



Donald Bankson Werthe

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Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to the late George Bankson Werthe and Ruby May (Graves) Werthe, Don became a journeyman plumber, apprenticing under his father throughout high school. He attended Oklahoma A&M for two years as a mechanical engineering student and a wrestler before joining the Air Force. He served during the Korean conflict as a pilot, from 1954-1957 stationed in Japan, flying many types of planes, primarily the B-26 in the 6th Tow Target Squadron. After the service, he became a corporate pilot for various oil companies in the midwest including Standard Oil, before signing on with American Airlines at O'Hare. He retired as a Captain in 1992 after over 40 years with American.

Don was always active in sports: wrestling, skiing, tennis, table tennis, billiards, bowling, etc. In his childhood he enjoyed building detailed models of cars and flyable airplanes. As a teenager, he took up motorcycling and hot rodding. As an adult, he coached youth league softball, baseball, and football. Don enjoyed being a father and included his children in all of these sports and activities. In his 40's he began his interest in stock car racing. He built and successfully raced several late-model stock cars at various dirt tracks in and around Illinois and North Carolina. In his later years he was an avid golfer, adding golf trophies to his racing trophies. Always a lover of dogs, Don often reminisced about his boyhood dogs, Rusty and Bob, and had numerous German Shepherds and innumerable rescued cats over the years.

Don lived on Lake Gaston in North Carolina for 40 years with his wife of 39 years, Dee (Allison) Werthe (deceased). He is survived by his children with his previous wife of 24 years Patricia (Norkus) Werthe (deceased): son Steven George Werthe; daughter Dawn Marie (Werthe) Ernst and son-in-law Mark Peter Ernst; granddaughter Karoline Dawn Ernst; grandson Jakob Mark Ernst and wife Riley Faye Ernst, and great-granddaughter, Della Riley Ernst; nephews Kenneth Pope (wife Ann), Jerald Pope (wife Rebecca),

George Pope, and niece Nancy Pope, children of his late sister Mary Ellen (Werthe) Pope and the late Sam Pope. Donald is also survived by sisters-in-law Jeanette (Norkus) Nissan; Deborah Allison; and Lynn (Allison) Nelson and brother-in-law Lance Nelson.

Tribute Wall



“ 5 files added to the album Memories Album



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