



Mark Gerald Peterson

August 2, 2023

It is with immeasurable sadness that we announce the death of Mark Gerald Peterson, 69, of Foley, AL who passed away unexpectedly following a mid-air helicopter collision on July 29, 2023. Mark was an extraordinary person who exuded a limitless warmth and compassion that won him many friends, and he possessed a deep, quiet confidence that arose from a principled life lived authentically and with integrity. The outpouring of support since his passing is a testament to his quality as a husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, friend and colleague. He will be greatly missed. Mark was a lucky man, discovering early the two great passions that would sustain him throughout his life. The first was Peggy Murphy, who he met while he was playing in a garage band when they were 14 and 15. They dated throughout high school, married shortly after graduation and together created the much loved family that was the center of Mark's life and focus. Mark and Peggy celebrated 49 years together on May

4, 2023.

During high school, Mark excelled in track, running the 880 and setting records. He was the Northern Illinois District Champion and was awarded a track scholarship to the University of Iowa.

His second passion was aviation. As a small child, he was captivated by the show Whirley

Birds and enjoyed the exploits of Chuck Martin and P.T. Moore. In 1985, he started

WaterMark Video, producing and editing promotional, corporate and commercial videos

for different products. He had always wanted to own his own helicopter and began

researching home built helicopter kits, which led him to Rotorway Helicopters.

He

approached the company with his idea to improve the instruction manual by creating an

instructional video; they agreed and the rest is history. He spent many hours in his hangar

in Clearwater, FL creating the instructional videos for the Exec 162F and went on to earn

his private pilot's license and CFI credentials. In 1995, he established AirMark Helicopters,

turning his passion for aviation into a satisfying career building and selling Rotorway helicopters and teaching others to fly. He was a highly skilled pilot who delighted in

sharing his love of flying with others.

Mark also loved motorcycles and music, and was a talented musician, playing guitar, bass

and drums. He adored the family cats, Callie, Salvador and Nikki and was

happy watching

endless cat videos on the internet. But he was especially in thrall to Nikki, who wandered

into his hangar one day and became "his" cat, accompanying him on the road in his RV

when he traveled for work.

Originally from Rockford, IL, Mark was predeceased by his parents Burdette and Ellen

(Scott) Peterson. He is survived by his wife, Peggy Murphy Peterson, son Zach Peterson

and daughter Camille Peterson, of Foley, AL, and grandchildren Alina Peterson and Liam

Peterson, of Palm Harbor, FL. He is also survived by his sisters Jennifer (Roger) Flux of

Sebring, FL, Beth (Mike) Metzler of Beaufort, NC, a niece and several nephews; brothers-in-law Mike (Lynn) Murphy of Phoenix, AZ and Tim (Barbara) Murphy of Tucson, AZ, and

sister-in-law Katy Van Aken (Harry) of Greenwood, IN.

A celebration of Mark's life will be held August 19, 2023 at St. Margaret of Scotland

Catholic Parish, 601 W. Laurel Ave. Foley, AL. Visitation at 10am, Mass at 11am. In lieu of

flowers, please send donations to St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Parish.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **19**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Margaret's of Scotland Catholic Church
601 W. Laurel Ave
Foley, AL 36535

Mass of Christian Burial

AUG **19**. 11:00 AM (CT)

St Margaret's of Scotland Catholic Church
601 West Laurel Ave
Foley, AL 36535

Tribute Wall

JJ

“ I met Mark well over 20 years ago at the Warehouse he rented space near Robertsdale. I was flying over in my Bell 47 and saw what appeared to be a helicopter landing pad. I landed and Mark came out and we met. He showed me around his small area where he had three Rotorway helicopters he was working on. We went outside and I offered him to fly the 47, which he jumped at the chance. From time to time, I would drop in an visit him. He told me he going to move to a place he bought with a house and a large hangar down near Foley (Collier Airpark 2AL1). I helped him move what he had in the Warehouse to the hangar. Over the years I moved around a lot. I live in Texas now. But whenever I got back to south Alabama, I would drop in to visit him. I told everyone I ever met who was thinking about a Rotorway to "talk to Mark Peterson, he is the best there is." The last time I spoke with Mark was this past May, to get his opinion of a A600 Talon verses a 162F Turbocharged Exec. I was shocked and saddened by his passing. I will miss him.

