He and Gay supported each other as he worked and she took care of the four children they would bring into the world, now including Marion Elizabeth, Anna Mozelle and Thomas Terrell, as Doug's work took the family from Seattle to New Orleans, Louisiana, back to Seattle, Huntsville, Alabama and Wilmington, Delaware. The family remembers gathering around the black and white television (rented for these occasions
because Doug and Gay wanted their children to be readers, not watchers), picking out the speckled images of orbiters and astronauts as the nation’s dream was fulfilled.

As the successful program wound down, the family, with Helen's deciding vote, returned to their roots, moving back to Houston in 1971, Doug finding success in Houston's oil industry, working for Texas Instruments, Superior Oil and eventually retiring from British Petroleum. He and Gay participated in Houston's music community, Gay with the Houston Grand Opera Chorus and both of them singing with Christ Church Cathedral and various churches and synagogues. Doug would be a founding member of the Sons of Orpheus Men's Chorus. He and Gay had many friends and made beautiful music and many memories. Doug also composed and heard his compositions performed over the years. His last composition was written for his brother Victor's Dixieland jazz band, played just this last year and for which Doug was soundly applauded. Gay and Doug were intensely proud of their four children, raising them with purpose and supporting them through their young years with college tuition and weddings. In their adult years they celebrated with them in good times, held them through hard times, and were happy to see each daughter and son now living life well and happy. They also welcomed and loved son-in-law Dennis McLane and daughter-in-law Cassandra Burke-Robertson. It brought them great joy to see how deeply Dennis loves Helen and Cassandra loves Thom. And as life goes on, this year Doug gave his blessing to Marion's engagement to Mr. Michael Kraus.

In retirement Gay and Doug entertained, remodeled their house of 40 years, played competitive bridge and welcomed their grandchildren. As Doug had taught his children, each grandchild found him or herself picked up in an early morning and driven to the Gulf, to learn how to bait a line and hopefully catch a fish. He taught them chess and tested their musical theory. Seeing them mature into intelligent young adults was a great joy to him.

Doug and Gay were able to travel, take cruises and enjoy themselves, even as her health became more delicate. He took care of her to the end, and he and their children were with her when she passed. Their love for each other set a great standard for all who knew them.

After his wife's passing, Doug found his feet again, enjoying his music, computers, a harrowing flight simulator, and just this year achieved a lifelong goal of surpassing one hundred gold masterpoints at Duplicate Bridge. He, Vic, Sharon, Bob and Barbara grew closer as the years wore on.

As well, he cherished and was close with his grandchildren, Mozelle Elizabeth, Jonathan Lynn and Cullen Rhys. They loved him fiercely, and Mozelle especially knew him as a guiding father figure. Bampa could freely discuss science fiction, musical theory, computer game design and the proper tools for any job. Only a few months ago he was out with the boys cutting down tree limbs. As he took care of his family, so he was taken care of in his final illness. In great health at 81, and walking two miles a day, he still was taken in months. His lifetime of strength and purpose made it possible for his mind to stay with him as his body gave way. He knew each visitor, each family member, and was still following the news of the day, up until he finally closed his eyes and left us, in his own home, with family surrounding his bed, holding his hand and saying sad goodbyes.

Although we do not know the generations to follow us, be assured that Doug's
grandchildren ten generations forward will think of him, speak lovingly of him, and look to him for the example he set in his own lifetime. He will be remembered always. Doug is predeceased by his wife, Gay Terrell Robertson; father, Lynn William Robertson; mother, Anna Belle Fourniquet Robertson; brother, James Robertson, Sr.; and brother, Robert Robertson.

Survived by brother, Vic (Sharon) Robertson; sister, Barbara (Bob) Malone; daughter, Helen (Dennis) McLane; daughter, Marion Robertson; daughter, Anna Robertson; son, Thomas (Cassandra) Robertson; granddaughter, Mozelle; grandsons, Jonathan and Cullen; numerous nieces, nephews and grands.