



George Wenschhof

January 9, 2022

George Clarence Wenschhof, 80 , of Gulf Shores, AL, passed away peacefully at home in his sleep on January 9, 2022, after a prolonged illness, with his wife by his side. He was born July 8, 1941, at home along Wenschhof Road, Fairfield, PA, the son of Clyde A. Wenschhof Sr. and Verna May (Ney) Wenschhof.

Having undiagnosed dyslexia that made reading, writing, and spelling almost impossible, so much so that his teachers and school counselor advised him to be content to just being a good farm hand as a career. Notwithstanding, George joined the Pennsylvania National Guard (with his father's signature) at age 17 and joined the Air Force the day after graduating from Fairfield High School in 1960.

He married Pamela Kay Bolish in 1962 while on active duty. They had two children, Sherry and Christopher. After active duty, George joined the Reserves and operated his own excavating business, laying telephone cable under the highways in upstate Illinois. When they divorced in 1968, George joined the Army and ultimately was stationed at Fort Rucker, Al, where he learned to fly helicopters, rescuing and transporting soldiers during Viet Nam, before returning to Fort Rucker as a helicopter flight instructor.

In 1970 he married Glenda Faye Adams, his wife of 40 years until her passing 2011. Glenda often said that interwoven with his 40 years of active and inactive military service, George started a new life about every 15 years. When they left Fort Rucker, he worked for a large building and excavating

company in Pennsylvania before he and Glenda began Lion Industrial Knives, Inc., a commercial knife sharpening business in their garage where he developed the art of sharpening industrial knives for paper mills, publishing houses, candy and snack industries, and eventually for the Postal Service and the US Mint. When the business outgrew the garage, they purchased a building, moved the operation into Red Lion, and hired a few employees. He once told a friend that the difference between his resharpened knives and that of others was that his were “shiny” as new.

With employees to keep the knife sharpening business going, he could take a few weeks off each summer to try something new. One summer he flew a float plane in Canada to guide fishermen in backwoods areas. A year or so later he studied to become certified as a charter captain and in the summers he and Glenda ran GeorgGlen Charter Fishing on Lake Ontario out of the home he built in Henderson Harbor, NY. One year he, with the help of one of his employees, built a gyrocopter which he flew only briefly before selling it to someone he met after entering and winning a national gyroplane competition. Several summers he went to Colorado to help a rancher he had met while hunting out west to make hay. This inspired him to want to become a rancher. In the late 1990s at age 58 George and Glenda sold everything in NY and Pennsylvania and moved to Meeker, CO, where George started another chapter in his life. He partnered for five years with a local rancher who in return taught him how to become a good cattleman. At the end of that period he and Glenda acquired the – T – ranch where George together with Don Hilkey innovated and upgraded the ranch operations, including but not limited to changing the way hay was stored, installing a 2000’ irrigation pivot and designing and constructing a hydroelectric generator system to power the ranch.

In 2000, he retired as a Chief Warrant Officer Four (CW4) after 40 years in a combination of active and inactive duty. During that time, he served in the PA National Guard, Air Force, Army, National Guard and Reserves in capacities as flight mechanic, pilot, Standards Instruction Pilot (SIP), providing check

rides, training, and qualifying helicopter pilots. He had achieved an advanced level of flight and maintenance skills and was maintenance-certified for all fixed wing planes up to a 747 cargo plane and all models of helicopter, as well as being instrumental in the development and testing of the first night vision goggles. He earned numerous awards including the "Broken Wing" award for safely landing a disabled helicopter by performing a challenging maneuver, one not found in the manual, which enabled him and his co-pilot to walk away from the aircraft without injury.

In 2012 George married Jaclyn M. Gisburne and continued ranching until 2015 when he decided to retire and sold the ranch to begin another chapter in his life. After reacquiring the house he had built in 1987 overlooking Lake Ontario outside Henderson Harbor, the plan was to spend his retirement fishing the days away on the lake. This meant refitting and rigging a new boat. Because NY was too cold and had too much snow in the winter, he and Jaclyn bought another home in Gulf Shores, AL. There George enjoyed beach fishing and traveling in their motorhome, going back and forth between NY and AL. He is survived by his wife, Jaclyn Gisburne Wenschhof, daughter Sherry Hodges of Mahomet, IL, son Christopher Alan Wenschhof (Amy) of Lacey, WA; four grandchildren, Tabytha Lawless and Tyler, Sheldon, and Levi Wenschhof; one great-grandson; three stepchildren Robert Svoboda (Amy), Paul Svoboda (Cara), Rich Svoboda (Jamie), and ten step-grandchildren. He is also survived by two brothers, Clyde A. Wenschhof, Jr. and Raymond C. Wenschhof of Fairfield, PA. .

A small graveside service with a military presence will be held on February 5, 2022 at Christian Home Church of Christ, 463 Hwy 92, Newton, AL, where his ashes will be interred next to Glenda. Because George had such a diverse life, there will also be Celebrations of Life services in the three communities that were so important to him:

April 23 at the Village Hall at 208 W. Main Street, Fairfield, PA from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.,

May 21 at the 4-H Bldg., in Meeker, CO, 10:00 to 2:00 with lunch being held and

July 2 a backyard barbeque followed by fireworks at 8054 Fargo Road, Henderson, NY

Friends and family are invited to bring and share stories and memories at one or all three celebrations.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to one of the ranch-related vocational training scholarships: The George C. and Glenda F. Wenschhof Memorial Scholarship for students in the Meeker School District through the Meeker Education Foundation (P O Box 255, Meeker, CO 81641) or The George C. and Jaclyn M. Wenschhof Vocational Scholarship Fund for students in Rio Blanco County through the Rio Blanco County Historical Society ()PO Box 413, Meeker, CO 81641) or to a charity of your choice in his memory.

After he presented how he designed and built his own hydroelectric plant at a hydroelectric conference in Colorado, George was asked what degree he had that made this possible. Without any hesitation George said, "I have a CBE." After a pause, the man sheepishly said, "I'm not familiar with a CBE degree." George quickly replied, "Cowboy Engineering." How did he make and level the platform? He used a custom-built septic tank and a level. How did he lift and set the generator in place without a crane? He just hooked a chain to it and lifted it with a backhoe.

And so it was. That was George. In the end, he became a good farm hand, meeting his teachers' and high school counselor's expectations, and on the way became so much more.

Tribute Wall

SD

“ *Susan Dehart lit a candle in memory of George Wenschhof*



susan dehart - March 14, 2022 at 11:15 AM

SH

“ *My dad was my hero. Always larger than life itself, always creating, always learning.*

Sherry Hodges - January 27, 2022 at 08:51 PM