



George (Jay) Parker

November 20, 2021

Jay Parker left us peacefully at 3pm on November 20, 2021. Jay was born in Hartley, Iowa to George Edward and Helene Parker. The first of four children, Jay always claimed he had the best childhood ever, growing up on a farm. He attended grade school in Cornell, Iowa where each class consisted of two grades. An avid reader all of his life, Jay contended that the system of multiple grades in one classroom vastly improved ones reading skills. He spent his summers fishing in the Big Sioux river, swimming in Lake Okoboji and playing in the grove outside his family home.

His parents left the farm when Jay was in eighth grade and moved to Rockford, Illinois. He missed his country roots and it took some time to adjust to city life. The answer to finding happiness in his new home was a group of model airplane geeks who became his friends.

They spent many happy hours building airplanes, then free flying them in the fields outside of town. This early hobby would lead to Jay's lifelong love of planes and aviation.

Jay graduated from West High School in 1945. He was active in ROTC and was on his school's rifle team and was a skilled marksman. Immediately upon his graduation in 1945, he was drafted into the US Army. World War II was officially over, but President Truman extended the draft for one more year. Jay

was stationed in Panama for the duration of his first tour of duty. Upon his discharge, he returned to Rockford, where he went to work for Woodward Governor as a machinist. In 1950, the Korean War started and as a reservist Jay was one of the first to be called back to service.

After two tours of duty and now eligible for free college, Jay enrolled at the University of Iowa, where he studied mechanical engineering. He returned to work at Woodward and continued to work there until his retirement.

Jay met his future wife Ruthanne, on a blind date arranged by his best friend Keith Wahlstrom. They were married in 1957 and celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary shortly before Jay's passing.

Jay was transferred to the Woodward plant in Ft. Collins, in 1966. This was a life changing event in the life of Jay, his wife and their three children. They embraced the Colorado lifestyle becoming enthusiastic skiers, campers and hikers. In addition his love of the outdoors, Jay had two enduring hobbies, fixing old cars (especially Volkswagon beetles and Chevrolet Corvairs) and flying airplanes. His children always had a car to drive as long as they didn't mind that it was a vintage Corvair.

Jay loved flying his airplane and was a member of the Civil Air Patrol for years. He was involved in many search and rescue missions and became an accomplished mountain pilot,

In their later years, Jay and his wife loved long road trips , winters in Arizona and cycling. They took several cycling vacations in the US and rode along the Danube from Passau, Germany to Vienna, Austria, on one of their adventures.

Jay was a quiet man who preferred "not to be noticed". He understood how things worked and kept his cars, his kids' cars and all house systems in

working order. He loved his wife, his children, grandchildren and dogs and will be sorely missed by all. While there is sadness in the loss of a loved one, there is no loss in a life well-lived. Jay lived his life well in every sense.

He is survived by his wife Ruthanne, daughters Elizabeth and Catherine and son Robert (wife Diane). He has four grandchildren, Kayla, Dylan, Parker (wife Brooke) and Quinn.

Tribute Wall



“ *George (Jay) Parker*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *So many memories over so many years! Holidays spent as part of the Parker's extended family, trips up the Poudre for picnics to name a few. Brigid's description of Jay is perfect! He was a good man and will be missed. Thoughts and prayers for you all.*

*Love,
Kevin and Joan Keane*

Joan Keane - January 19, 2022 at 03:53 PM



“ *To Ruthanne and the Parker family from the Coralville, Iowa Healys: What a beautiful tribute to Jay's life. Strength and love to all of you and Light Perpetual to Jay.*

Love, Kim and Matt Healy

Kim Healy - December 08, 2021 at 06:56 PM

AH

“ To the Parker family from the home of chef Jon in Chicago. Your tribute to Jay is lovely, It brings to mind all the times he and Dave enjoyed themselves together in Breck, some times meeting those of us who still skied at the Crown Pub, or just all having dinner together at RockRidge. I wish I were there with you in Ft.C at this difficult time.

Much love,

Ann

Ann Healy - December 04, 2021 at 08:26 PM

BW

“ Love and strength to Ruthanne, Beth, Catherine, Bob, Diane and the grandkids. Remembering him as I often saw him - with a smile and a twinkle in his eye. He was a good man and I am lucky to have known him.

Brigid (Keane) Woodward - December 02, 2021 at 01:20 PM

NA

“ I loved working with Jay. I'm only sorry I did not know him sooner. Indeed a life well lived, but I'm sorry for your loss.

Nancy, PT

Nancy - December 01, 2021 at 08:42 AM

HC

“ *The only time I flew with Jay was during a visit to Ft, Collins with my wife (and Ruthanne's good friend). Whenever Ruthanne and Pat got together, they never stopped talking so Jay and I were left to our own devices. One day, Jay asked me if I'd like to go for a ride in his Cessna 150. Of course I did!*

At the airport, Jay spent 15 minutes methodically going through his checklist. Ailerons, flaps, elevators, rudder, fuel; check! He got in the cockpit started the engine and taxied to the end of the runway and we took off. We were still climbing (at about 500 ft) when he calmly did a 180 and said "I forgot something". We landed, he turned off the engine, opened the engine cowling, opened an air vent, shut the cowling swung the airplane around and took off and flew over the Devil's Backbone. He never broke a sweat and neither did I. If it had been anyone else i'd have been out that plane as soon as the engine shut down. But it was Jay.

Hal Cronkhite - November 29, 2021 at 03:25 PM

TG

“ *Wonderful, loving obituary -- just right for Jay.*



Tammy Glover - November 28, 2021 at 03:00 PM