

George Henry Strohsahl, Jr.

George Henry Strohsahl, Jr. (May 24, 1937-May 22, 2011) passed from this realm and soared valiantly into eternity peacefully at his home on May 22, 2011, after a short illness with cancer. He was surrounded with the presence and the love of his devoted wife, three children, and other family members.

George was born on May 24, 1937, in New Jersey and lived in New York and Connecticut during his formative years. He was a 1959 honors graduate of the United States Naval Academy, entered flight training and was designated as a Naval Aviator in 1961. He held a Master's Degree in Air-Space Physics from the Naval Post Graduate School. A designated Material Professional (MP), he was the first naval aviator of this specialty selected for Flag Rank. During operational assignments in A-4 and A-6 squadrons of both Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, including combat in Southeast Asia, he amassed over 5,000 flight hours, including 71 combat missions in the Vietnam conflict. George commanded VA-65, an NAS Oceana-based A-6E squadron, and was "Air Boss" aboard USS Nimitz.

As the NAVAIR Program Manager of the F/A-18 Naval Strike Fighter, he introduced the F/A-18 to the fleet and was responsible for managing the acquisition and initial support of the largest nonstrategic procurement program in the Navy. He was Vice Commander of NAVAIR and assumed command of the Naval Air Warfare Center when it was established on Jan. 1, 1992. His command included ten prior field activities of NAVAIR, employing about 25,000 persons and executing the annual business in the technical support of naval aviation and other navy and DOD programs. Among his assignments ashore, he was Commander, Pacific Missile Test Center at NAS Point Mugu.

His personal awards included the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with two gold stars, Meritorious Service Medal, Strike-Flight Air Medal with Numeral Seven, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V and Gold Star, and the Navy Achievement Medal. Following retirement, George was executive manager of the Joint Strike Fighter Program for Boeing in Seattle, Wash. George never lost his enormous respect for the Navy and the contributions of naval aviation.

He was most recently active locally in the community with the Regional Defense Partnership for the 21st Century (RDP-21) working to support the mission of the partnership by strengthening and elevating the value of Naval Base Ventura County for the community and the Department of Defense and served on the Board of Directors of the Southwest Defense Alliance.

George received his pilot's license at age 16 and was always grateful that he was able to pursue his ardent love of flying his entire life, both professionally and personally,

even teaching his son, David, to fly. In retirement, he truly enjoyed being a commercial flight instructor and, most recently in his leisure, he followed his passion by soaring in his personal Carat motor glider. Some of the greatest flights of his life were soaring over the Cascades in Washington and the Sierras in California.

While George had an illustrious Navy career and was a born leader and mentor for many, his greatest joy was his family and the time he spent with those he loved the most. George was married to his high school sweetheart, the former Marvalyn Fiske, on the day he graduated from the Naval Academy until her passing in 2004.

With his beloved Marvy, he has left behind three surviving children, Bethany Altobelli and her husband, Chuck, of Kent, Wash., David Strohsahl and his wife, Robin, of Virginia Beach, Va., and Laurie Hurley and her husband, Patrick, of Ventura. His loving grandchildren, Emily, Maggie and Libby Altobelli, and Keefer and Hudson Hurley, will miss their very beloved Grandpa very much. Carol Mariani, a sister-in-law, resides in Lady Lake, Fla. He remarried the former Mary Anne Dutt Vernallis, a Navy family friend and widow, in 2006 with whom he joyfully shared love in the latter years of his life.

The family extends an invitation to join them from 2 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 28, for a Celebration of George's Life at his home in Newbury Park. A memorial service will be held at the US Naval Academy at a future date to be announced.

Contributions may be made in his honor to Food Share Inc or the American Cancer Society.

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