



Donald Edward Early

September 24, 1940 - January 11, 2021

Capt. Donald E. Early, (U.S. Air Force Ret.) 9/24/1940 – 1/11/2021. Don Early, avid outdoorsman, devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather passed away peacefully on January 11, 2021, at age 80. Don was born in the Florida Panhandle village of Niceville in 1940 to Grady Early and Katie (Wells). Graduating from high school but still too young to join the Navy, Don joined the Merchant Marines, serving for six months before turning 18 and enlisting in the Navy. This began Don's lifetime of service to the United States of America. It was the Navy that took Don to San Diego, California where he met the love of his life, Linda (DeJarnett) at a family gathering. Don and Linda were married in 1961 and began a lifelong adventure of service to their country and outdoor adventure with their growing family. After completing his tour with the Navy, Don took a break from military service in 1962 to attend college. After the birth of his first son, David, Don joined the United States Air Force and worked his way through the ranks while attending college, ultimately receiving his bachelor's degree in accounting from San Diego State College, the first in his family to graduate from college. During this time Don and Linda were blessed with two more sons, Daniel and Darrell. Don received his officer's commission in 1970 and his service took him and his family across the U.S. where he fell in love with the Pacific Northwest. Eventually, he was stationed at Fairchild A.F.B. where he decided to put down roots; first building a log cabin by hand on property they purchased near Priest River, Idaho and later becoming a "gentleman farmer" on six acres near Medical

Lake, Washington. In 1981, Don retired from active service but soon returned to work for the Air Force as a civilian; working for another 20 years and becoming the Deputy Commander of the Services Squadron at Fairchild. Throughout, Don provided for his family with his extensive garden and his consummate skill as a hunter and fisherman. He instilled in his family a love of the great outdoors, a sense of boundless adventure, and certain knowledge that there was nothing that was impossible. In 2001 after serving the United States military for over 43 years, Don retired and he and Linda started their next grand adventure, traveling the U.S., Canada and Mexico with fishing poles in hand, but always returning to his home in time for the best fishing and hunting of the year. Don's love of the outdoors was next only to his love of his wife and family. He shared his passion with his wife, children and grandchildren teaching them how to present a dry fly to a rising trout, shoot a double on flushing quail and to "hem up" a whitetail buck. The number of fish he caught cannot be counted and his hunting exploits and tales will live on in our memories. His spirit will be with us on every cold autumn morning, as we walk along the swift-running rivers and hear the waves gently lap upon the shore. Don is survived by his darlin' wife of 59 years Linda who was always in his thoughts, sons: David (Jacque), Dan (Trudy) and Darrell (Becky), grandchildren: Shawn, Desiree (Josh), Alyssa (Joey), Grady, Rachel (Jaan) and Logan; great-grandchildren: Jordyn, Hailey and Kenneth; and Sister Dale Shaw (Earle) and numerous nieces and nephews in Florida. Services will be held at the Eastern Washington Veteran's cemetery when circumstances allow. In lieu of cards and flowers please consider making a donation to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

Tribute Wall

MB

“ I was Don’s secretary for years and he was an amazing person and boss.....

M’Liss Bush - May 21, 2025 at 10:27 AM

BC

“ I worked for Captain Early when he was the Air Force Comptroller Air Forces Iceland at NAS, Keflavik Iceland. He was always kind and easy going, and I enjoyed working for him. This was circa 1976. I’m so sorry for your loss.

Bob Crowley - April 16, 2024 at 03:33 PM

C(

“ I was one of Capt Early’s young airmen in Accounting & Finance at Fairchild in the late 70s. I can remember he always had a smile and the patience of a saint, and he was well respected too. It was great to run into him around Medical Lake every so often - the last time was on a Saturday morning at the Lefevre St Bakery - probably a year or so ago. I am so sorry for your loss - God Bless all of you. Although he is gone, you will always your great memories.

Cheryl Moriarty (Muench) - February 09, 2021 at 07:32 PM