

Major David Earl Sutherland, 87, of Bartow, Florida, passed away on March 14, 2017.

Sutherland was born in Wellington, Alabama September 14, 1929, and graduated from Summerlin Institute in 1947. He then attended the University of Florida where he received a BA in Business Administration in 1953, the same year he entered the US Air Force. He married his high school sweetheart, the former Miss Katherine Walker, in 1951.

A Command Pilot, flying C-130s, Sutherland logged over 6000 flying hours including 735 combat missions. Sutherland received his earlier pilot training in Kinston, N.C., and Lubbock Texas. He was stationed at AF bases throughout the world, including France and Germany. Many of Sutherland's missions were classified and took him to remote locations around the world, including Africa, the Middle East, India, as well as South East Asia.

During one particularly quirky mission in 1962, Sutherland's squadron was supporting John F. Kennedy's visit to Berlin, Germany. In addition to all the support of the entourage, a key responsibility of his squadron was to transport one of Jackie Kennedy's prized horses in his C-130.

His military decorations included the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Meritorious Service Medals, two Air Force Commendation medals, the Presidential Unit Citation, the Air Force Outstanding Unit award with V-device and two Oak Leaf clusters, the Combat Readiness medal, the National Defense Service medal, the Air Force Expeditionary medal, the Vietnam service medal and the Republic of Vietnam Commendation medal.

Upon his retirement Sutherland returned to Bartow and went into real estate and joined the firm of Harry C. Griffin. In later years Sutherland started his own real estate company focusing on all areas of real estate in Central Florida. Sutherland was on the Bartow Board of Realtors serving for many years as its president. He was an avid supporter of the University of Florida and held Gator Football season tickets for over 40 years, attending both home and away games.

Major Sutherland is survived by his wife of 66 years Doris Katherine Sutherland, son David Sutherland and wife Sarah Yates of Atlanta, Georgia, daughter Kathryn Susan Willcockson and husband Joel of Lakeland, Florida and daughter Holly Ann Sutherland of Alconbury, England, five grandchildren and four great grand children. Sutherland was preceded in death by his late son, James Alan Sutherland of Atlanta Georgia.

Services will be held with the family receiving friends Saturday, March 18, 2017 at the First United Methodist Church, 310 S. Broadway Avenue, Bartow, FL from 10 AM to 11AM. Funeral services will begin at 11:00AM. In lieu of flowers please make donations to the Bartow First United Methodist Church in David's name.