



The obituary for Alex "Ben" Watson has been obtained, and subsequent to the Gone West notice issued earlier today, the obituary is being posted below. Thanks to Golden Eagles member Captain Robert Stetzer for providing the obituary.

OBITUARY

Ben Watson

May 10, 1943 – November 15, 2024



IN THE CARE OF

Stoddard Funeral & Cremation & Sunset Memorial Gardens

Alex Benson Watson known as Ben, age 81, of Chadron, Nebraska, earned his final set of wings on Friday, November 15, 2024.

Ben was born on May 10, 1943 to Alex and Esther Watson in McAlester, Oklahoma. After Ben graduated from McAlester High School in 1961, he went on to study Aviation Technology at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma where he completed his Airframe and Powerplant certification in 1964. After graduating, Ben entered the United States Navy as an Officer in their flight training program at Pensacola, Florida where he became a naval flight instructor. Ben served his country during the Vietnam war as an aircraft commander on the EC-121 Super Constellation, at NAS Agana, Guam. He returned home from his deployment to the United States in 1969 as a decorated Naval aviator.

After completing his six-year commitment with the Navy, Ben was immediately hired by Continental Airlines as a Second Officer on the Boeing 707. His aviation career afforded him the opportunity to fly for multiple airlines, including Pride Air,

Frontier Airlines, Kalitta Flying Service, and Piedmont Airlines. He retired as Captain from USAirways in 2003.

In 1970, Ben met and married Gillie Shield in McAlester, Oklahoma. Ben and Gillie built a family of two daughters, Amy (Watson) Hayden and Angela (Watson) Lollar.

In June 2019, Ben was presented the rare and prestigious Federal Aviation Administration Wright Brothers "Master Pilot" Award and The Charles Taylor "Master Mechanic" Award, both for his 50-year dedicated service, technical expertise, professionalism, and outstanding contributions to further the cause of aviation safety.

In his retirement years, Ben continued his love of general aviation spending every summer flying to Oshkosh and Sun-n-Fun. He also enjoyed tinkering, showing and driving his collection of classic cars and spending time with his family and dogs.

Ben was preceded in death by parents, Alex M Watson and Esther L Watson, siblings Dorothy Watson, Gilbert Watson, Alverna Proctor, and Margaret Shields.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Gillie Watson, daughters, Amy Hayden (husband Kevin) and Angela Lollar (husband Phill), and granddaughters, Kalani Hayden, Sierra Hayden, Ashley Lollar and Bree Lollar, nieces and nephews including his beloved Pam Eldridge.

Services will be held at Landing Place Church, 11555 Chambers Road, Brighton, Colorado, 80603, on Saturday, November 23, 2024 at 10:00 am. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Wounded Warrior Project in support of our Nation's veterans and families. "The greatest casualty is being forgotten." https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org/default.aspx?tsid=10043&ovr_acv_id=5246



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