



## Leo G. Janssens

July 19, 1937 - February 19, 2023

Leo G. Janssens, 85 passed away on Sunday February 19, 2023, in Ocklawaha, FL after a brief stay in Hospice.

Leo was born on July 19, 1937 in Monroe, Michigan on the family farm. He attended a one room schoolhouse. He and his brother Richard worked in the farm fields to earn money to buy a car during WWII. Their father, Gus bought the neighbors 1928 Chevrolet so they could drive themselves to school. He graduated from Monroe Catholic Central High School in 1954. He completed the ROTC program and graduated from the University of Michigan in 1959 with a degree in Aeronautical Engineering. He then embarked on a 22 year career in the Air Force. He also earned a Master's Degree in Engineering Management in 1973 from the University of Dayton.

During Janssens' USAF career Leo graduated from USAF Pilot School in 1962 and USAF Test Pilot School in 1969. He was awarded 12 Medals and Ribbons including the Air Force Commendation Medal and Ribbon. He served in Vietnam and flew 500 combat hours and 605 combat missions in C-123 Provider aircraft.

Leo retired from the Air Force as a Flight Test Squadron Commander at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, OH in 1980. From 1980-1988 he was a Civil Service Executive with the Federal Aviation Administration and Department of

Defense. He later worked as an independent FAA Designated Engineering Representative (DER) and international Aviation Safety Consultant.

During his fifty plus years as a pilot Leo flew over 15,000 hours in 125 different types of aircraft ranging from gliders to the C-5. He has also taught numerous students to fly as a certified instructor. He owned and regularly flew his Meyers "Little Toot" open cockpit homebuilt experimental biplane.

Leo earned distinction as a Fellow in the Society of Experimental Test Pilots (SETP) of which he was a Life member and presented five papers at the SETP European Symposium.

In 1995 the SETP Board of Directors unanimously endorsed Mr. Janssens, in a letter to President Clinton, to be appointed to the National Transportation Safety Board.

Leo also enjoyed sports cars, his wave runner and boats. He taught his children and numerous people how to water ski and snow ski.

Leo enjoyed traveling back to Monroe, MI through the years to spend time with family and attend University of Michigan Football games.

Leo is survived by his wife, Beverly, daughter, Joy (Chris) Georgakas of Prescott, AZ, son John (Brigitte) of Perrysburg, OH. Brothers Richard (Mary Jane) Monroe, MI, Gus (Patricia) Monroe, MI, Jerry (Diane) of Monroe, MI and sister, Jan (Thomas) Chulski of Green Valley, AZ. Grandchildren Caitlin Coffey, Jennifer Georgakas, Griffin Janssens & Melissa (Trent) Burns who are both pilots. He taught Melissa to fly and she became an aerobatic champion. He is also survived by many nieces, nephews, and many step grandchildren and step great grandchildren.

Leo was preceded in death by his father, Gus mother, Helen & brothers Morey and Marion.

The family thanks the Woods and Lake Airpark community in Ocklawaha ,FL for their kindness, support, and love.

The family also thanks the Hospice team at the Brandley House of Marion County FL for their loving care in Leo's final days.

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated on Sat May 6 @ 11A  
St Mary Catholic Church  
127 N Monroe Street  
Monroe, MI 48162  
[www.stmarymonroe.org](http://www.stmarymonroe.org)

A luncheon will follow in the St Mary Life Center.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be considered to Marion County FL Hospice and/or USAF Museum Dayton, OH in the name of Lt Col Leo G. Janssens USAF.

“Blue skies and tailwinds always” 

# Previous Events

## Memorial Mass

MAY 6. 11:00 AM (ET)

St Mary Catholic Church  
127 N Monroe Street  
Monroe, MI 48162

*[www.stmarymonroe.org](http://www.stmarymonroe.org) A luncheon will follow in the St Mary Life Center.*

# Tribute Wall

DC

“ Leo, Poppa Pilot. You were a good Grandpa to Caitlin. I still share memories of us discussing when/where to go to the bathroom on trips to Monroe! The time you came into Arizona and took pictures of Caitlin. I can still hear you sing "Ave Maria" at the top of your lungs! Flights around the New Carlisle Airport dropping bombs and your flight to Jacksonville for your Mom's 75th birthday. You were always fair and loyal. I appreciated your humor and zest for life. You're in the palm of His hand now. I will see you in Heaven.  
Dan Coffey

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**Dan Coffey** - March 01, 2023 at 12:31 PM

PB

“ I remember going to Norris Lake with the Janssen's and Leo taught me to ski. Great times. Joy and I also went tubing. Spent many nights at their house.

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**Patty Hattan Buhman** - February 27, 2023 at 03:12 PM