

Thomas Joseph Solak



Thomas Joseph Solak died peacefully at Silverado Memory Care Community near his home in Alexandria, VA, on April 8, 2025. He was 86 years old. Tom was born on 19 December 1938 in Chicago, Illinois, to Polish-American parents, John E. Solak and Helen Hedwig Solak. He was the oldest of four children, followed by Jack, Therese, and Leonard.

Tom graduated from Weber High School where he played on its football team that won the Chicago Catholic League Championship in 1965. He was recruited by the Navy Director of Athletics and was accepted into the U.S. Naval Academy Class of 1960 where he was assigned to the 2nd company. Tom played Navy football for four years. In his senior year, he was an Honorable Mention academic All-American.

Tom continued to be an avid football fan for more than 60 years. He enjoyed tailgating and attending games with Class of 60 Academy graduates. He supported the team and the United States Naval Academy as an Athletic and Scholarship Foundation Trustee for over ten years and was designated Trustee Emeritus in 2024. He served as 1st Battalion and 2nd Company "Rep" for his Naval Academy Class.

Tom was commissioned into the United States Marine Corps and proceeded to Quantico for Marine Officers Training immediately upon graduation from the Academy. After six months of Marine Officer Training, Tom was assigned to Hawaii. Subsequently, he went to Norfolk and then to Monterrey for language school (Vietnamese). He went to Vietnam, followed by Okinawa and back to Monterrey Post Graduate School, majoring in electrical engineering. Tom taught electrical engineering at the Naval Academy. He then served as a battalion commander at Camp Lejeune and deployed to the Mediterranean. Tom ended his military career at Marine Corps Headquarters, retiring as Colonel. Tom represented the Marines proudly and participated in many Marine activities after his retirement.

Tom's many awards include the Legion of Merit, Navy Commendation Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, RVN Cross of Gallantry, and RVN Campaign Medal, Expert Rifle Qualification Badge.

Following retirement from the Marine Corps, Tom served as a legal administrator at the Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich & Walsh law firm for 16 years. He made many lasting friendships during this time.

Tom was a devout Catholic and practiced his faith by singing in church choirs wherever he lived, including the St. Robert Bellarmine Chapel at George Mason University. He volunteered for the Catholic Business Network of Northern Virginia as a member of the board of trustees President and Communication Chair.

Tom was active in his Old Town Alexandria community, including serving on the Architectural Review Board. Above all Tom was always a gentleman. He was generous, kind, caring and giving to family, friends and associates. We remember him as a devoted husband, father and friend, a man who loved his country, his church, his family, the Marine Corps and football. Tom is survived by Jeanne, his wife; his children Scott (Ketlen) Solak, Jamie Solak (Scott) Pickens, Heather (Michael) Capozzi, and Sarah (Paul) Dokken, grandchildren Emma Mobley, Lauren Capozzi, Caroline Capozzi and Julie Capozzi and siblings Jack (Barbara) Solak, Therese (Robert) Wis and Leonard (Barbara) Solak. He brought Jeanne's children into his family, Cynthia (Patrick) Bernard, Michelle Fox (Michael Cox); and grandchildren, Ashley Fox (Kris Fridley), Morgan Fox, Abby Bernard and Samantha Bernard.

Tom was married until her death to Thomasetta Czajkowski with whom they had four children Scott, Jamie, Heather and Sarah.

Cunningham Funeral Home