

Don Harvel of Fountain Hills, Arizona, passed away on September 5, 2020. Don was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico and knew ever since he was a young boy that he wanted to fly...and that's exactly what he did! He left Albuquerque to attend the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York. After graduation and receiving a commission in the Air Force, he was assigned to pilot training at Williams AFB, Arizona. His first flying assignment was flying C-130s at Dyess AFB, Texas. In 1982 he was reassigned as an instructor pilot flying C-130s with the Air Crew Training and Test Wing, Air Force Special Operations, at Kirkland AFB, New Mexico.

His military assignments included commander of the 181st Airlift Squadron, commander of the 136th Operations Group, and commander of the 136th Airlift Wing. Don was promoted to Brigadier General in 2008 and was assigned as the Deputy Commander of the Texas Air National Guard. He also served as the Assistant to the commander of Air Force Special Operations. He retired from the Air Force/Air National Guard, in 2010, with the permanent rank of Brigadier General. Don completed 34 years of military service that included deployments in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom. He had more than 4,500 hours of C-130 flying experience.

In 1985, Don left active duty and joined the Texas Air National Guard. In 1986 he was hired at Delta Air Lines, enjoying his dual careers. At Delta, he flew the Boeing 727, 737, 757, 767, 777, and the MD-88. In 1993 he met his beautiful wife, Nan, a passenger on his airplane, while he was flying a trip for Delta. Don retired from Delta Air Lines in August 2019, with over 23 years as an experienced captain.

In 2010, he was assigned to be president of an accident investigation board, which investigated an Osprey crash in Afghanistan. He recently authored a book titled, *Rotors in the Sand*, detailing the accident and investigation process and honoring the airmen and soldiers involved in the accident.

In his time off from his volunteer efforts and hobbies, Don enjoyed taking his '53 Corvette to car shows, meeting up with friends for a casual beer and listening to The Beatles and Christmas tunes (yes, year-round) regardless of how often his daughter attempted to update his music library.

Don was the most loving husband, father, son, friend and leader. He would light up any room he walked in and was known for always having a smile on his face. Don and his family moved to Fountain Hills in 2016 and he would always say that moving here was the best decision he had ever made (besides marrying his wife, Nan, of course). He loved his local community and the world-famous fountain, which Don often called "The Fountain of Youth."

He is survived by his father and stepmother in Albuquerque, his wife, three children, three brothers, and many other relatives, friends and military family members.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to one of his three favorite non-profit organizations: (1) E3 IVXP, Inc., whose focus is helping end veteran homelessness. Donations can be made through the organization's website: e3-project.com; (2) The Phoenix Children's Hospital; or, (3) America's Gold Star Families, whose mission is "to provide honor, hope and healing to those grieving any military loss through active duty service in the United States Armed Forces."