



Norwood Joseph Meche

January 24, 1940 - October 18, 2024

Lafayette - It is with a heavy heart that we announce Norwood Joseph Meche passed away on October 18, 2024, at the age of 84.

Norwood was born in Bristol, LA to Edmund and Marie Sonnier Meche and was the 3rd of 6 children. They lived on a farm in Rayne, LA raising cotton. When Norwood was 15, his father was killed in a car accident leaving him responsible for his mother and three younger siblings. For two years, he farmed, did odd jobs for extra money, and continued to attend school, instilling in him the strong sense of responsibility and work ethic that he carried with him all his life.

Norwood graduated from Lafayette High and attended UL Lafayette on a track scholarship (Southwestern Louisiana Institute and University of Southwestern Louisiana back then). One day while walking across campus, he saw an Air Force recruiter had setup a table to talk with students about joining and decided to listen to the information – pay for college, medical care for life, etc. – and he joined up. Thanks to the pay, he was able to finish college and become the first person in his family to graduate from university.

Norwood would go on to spend the next 30 years of his life in the Air Force, moving 14 times to bases near and far and traveling all over the world in support of his duties and his country. Along the way, he met many characters

and made friends with many, many people all over the country and world who he stayed in touch with throughout his career and afterwards throughout retirement – visiting many of them on his family travels. He truly enjoyed his time in the service and wanted to stay longer, but it was not to be. In 1992, he retired as a Full Colonel and moved back home to Lafayette, LA with his family; glad to be home!

Norwood wasn't quite ready to stop working just yet, first spending time helping his niece and nephew renovate their house and then deciding that he wanted to teach. He enrolled back at UL Lafayette in a course to receive his teaching certificate (now University of Louisiana at Lafayette; meaning Norwood was able to attend all three iterations of the school's name). After completing his certificate, he was hired on to teach at Sunset Elementary and then moved over to teach the remedial GED program in Opelousas, LA. After 5.5 years, he decided he was old enough now to retire (again) and enjoy his free time.

Norwood got involved with the local American Legion, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). He would go on to be Commander of VFW Post 9822 for 12 years and was a regular staple of their Bingo volunteering most every Friday evening and Sunday afternoon. Norwood also joined as a founding member of the Veterans Action Committee who worked with senators and political leaders and were responsible for the opening of 27 new Veterans Affairs Clinics all across the country, including two in Louisiana. His work with the Committee also led to the Veterans Memorial designed and built in Moncus Park in Lafayette.

The only time Norwood wasn't around helping the veteran organizations, visiting family for lunch, and speaking French over Tuesday morning coffees in Rayne was when he was out traveling. His love for experiencing the world

was kindled in the Air Force and he made great use of his retirement to visit places he had never been and return to the places he loved, including his favorite place in the world – Andechs, an old monastery outside of Munich, Germany where he enjoyed the monks' beer and swine hoxen (pork shoulder). He would always make sure that any road trips he and the family took would pass by at least one or two or three Air Force friends, even if it was not the most direct route.

Norwood lived a life filled with love, family, friends, hard work, and the Air Force. He had 5 sons, 4 grandsons, 1 great-grandson, and 1 great-granddaughter on the way. He is survived by his wife Mary; his sons Donald (wife Robyn), Kyle, and Kris; his grandsons Jake, Lucas, Logan, and Daniel; his great-grandson Cleo; his brothers Ancy Lee (wife Belinda) and Alvin; his sister Judy; and many, many beloved cousins, nieces, and nephews who will all miss him.

Norwood is predeceased by his parents; his brother Lesley and his wife Zula; his sister Marie and her husband Elton; his two sons Bryan and Sean, and their mother Daisy.

Visitation for Norwood will be held at Gossen Funeral Home in Rayne, LA. Viewing will be from 4pm-8pm on Tuesday, October 22nd and 8am-10am on Wednesday, October 23. Funeral Service will be at 10am on Wednesday, October 23rd. He will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. All are invited to attend a Celebration of Norwood after the funeral service concludes at VFW Post 9822 in Lafayette.

In lieu of flowers, please donate in Norwood's memory to Tunnel to Towers, St. Jude's, or Shriner's Hospital.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **22**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Gossen Funeral Home Inc.
504 N. Polk Street
Rayne, LA 70578
(337) 334-3141
info@gossenfuneralhome.net
<http://gossenfh.funeralplan2.com/>

Visitation

OCT **23**. 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Gossen Funeral Home Chapel
504 N. Polk St
Rayne, LA 70578

Service

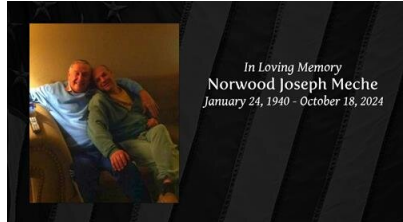
OCT **23**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Gossen Funeral Home Chapel
504 N. Polk St
Rayne, LA 70578

Tribute Wall



“ *Gossen Funeral Home Inc. created a Tribute Video in memory of Norwood Joseph Meche*



Gossen Funeral Home Inc. - October 22, 2024 at 09:45 AM

SV

*To Mary and family,
Please accept my deepest condolences on the passing of your beloved husband and father, grandfather, Norwood. I've known him since high school(Lafayette High School, Class of '58), and my husband, Carl and I were charter members of VFW 9822 in Duson. We, together, spent many years helping out with Bingo and serving, cooking on Sundays as well as socializing at the VFW with all of the members.
It is with sincere prayers that I will pray for the repose of Norwood's soul and that a benevolent God embrace Norwood's entire family at this very difficult time. Norwood will be missed.
Sincerely,
Shirley Arceneaux Vincent*

Shirley A Vincent - October 30, 2024 at 07:01 AM

DW

“ *Sorry to hear of Norwood's passing. The tribute by the family shows he had a full life. Don got to meet him at boot camp many years ago. We enjoyed seeing him again a few years back while he was visiting Donald & Robyn in Alabama. Our thoughts & prayers are with his family.
Don & Sandy Ward*

Don & Sandy ward - October 22, 2024 at 11:47 AM