



## Daniel Johann McKenzie

December 5, 1958 - April 24, 2026

Celebrating the Life of  
Daniel Johann McKenzie  
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With heavy hearts and deep love, we celebrate the life of Daniel Johann McKenzie, a man whose calm spirit, steady presence, and generous heart touched everyone who knew him.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, to Leander McKenzie and Veronika McKenzie-Pernell, Daniel carried with him the values of hard work, humility, and quiet strength throughout his life. He graduated from John Adams High School in 1976 and went on to pursue his passion for aviation, earning his FAA Airframe and Powerplant certification from Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Daniel built a long and respected career doing what he loved. His work took him from Cuyahoga County Airport in Richmond Heights, Ohio, to Rockwell International in Columbus, Ohio, to U.S. Airways in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and finally to American Airlines in Charlotte, North Carolina, where he retired in 2020. He took pride in his craft, working with his hands and mind, always building, fixing, and making things better.

But more than what he did, it was who Daniel was that made him unforgettable.

Known to many as “Cool Dan,” he lived up to the name in every way. He had a calm spirit, a warm and welcoming smile, and a way of making people feel at ease. He was generous, patient, and slow to anger—a steady presence in a world that often moves too fast. He carried a servant’s heart and a quiet kindness that spoke louder than words.

Daniel found joy in the simple, meaningful things in life. He had a deep passion for building and creating—from model airplanes to hands-on mechanical work. A true engineer at heart, he loved working on cars, riding his motorcycle, and figuring out how things worked. Above all, he cherished time spent traveling and making memories with his family.

He also enjoyed the simple pleasures of life, including his loyalty to the Cleveland Browns. One of his favorite traditions was the friendly rivalry he shared with his son, Ross, a Pittsburgh Steelers fan. Their back-and-forth, game-day conversations, and playful competition were moments he truly cherished—less about the teams, and more about the bond they shared.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 30 years, Sue McKenzie, whose love and partnership were the foundation of his life; his loving son, Daniel Ross McKenzie; and his siblings, Vera (Reiner) Kettner of Germany, Alexander McKenzie of Florida, Rochelle (Patricia) McKenzie of Ohio, and Brenda Mejia of Texas. He also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and in-laws who will carry his memory forward.

Daniel was also deeply valued by those he chose as family—his special cousins Valerie McKenzie and Delia Mallory and close friends Geoff Warren, Chris Cote, Scott Howard, and Vilma Males.

The family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to Dr. John Crawford, the staff at DaVita Dialysis East Clinic, Dr. Paul Orland, and the incredible ICU team on the 3rd floor at Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center for the compassion, care, and dignity they showed Daniel, with special appreciation for the exceptional care and kindness of Dr. Fillmore.

Daniel's life was not defined by grand gestures, but by the quiet, consistent love he gave to others. He showed up. He cared. He built a life rooted in family, kindness, and integrity—and that is why his Christian legacy will never fade.

A celebration of Daniel's life will be announced at a later date.

He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

IN LIEU OF FLOWERS, donations in Daniel's name would be appreciated to the American Diabetes Association, <https://diabetes.org/ways-to-contribute>

# Tribute Wall

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Brenda Mejia - April 29 at 08:08 PM