



Guy Thomas Keilman

May 19, 1946 - August 10, 2024

Our hearts break to announce the passing of Guy Thomas Keilman of Yountville. A beloved husband, father, granddad, brother, cousin, friend and Marine, Guy made his final landing on August 10, 2024.

Guy's journey began on May 19, 1946, born to Blanche Harmon Keilman of Panhandle, Texas and WWII veteran and then Lt. Colonel Myron Harold Keilman of Missoula, Montana. His brother, Geary, arrived four years later. While Guy was initially dubious over the noisy addition, Geary won him over and they became lifelong friends and partners in skiing, aviation, and mischief. Geary further enriched Guy's life with his marriage to Laurie, who's been a sister to Guy since 1971.

So-called "Air Force brats," Guy and Geary were moved by car by boat and by plane from California to Florida to Japan to Hawaii to Missouri to Michigan to Wyoming to New York and then finally to Sacramento, where the Colonel and Mrs. Colonel were lastly stationed in 1965 and retired in 1970. There, Guy attended American River College and Sacramento State before joining the Marines in 1971. He became an officer and a helicopter pilot and embarked on a storied career in helicopter aviation, and met some of his greatest friends in the process. This was the tail-end of Vietnam, and Guy would have wanted to clarify that he did not see combat and that he held the deepest respect for those who did.

In 1975, Guy mustered out of the Marines and continued flying in the reserves and then the civilian world. Guy described his work merely as going “up and down, back and forth, as usual” while the rest of us described it as “Wow.” His career spanned five decades, six continents, and four types of heavy-lift helicopters. Guy flew on logging, oil, and construction projects in the US, Papua New Guinea, and Peru in addition to, most proudly, many fire-fighting expeditions in Australia, Greece, and the Western United States and humanitarian expeditions to Sudan (“the only place I was ever shot at”) and New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

Guy was a man of deep Catholic faith and conscience, which he shared with his soulmate and wife, Mary Margaret. They met in the fall of 1992, while Guy was critter-sitting for dear friends and required the aid of Mary, a famed goat-whisperer. Enchanted, Guy offered Mary a single rose, the flower of which was promptly eaten by a goat. Mary fell in love with his heart, humor, and deep Catholic faith, and they married two years later on October 15, 1994. Guy devoted himself to being a good husband and partner, always ensuring Mary had a strong cup of coffee, a hot dinner, a chore-buddy, and someone to lean on and pray with.

Guy and Mary were also partners in raising their daughter, Annie. Guy was the best dad - immensely kind, immensely patient, immensely proud, unconditionally loving, and so so fun. He delighted equally in Annie’s accomplishments, travels, and all the boring little moments in between. He went to great effort to visit Annie wherever she was, be it Rhode Island, Spain, Senegal, or Oakland. Guy cherished his son-in-law Sam and grandchildren, Naomi and Nicholas. He was a doting and present “granddad,” enjoying lakes, boats, playgrounds, wiffle bats, beaches, and reading with his grandkids.

In 2017, at “the just right time,” Guy retired from being a helicopter pilot with

over 26,000 hours of flight time, countless stories, and many dear friends. He quickly replaced the elegant Skycrane he'd been flying with an elegant yacht he captained, a Grand Banks wooden-hulled beauty he called the "Driftwood II" and Mary called "Guy's mistress." Indeed, he loved this boat and loved sharing it with friends and family, referring to it as "our boat." He made many great friends at the Napa Marina, where he will be sorely missed.

Guy is predeceased by his parents and parents-in-law, to whom he was a dedicated son, along with many beloved friends, cousins, uncles, aunts, and good dogs.

Guy's family and friends, including his Marine Corps friends - "the boys" (oorah!); his "vagabond" helicopter pilot friends from Columbia, Carson, and Erickson; his friends from the Catholic community up and down the Valley; his Holland Lake friends; and his Napa Valley "marina buddies," will miss Guy for his hearty laugh and big smile, his endless generosity, his stories, his expertise, his Faith, and for the kindness and zest for life that he radiated. He loved greatly, and remains greatly loved.

Memorial services will be held at St. Helena Catholic Church, beginning with a Rosary on September 3 at 6pm, then funeral Mass at 11am on September 4 with a reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Wounded Warrior Project or the Carmelite House of Prayer in Oakville, CA.

Previous Events

Rosary

SEP 3. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

St. Helena Catholic Church
1340 Tainter St
St. Helena, CA

Mass

SEP 4. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

St. Helena Catholic Church
1340 Tainter St
St. Helena, CA

Reception

SEP 4. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (PT)

St. Helena Catholic Church
1340 Tainter St
St. Helena, CA

Tribute Wall



“ I was so sorry to hear of Guys passing... he was my dad's cousin and one of those people you always wanted to get to know better were it not for the distance between California and Montana. We shared some interesting phone calls in the last few years as he processed the losses of cousins. My thoughts and prayers go out to his beloved family. Kelly Keilman

Kelly Keilman - August 21, 2024 at 07:10 PM

DK

I'm picturing Guy, Harold and Leo sharing old stories and laughs!

Diane Keilman - September 03, 2024 at 11:44 PM

PK

*Guy and I worked together for many years in the rotor wing industry. A top notch pilot and great friend. I was shocked and of course saddened by Guy's passing.
May Guy rest in peace.
My condolences to his family.*

Paul Kearns - December 19, 2024 at 06:18 PM