



Gary Wilsey

1935-2017

- Aug 9, 2017



Gary Wilsey

Retired airline pilot and Napa Valley winegrower, Gary Roy Wilsey, died Monday, July 31 at age 81 after a long illness. He will always be remembered as a kind and loving husband, father, grandfather and friend to all who knew and loved him. Gary was born in Oakdale, California on October 11, 1935, where his family had settled from Nebraska and established an almond ranch. In 1950 the family left the ranch and relocated to San Francisco, California, where he graduated from Lowell High School in 1953.

After high school, Gary chased his interest in flying and began a successful journey into the field of aviation. After acquiring all the necessary ratings including Flight Instructor, he started his airline career flying the DC-3 with Continental Airlines in 1959. Over the next 25 years with the airline he reached Captain, Chief Pilot and LAX Flight Manager. During this period he also flew troop transportation during the Vietnam War, and was very active in the original Air Micronesia operation. In 1983, Gary joined Federal Express where he flew for another 18 years, again achieving the position of base Chief Pilot and retiring as an MD-11 Captain in 2001.

While Gary spent the majority of his career in the skies, he simultaneously followed a passion for winegrowing after purchasing a vineyard in Rutherford, California in 1974. He was so taken with the beauty of the Napa Valley that in 1980 he moved his family from Los Angeles to St. Helena, and they still grow Cabernet Sauvignon on their ranch to this day.

Mr. Wilsey is survived by his wife of 50 years, Lanetta, and his children: son Jack and his wife Andy and their children Kyle and Bryan, son Clint and his wife Susan and their children Clara, Clint and Blake. He is preceded in death by his parents, Stan and Dorothy Wilsey (Lewis).



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