



Cletus B. Kuhla

May 9, 1937 - July 16, 2019

A multifaceted man, who led by example through admirable honor and respect, saw life through a uniquely creative mathematical lens and the mind of an inventive engineer. Cletus Bonaventure Kuhla (Boots to family and friends) was born at home in East Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania (now called Jim Thorpe, PA) to mother, Irene Yvonne Kuhla (nee Speshock) and father Michael Joseph Kuhla on May 9, 1937. Boots was the last born of his siblings, Dolores M. Kirkendall, Bernard C. Kuhla and Donald Kuhla. He spent much of his childhood exploring and tinkering around (as he would call it) through the mountains, woods and Lehigh River that surrounds his hometown with his “Little Rascal” group of friends (Bunny, Coco Pie, Fingers, Hooks, and Lefty). Being a natural-born athlete and Big Band era music enthusiast drew him to pick up the trumpet, join and champion the high school wrestling and basketball teams, and play baseball in the local league run by Mickey Hodor, who was like a father to him.

His intrigue of the mechanics on how things work, how to make them better, combined with his God-given gift, passion, effortless skill-set for mathematics and love of his country culminated so that he could make his mark on the world around him by sharing these attributes with others.

Boots graduated from Jim Thorpe High School in 1955 and that September, at the age of 18, he left his family to join the Navy and begin recruitment at

Bainbridge, MD. While at Bainbridge, he was selected to test for entrance to the United States Naval Academy. Boots treasured his time studying at the Naval Academy where he made many lifelong, true friends, and learned important values that he would carry with him throughout his career and life.

Upon graduating from the Naval Academy in 1961, Boots was commissioned as an officer in the US Air Force where he utilized the education and work acumen he acquired as an engineer in the Missile Squadrons stationed in Lincoln, Nebraska, where he met his future wife, Gloria Newman. Gloria and Boots were married on October 6, 1962, just three short months after their initial chance meeting. As working in the armed forces often requires, the couple then moved to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, OH where Boots obtained his Master's Degree in Engineering and where their first daughter, Michelle was born in 1967. In 1968, they moved to Houston, TX where Boots worked at NASA training the astronauts from Apollo VII through Apollo XV on the flight simulators working side-by-side with Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Buzz Aldrin. As a member of the Apollo XIII Mission Operations and Rescue Mission Team, he was awarded, by President Nixon, the Presidential Medal of Freedom Award. Houston, TX was also where they welcomed their second daughter Stephanie into the family in 1969.

The family then moved to Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts where Boots was assigned to work with Radar Projects and upon completion of this assignment, he was commissioned to work for the Under Secretary of Defense at The Pentagon in Washington D.C. for 11 years. The family lived in Crofton, MD at that time. Upon his retirement as a Colonel in the US Air Force, after 30 years, in 1984, Boots began his career as a civilian and joined his longtime friend, John Seidlarz, Sr. in managing a number of companies in the security systems and engineering industry performing studies in nuclear, infrastructure security, and completing threat assessments. Together with the scientific inventors, he helped develop and innovate the world's first biometric

Iris identification and recognition system IrisScan, and through its acquisition, the company became Iridian Technologies, Inc., where Boots held the position of active CEO and President. The family settled in Tabernacle, NJ.

Boots loved his immediate and extended family above everything. He also loved his quiet home in Tabernacle, jitterbugging to Tommy Dorsey's Boogie Woogie, eating his wife's cooking, reading and traveling with his wife in New England, North Carolina, and Europe.

Boots passed on Tuesday, July 16, 2019, in the care of the wonderful staff at Samaritan Hospice in Voorhees, NJ. He is preceded in death by his wife, Gloria, who passed on March 12, 2019, and survived by his two daughters, brother Bernard Kuhla and numerous nieces and nephews. The family is grateful to Fay, his home health aide, and friend, for making sure he was safe, happy and comfortable in his final months.

Friends and family are invited to a memorial service on Monday, July 22, 2019, at Givnish Funeral Home-Marlton, 398 East Main Street, Marlton, NJ 08053 (856) 452-5090. Family and friends are invited to gather from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm with a memorial service to commence at 6:30 pm. Burial will be private at Brigadier General William C. Doyle Memorial Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Samaritan Hospice of Southern New Jersey or the United States Naval Academy Alumni Association Foundation.

Cemetery Details

NJ Veterans Cemetery

350 Provinceline Road
Wrightstown, NJ 08562

Previous Events

Gathering of Family and Friends

JUL 22. 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM (ET)

Givnish Funeral Home Marlton
398 E Main St
Marlton, NJ 08053
(856) 452-5090
info@givnish.com

Service

JUL 22. 6:30 PM (ET)

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Tribute Wall



“ *Givnish Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Cletus B. Kuhla*



Givnish Funeral Home - July 20, 2019 at 07:57 PM



“ *Cletus B. Kuhla*

September 09, 2022 at 01:27 AM



“ *243 files added to the album LifeTributes*



Givnish Funeral Home - July 20, 2019 at 06:42 PM