Thomas Luther Crockett

May 24, 1923 ~ January 7, 2018

Thomas Luther Crockett passed away peacefully surrounded by family on January 7, 2018, at the Perry home in Sandy, Utah, at the age of 94. He was born on May 24, 1923 in Los Angeles, California to actor, Henry Luther Crockett and Grace Edris Martland. His parents were from Fulton and Mexico, Missouri and had moved to Hollywood in 1914. Tom was the fourth child with 3 sisters and 1 brother, John, Betty, Phyllis and Carol. Tom loved growing up in Hollywood, CA! He enjoyed the outdoors, hiking, dancing and playing all kinds of sports including basketball, track, baseball and football. He was a starting varsity half-back and quarter-back for his football team at Hollywood High. He also loved being involved with his church sponsored YMCA group, The Cavaliers. Tom graduated from Hollywood High School in 1941. He worked at Lockheed Aircraft building airplanes for a year and a half after graduation. Then he joined the Navy in 1943, becoming a Navy Fighter Pilot and served with the VF-24 Squadron, who became like brothers to him. He served in the Pacific Theater in World War II performing 95 missions. He flew F6F Hellcats, F2H1 Banshee, and FJ1 Fury airplanes and his aircraft carrier was USS Santee CVE-29. While in the service, he was also an active member of the Naval Football Squad. He served as a lieutenant and was in the Naval Reserve for 8 years and received many awards for his service. His significant awards for his valor in combat were 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 6 Air Medals, a Presidential Unit Citation, The American Area Award, the Asiatic Pacific Area Award, and World War II Victory Award.

While in Naval training, he borrowed a plane several times and flew to Pendleton, Oregon, to go to dances with his friends. On one of these excursions, he saw the love of his life, MarDean, who he said was the best girl dancing at the afternoon dance at the Pendleton Hotel! He flew several more times to visit her and eventually they were engaged at Half Moon Bay, CA. Thomas was married to Rae MarDean Head in Hollywood, CA at his parent's home on June 23, 1946. Together they had 3 children, 2 sons, Thomas and Scott, and a daughter, Nancy. They were sealed as a family in the LDS Los Angeles Temple in December 1961. After his Naval service, Tom graduated from Occidental College, in Eagle Rock, CA and raised his family in the Glendale, Manhattan Beach and Woodland Hills areas. During this time, he enjoyed working at the YMCA coaching youth leagues. He also worked as a counselor and a teacher, specializing in Physical Education and Driver's Ed courses, at various schools in the Los Angeles School District for over 30 years. He even taught at Taft High School and El Camino High School, where his children attended and where he made lifelong friends.

Tom enjoyed many fun-filled summers alongside his family while leading and teaching youth groups in various sports activities, such as football and basketball. He even taught swimming and diving in the family's own backyard Olympic-sized pool and coached little league baseball teams on their backyard diamond that he had built! He enjoyed all sports and at age 30 he was on the Redondo Beach Basketball Team that won the Mormon Church Basketball Championship, the largest organized basketball championship in the world with over 800 teams

competing--even playing teams from Canada and Mexico to win! After his retirement, Tom and MarDean became avid golfers, even winning a number of tournaments individually and together! They also enjoyed traveling and cruising to many destinations and especially enjoyed attending Jazz Music Festivals together. He loved visiting family and friends and Navy buddies and going to the beach with his grandchildren. In their later years, they lived in San Diego for a few years and then settled in Sun City, CA for 20 years, where they loved playing golf on the golf course right off their backyard!

The last two years of his life, Tom lived in Utah near his family in St. George and Sandy, making friends wherever he went. He was devoted to his wife, MarDean, and they celebrated their 70th Wedding Anniversary several months before she passed away. He was an extraordinary person who was self-disciplined and very organized. He enjoyed fixing things around the house and in the yard and worked to improve things wherever he went. He always had a smile or a "pinkie finger handshake" to share. He loved his eleven grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren, often calling them endearing nicknames that always brought a smile. He loved to tell the stories of his airplanes and adventures and could still co-pilot an airplane at age 94! He was beloved by his family and he will be greatly missed! He is survived by his son, Thomas (Teresa) Crockett, son Scott Crockett, daughter Nancy (Richard) Perry and 11 grandchildren, Michelle (Ben) Williams, Rachael (Shayne) DeMille, Kristin Perry, Tiffany (Sam) Wilkinson, Joey (Emily)Perry, Richard (Marissa) Perry, Heather Perry, Natalie Perry, Justin Perry, Nicole Perry and Whitney Perry along with his 25 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held On Saturday, January 13, 2018 at 11:00 am at Larkin Sunset Gardens Chapel, 1950 East Dimple Dell Road, Sandy, Utah with a visitation from 9:30 , 10:30 am.