



Donald Lawrence Miller

February 25, 1935 - May 8, 2023

Donald Lawrence Miller had a great life filled with love, service, family, friendships, fun and a little bit of flying. Not everyone gets to marry their childhood sweetheart, but Don was blessed to meet Charlotte Kleen when they were both in Junior High School in Forest Grove, Oregon, and then convinced her to spend the next 70 years together. Don and Charlotte were married June 9, 1957, joined the Air Force, and they lived a storybook romance filled with adventure that produced 4 boys and countless friends.

Don, the son of Ray and Norabel Miller, was born on 25 February 1935 in Salem, Oregon, and spent most of his youth in Forest Grove with his sister Carolyn where their parents owned Miller's Ace Hardware. He was a 1953 graduate and class president of Forest Grove High School and in 1957 Don graduated from Willamette University where he was a track running Beta who majored in Economics, ROTC, and learning about people.

A command pilot with over 4000 flight hours, Don started his Air Force career as an instructor pilot in the T-33, T-37, and T-38 helping shape the habit patterns for young pilots and building lifelong friendships with his fellow instructors. After a tour at the Air Force Academy where Don helped to build Jack's Valley, Don switched airframes to the F-4 and headed to Ubon,

Thailand. He flew 186 combat missions in 1969 and 1970. Next, it was off to Germany where Don was the commander of the "Big 22" Fighter Squadron and the Director of Standardization and Evaluation for the USAF in Europe. Every fast rising fighter pilot needs a staff tour, so after graduating from the International College of the Armed Forces Don found himself at the Pentagon in 1976 as the Chief of Fighter Force Development where his division not only helped to shape the tactical air forces, but also built a fighter bar in the Pentagon that was still standing the last time the family checked. Happily back in the cockpit after the Pentagon, Don was the Vice-Commander of the 56th Fighter Wing and then the Commander of the 474th Fighter Wing (both flying F-4s). His last flying assignment was to fly the F-15 as the Commander of the 1st Fighter Wing. Next, Don found himself as the Deputy Director for Air Force Safety and then headed back to Europe as the Vice Commander for the 3rd Air Force in England. Don's final assignment was at Bergstrom AFB in Austin, Texas, where he was the Vice Commander and Chief of Staff for the 12th Air Force. Finally, Don decided to retire from the Air Force in Austin after 30 years of distinguished service. Colonel Donald Miller was awarded ten Air Medals, three Legions of Merit and the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service to our nation.

The assignments and awards are just one part of an Air Force story. Wherever Don and Charlotte lived they always made great friends who became their large Air Force Family. It is those friendships Don truly cherished when he looked back on his Air Forces career. It is with those friends Don and Charlotte raised their children, shared vacations, threw some world-class parties, and mourned together with the tragic losses that come from a life in the Air Force.

After retirement, Don and Charlotte headed back to Oregon and ended up in Bend once they realized it had better skiing and more sunshine than the Willamette Valley. They continued to travel extensively to visit family, friends, and loved to go on cruises.

Charlotte let Don know one day in 2005 they were moving into a new place called Touchmark. With a stunning view of the Deschutes River the Millers started on the next phase of their lives. Charlotte and Don were involved in everything and as some of Touchmark's first residents they were a key part of turning new arrivals from across the country into a closed knit community of friends. Don and Charlotte treasured their new friends just like they had their Air Force family and all of these friends along with his family surrounded Don with love when he lost Charlotte in 2017.

Don passed away peacefully in his sleep on the morning of 8 May 2023 with two of his boys present after a very short battle with cancer. Don lost his son Steve in 2021 and is survived by his sister, Carolyn Williams, and his other three sons who all served in the Air Force: Wes who flew F-15s, Mike who flew F-16s, and Keith who flew F-16s. All of the boys followed their Dad's example and married way, way up and provided Don with three beautiful daughter-in-laws (two of them also are retired Air Force), nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Tribute Wall



“ 8 files added to the album *Obituary Wall*



Niswonger Reynolds Funeral Home & Greenwood Cemetery - May 18, 2023 at 03:18 PM



“ 2 files added to the album *New Album*



Niswonger Reynolds Funeral Home & Greenwood Cemetery - May 18, 2023 at 03:18 PM



“ *My prayers are with you as you mourn the loss & celebrate the life of an extraordinary man. Loved singing with Don & Charlotte in Bend Church choir.*

Carol Ann Munson - May 15, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AN

“ Oh, such fun we had with Don & Charlotte. We'll sing together again in God's Choir one day!

Anonymous - May 13, 2023 at 12:00 AM

RM

“ We are mourning along with you, Wes, Mike, Keith, and family. Your parents were dear and special, and our hearts are with you. (Rich & Celeste Meader)

Rich and Celeste Meader - May 10, 2023 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ Donald Lawrence Miller

Mike Miller - May 10, 2023 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ Donald Lawrence Miller

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MM

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MM

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MM

“ Donald Lawrence Miller

Mike Miller - May 10, 2023 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ *Donald Lawrence Miller*

Bend Funeral Homes - May 10, 2023 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ *Donald Lawrence Miller*

Bend Funeral Homes - May 10, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ *We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home*

A Memorial Tree was planted for Donald Lawrence Miller - May 10, 2023 at 12:00 AM