



The sad news that former Golden Eagles member and Continental Captain Harold (Hal) W. Spores has taken his last flight West was just received from his oldest Daughter, Claudia. The Golden Eagles sends condolences to Claudia and the rest of Captain Spores` family and wishes them peace and comfort at this difficult time. We also wish Hal Godspeed and may he have smooth air, favorable winds and clear skies for his last flight West. RIP Captain Hal.

Additional information will be provided as it is received.



**Harold W. Spores, (June 9, 1921, Malden, Washington-November 12, 2017, El Paso, TX)**

My dad learned to fly in Spokane, Washington, but honed his skills in the Army Air Force. He was based in Roswell, New Mexico, where he trained other pilots. Just before he was to go overseas, the war ended. In 1943, he had married my mother, Jeane, in Albuquerque.

Dad was hired by Robert F. Six for Continental Airlines, based in DEN. My brother, Craig, and I were born in Denver before Dad was “temporarily” transferred to El Paso in 1951, where my sister, Carla, was born. That assignment lasted for 11 years, during which Dad’s love of flying, family, friends and El Paso grew exponentially. I remember not understanding why our dad would be gone to work for several days and then home for several days—why couldn’t he be like other dads who left in the morning and came home for dinner?! Then he got “the office job” and I remember the day that the FBI escorted him home to get his uniform to be used if needed during the attempted CAL hijacking at the airport. That didn’t end well for the airplane, but Dad and his uniform were safe and he came home for dil have a few memories of the family flying somewhere on vacation and having to get dressed in our Sunday best to go to the airport and “stand by as non-revs.” A few times we were left behind and had to go back home. One time when we did get on, I remember a stormy nighttime flight when it seemed to me that we did nothing but take off, be bumpy, land somewhere else, take off again. We were all so sick by the time we got back to ELP! From then on my memories of family vacations are of driving and camping trips.

In 1972, Dad agreed to go to LAX and give that office a try. We arrived during a very rainy, foggy December. Our new house had a leak. What a culture shock from desert Southwest to sunny California; and I remember being so worried whenever I knew Dad would be driving back and forth on the freeways. He would be so much safer in an airplane in the sky! By then I was old enough to know that my dad didn’t belong in an office and he realized it, too. During my college years and the Vietnam war, he flew MATS. Then he flew to Hawaii and the South Pacific until his retirement in 1981. It was a thrill for my husband, Richard, and me to be able to go with Mother on Dad’s retirement flight from LAX to HNL on a DC-10. He allowed us a brief cockpit visit to see his view of the world. No wonder he loved it so much! As his retirement was coming closer, my folks were anxious to get back to ELP where they had always been so happy. Dad commuted from ELP to LAX to fly to HNL and bunked in a trailer not far from Craig and his wife, Susan, in Torrance. None of us kids ever learned to fly, but Carla worked as a flight attendant for Western and then Delta until her retirement 9 years ago.

After retirement, Mom and Dad traveled the US by truck and travel trailer, with the CARM group, and the world with airline employee tours.

They established lasting friendships with people wherever they went. But, they never found any place they liked more than El Paso, Texas, and they never wanted to leave. They will be interred together at Ft. Bliss National Cemetery.

After Mom died in 2011, ending their 68 year marriage, Dad confided that Mother once asked him if they couldn’t just buy a first class plane ticket to somewhere and not always travel stand-by. In just the last few days, I have learned that pilots who have died have “flown West.” I am happy to know that my dad and mom have finally gotten a First Class ticket to fly West together into Eternity.

Written by Claudia Spores Bernt, 11.16.2017



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