

Rev. Arthur P. Craig

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Rev. Arthur P. Craig, a devoted Catholic priest, retired U.S. Army Colonel, and compassionate servant to his community, passed away peacefully on January 7, 2025, in Phoenix, Arizona. He was 96 years old.

Born on September 28, 1928, Rev. Craig grew up in Staten Island, New York. He graduated from Central High School before earning a Bachelor of Arts from Fordham University in 1949 and a Master of Arts from Long Island University in 1951. He answered his calling to the priesthood and completed his studies at Catholic Seminary in 1955.

Rev. Craig dedicated his life to service, both spiritual and military. Ordained in 1955, he ministered faithfully for seven decades. As a U.S. Army Chaplain from 1955 to 1985, he provided spiritual guidance to soldiers and their families, earning the Bronze Star for heroism during the Vietnam War. Rev. Craig was a proud member of

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the Air Brigade. He admired the young men he served with in the jungles of Vietnam. His last request was to be laid to rest with his fellow infantry men. After retiring from active duty as a Colonel, he continued his ministry as a chaplain for the Maricopa County Jail System.

An accomplished athlete, Rev. Craig was proud to be a military champion tennis player and enjoyed refereeing intramural sports on army bases. As a teenager, Rev. Craig turned down an opportunity to sign with his hometown New York Yankees. He also found joy in helping organizations and individuals develop communication skills.

Above all, his greatest passion was caring for others whether through his ministry or his cherished friendships including those in my family. We met in 1973 in Worms, West Germany. It was the beginning of a wonderful relationship that endured time, miles and many life events. Rev. Craig (Art) was an important part of my family. He was present at every important moment in my life - from graduations to holidays, my wedding day, and family baptisms. He was always there with us and it was special. When my mom and I needed to move from Wisconsin to Arizona, he not only helped us load the rental truck but also drove it all the way to Tucson. I remember the three of us huddled in the cab of the truck while trying to survive the crazy winds of West Texas. We couldn't have started that new chapter of our lives without his help. Art was everywhere. I'm pretty sure I was the only person at my law school orientation that had their family priest watching from the back of the auditorium! He was one of a kind.

Rev. Craig possessed an amazing intuition to see and to know how a person was feeling in only a few minutes. Even during the past few years, this talent was still on display. He was able to provide comfort and understanding during all of our conversations, regardless of how he was feeling. I always felt a sense of love every time we were together.

Art impacted the lives of those who knew him. For such a quiet, understated person, he left an incredible mark on everyone he met. Due to his careers, Rev Craig made a difference for thousands of people. He never chose the easy path. From the battlefield to prisons, Art ministered to people who were facing daunting circumstances. He will be missed by me, my family, and those who cared for him.

Rev. Craig was predeceased by his parents, John and Helen Craig; his siblings John, Eugene, Robert, Leonard, Claire (Huber), and Marion; and many close friends, including my mother, Lynne Tronsdal.

A Funeral Mass will be held on January 31 at 11:00 a.m. at St. Jerome's Catholic Church in Phoenix, Arizona. Burial will follow at 1:30 p.m. at the National Veterans Cemetery in Phoenix.

Rev. Arthur P. Craig's unwavering faith and dedication to serving others leave an enduring legacy that will be deeply missed by all who knew him. May he rest in eternal peace.