

Hugh G. Robinson: Retired Army general served country, community

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Retired Army Maj. Gen. Hugh G. Robinson was a decorated Vietnam veteran whose service record included posts at the Pentagon and White House.

He retired to civilian life in Dallas, where he maintained his torrid pace, whether it involved civil engineering work or public service.

Gen. Robinson, 77, died Monday at his DeSoto home.

There will be a viewing today from 5 to 8 p.m. at Sparkman/Hillcrest Funeral Home. Services will at 11 a.m. Saturday at The Potter's House, 6777 W. Kiest Blvd. in Dallas. He will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Gen. Robinson's last Army assignment was as Southwest Division engineer for the Corps of Engineers in Dallas.

"He was supposed to officially retire in 1983, and that didn't happen," said his wife, Paula Raymond-Robinson of DeSoto. "He kept going."

In July 1983, Gen. Robinson joined Southland Corp. as vice president in charge of the company's 160-acre Cityplace development just northeast of downtown Dallas.

He served on many corporate boards of directors, including Belo Corp., which he joined in 1989.

"Hugh Robinson was a truly accomplished person who established ambitious standards for inclusiveness in every organization he influenced throughout his life," said Robert W. Decherd, president, chairman and chief executive officer of A.H. Belo Corporation.

"Dallas benefited enormously from Hugh's civic leadership for more than a quarter century," Mr. Decherd added. "Belo Corp. was fortunate to have Hugh as a key member of its board of directors, as were other prominent public companies across America."

Just before joining the Belo board, Gen. Robinson became chief executive officer of The Tetra Group, a construction management firm with principal offices in Dallas and Houston. He continued as a consultant to the Cityplace development.

Despite his demanding post-military career - serving on numerous corporate boards - Gen. Robinson was deeply involved in civic affairs. He served a total of seven years as vice chairman and later chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

He served as a trustee or board member of the Dallas Museum of Art, the LBJ Foundation, the African American Museum in Dallas and for North Texas Public Broadcasting.

Gen. Robinson was born in Washington, D.C. He received his bachelor's degree from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and a master's degree in civil engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1959.

He served in the Army from 1954 to 1983. For his service during the Vietnam War, he received an Air Medal, a Bronze Star, the Legion of Merit and an Army Commendation Medal.

In Vietnam, he commanded the 39th Engineer Battalion (combat) and was executive officer of the 45th Engineer Group.

After serving in Vietnam, he returned to Washington, D.C., where he worked for the deputy chief of staff for operations at the Pentagon and was an Army aide to President Lyndon B. Johnson - the first black soldier in such a position.

At the White House, he was a major whose duties included delivering Vietnam casualty figures to the president each morning.

In April 1968, President Johnson called on Gen. Robinson to help defuse race riots breaking out in the nation's capital.

"He was actually the one who went out and spoke to the blacks to calm them down and stop the rioting," Mrs. Robinson said.

In 1993, the National Society for Fund Raising Executives named Gen. Robinson its Outstanding Volunteer Fund Raiser.

He became a dedicated member of New Way Christian Outreach Church in Dallas during the last six months of his life, Mrs. Robinson said.

Gen. Robinson was diagnosed as having congestive heart failure 11 years ago, but he had not had problems with the condition until January, Mrs. Robinson said.

Mrs. Robinson said she and her husband had taken in 13 foster children.

In addition to his wife, Gen. Robinson is survived by his son, Hugh Robinson Jr. of Lorton, Va.; a daughter, Susan Wells of Silver Spring, Md.; a sister, Grace Fay of Vienna, Va.; Mrs. Robinson's children and some of their foster children, Clifton Tisdale-Brown of DeSoto, Marquel Russell of Washington, D.C., Kenneth Farr of Arlington, Brandon Brown of DeSoto, Chelsie Raymond Hugh of DeSoto and Esmeralda Garcia of DeSoto; and four grandchildren.

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