

THOMAS 'LARRY' WELCH



Thomas 'Larry' Welch, 78, of Hilliard, passed away June 12 in Fernandina Beach, following a lengthy illness. He was born March 2, 1940 in Madison, Florida to the late Thomas Lewis Welch and Laura Allene Tate Welch. He joined the Duval County Road Patrol, which later became JSO, in 1965 as a Deputy Sheriff and Motorcycle Patrolman. Following retirement from JSO, he worked at Container Corp in their Fernandina Beach mill. He was a member of the Fraternal Order of Police since 1965 where he served as Treasurer for a number of years. He was an active member of the First Baptist Church of Hilliard for 37 years, where he faithfully served as a deacon, choir member and trustee.

Larry grew up on a farm in Madison County which instilled a lifelong love of raising cattle, growing gardens and sharing what he grew with others. He passed on the knowledge and love of farming to his grandsons, along with many aspects of being a true gentleman. He loved the Lord and ministered to all those around him, as so many have testified to. He was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and friend to so many. He was a humble, confident man who enjoyed fishing and hunting almost as well as telling the funny stories that occurred on these trips. Anyone familiar with Larry knew better than to stand near him should someone jokingly poke him in the side, for his reaction was a lightning speed punch to the closest person. He will be deeply missed by those that knew and loved him.

Along with his parents; he was preceded in death by a sister Joyce Welch; and a brother Charles.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Cecelia Welch; a daughter Rhonda Mason and her husband Steve; two grandsons Zachary Mason and Ryan (Brittany) Mason; two sisters Clifford (Roy) Jackson and Cindy Scanlan (Bill) Brown; a brother Pat Welch; a sister-in-law Bev Welch; three great-grandchildren Elijah, Micah and Bella Mason; and a number of nieces, nephews and other relatives.

The family received friends Friday, June 15 at the First Baptist Church of Hilliard. Funeral services were held Saturday, June 16 at First Baptist of Hilliard with Dr. Richie Allen, Rev. Josh Tillman, Rev. Dallis Hunter and Rev. Ryan Mason officiating. Burial followed in Oakwood Cemetery in Hilliard.

Condolences may be expressed at www.shepardfh.com.

Arrangements were under the direction of Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home in Folkston.