



George Erskine Rice

Aviation pioneer and retired airline executive George Erskine Rice, 91, died on Wednesday, November 18 at Athens Regional Medical Center in Athens, Georgia. Mr. Rice held a distinguished, globe-circling, four-decade record in aviation history that began in bi-planes and continued into the age of supersonic travel. He pioneered in trans-Atlantic navigation during World War II as a member of the Air Transport Command; represented the U.S. at the Geneva conference that negotiated and introduced global long-range navigation (LORAN); created the commercial-airline field of operations analysis for Pan American World Airways; helped coordinate the introduction of the first commercial jets for Pan AM; and was a leader in the breakthrough effort to bring emerging nations fully into commercial aviation, working with the governments of Afghanistan, Iran, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Morocco, Oman, Bahrein, Vietnam, Puerto Rico, Panama, Zaire, and Nepal to create airlines and international airports in their countries. He retired as Vice President of Pan Am World Services. A member of the National Aviation Club in Washington, DC and of the Wings Club in New York, which recently awarded him its Golden Eagle, Mr. Rice served on the boards of stewards of the First United Methodist Church in Westbury, New York and of Commerce (GA) First United Methodist Church and was a member and Distinguished Past President of Commerce Kiwanis. He was a charter member of the Commerce Downtown Development Authority and of the Cold Sassy Players; chaired the Jackson County, GA Advisory Council on Aging, which introduced the Meals on Wheels program in Jackson County; and was a past vice president of the Northeast Georgia Council of the Boy Scouts of America, which awarded him the Silver Beaver. Mr. Rice was preceded in death by his sisters, Jane Rice Templeton and Edith Rice Blanco. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Mildred Trawick Rice, and their three children, Susan Rice Harper of Commerce, GA; David Erskine Rice of Raleigh, NC; and Emily Rice Reynolds and husband Stephen F. Reynolds of Barrington, IL; and grandchildren Chad H. Harper of Albany, NY; Daniel Erskine Harper of Glendale, CA; and Caroline Reynolds of Barrington, IL. Funeral services will be held at 2 PM Tuesday, November 24, 2009 at Commerce First United Methodist Church, with the Rev. Dr. David Bowen and the Rev. Dan Maxey officiating. Interment will be in Commerce's Grey Hill Cemetery. Visitation will be from 5 to 8 PM Monday, November 23 at Little-Ward Funeral Home, Commerce.

Memorial donations may be made to Commerce First United Methodist Church or to the building fund of the Commerce Public Library.\r\n

Tribute Wall



“ *George Erskine Rice*

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