Joe Jablecki

Joseph S Jablecki - September 22, 2023 at 10:55 AM

“ Anyone who ever met Mark Peterson would never forget him. I don’t believe that in all the years I knew him, I had ever heard an unkind word about anyone come from his being. I did Voiceover and TV production work with Mark when he first opened WaterMark video in Clearwater. You get to know a lot about a person while sitting together in front of a video editor for hours upon hours. I admired Marks’s creativity but also his patients and attention to detail. We had a lot in common. We were both from the Midwest. We both ran track in school; Both loved flying; and doing video creative work. I remember the day Mark and I were talking about helicopters and kits to build. Mark had made the decision to build one and had ordered the first phase but didn’t know how long it would take to gather the funds to get the remaining parts for the ship. I suggested he call the company and offer to ‘trade out’ the rest of the kit in exchange for step-by-step instructional videos on how to assemble, rig, and fly the bird. Mark hesitated a bit, and I said, “The only thing they will tell you is no!” Well, they did not say no, and in the coming months, Mark’s helicopter began to take form in the back room of his production facility. Soon, Mark got a hangar at KPIE, where the Rotorway videos became a reality. Mark gave me an official Rotorway shirt (which I still have today). I placed myself among the newly arrived crates of copter parts. On went the lights, and Mark yelled action. The ‘Welcome to Rotorway’ instructional video series began. Mark’s dad did the part-by-part assembly voice-over work to complete the project.

Years later, at AirVenture 2021, I reconnected with Mark by yelling his name through the fence. He came over after refueling his Rotorway for its next flight, and we re-connected after many years. He asked me if I was ready to take a flight, and of course I was. We filled out the required paperwork, and off we went as we had so many times before. It was just like old times. Afterward, Mark took me over to the camping area to surprise his wife, Peggy. It was as if we all had not put any miles between us. Mark asked my friend Paul and me to join them at the Rotorway dinner that evening. He said he wanted to see how many pilots would recognize me from the video

we had done so many years before. Surprisingly a good number of them did!

I said my goodbyes to Mark and Peggy that evening.

I have learned that someone's passing is just an example of everlasting life because the thoughts and memories they leave behind are, in fact, everlasting.

Phil Hanna

Phil Hanna - August 22, 2023 at 07:49 AM

“ I want to offer the most sincere condolences to you Peggy, Zach, and Camille on Mark's passing. Although both my wife Peggy and I are just heartbroken, this is a time to reflect on all the wonderful things that Mark accomplished and the quality man that he was. My memories of Mark go back to high school and the track team, He was one of our leaders and was a multi year state qualifier. He owned the 880, and went down state in the mile as well. Years later one of his Guilford competitors who ran collegiately as well said he never saw anyone at any level with a closing 330 yard kick like Mark's.

Mark was a good friend with boundless energy and initiative. We shared a motorcycle trip from Rockford to Gastonia. We were never so scared as when we waved at some cyclists rumbling uphill near Ashville, only to find out they were Hell's Angels going westbound. We worked a full summer together in Rockford in his appliance business. At the end of our last call of the day we would page each other (before cell phones) and meet on the Rock River, learning to water ski.

Peggy and Mark were married by that time. Peggy, you were the one true love of his life, only expanded upon when the kids were born. I look back on weekend camping trips and a summer vacation in the north woods, and good times at your place on Crosby street. About the time I moved back after school, Mark had moved to Florida, but his zest for the spectacular included a couple of Suncoast Shark Fishing Tournaments that I participated in. Mark, of course, was the president of that club, and provided me with perfectly edited videos of our 686 and 406 pound big catches. He was really on to something with the videos and told me to watch for one of them to be broadcast on the unheard of station ESPN.

Mark was always the epitome of a mechanic and engineer. It's not surprising that he commanded the highest respect from his aviation clients. About ten years ago one of my patients, a jet pilot, once casually mentioned that his wife had taken helicopter instruction. She was one of Mark's students. They had just moved from New Hampshire, and here we were talking about Mark and his expertise back in Illinois.

Having known Mark for over fifty years as a friend, a groomsman, as Peggy's husband , and as loving father to Zach and Camille, I will always cherish the memory of a funny, kind hearted, honest, and loyal friend.

Requiem aeternam,

Bill and Peggy Shold

William G Shold - August 18, 2023 at 05:06 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mark Gerald Peterson.

August 18, 2023 at 11:18 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Mark ..doing what he loved



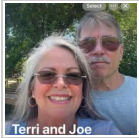
Charlie Rogers - August 18, 2023 at 09:04 AM

PS

“ Mark came to Pilot Mountain, NC in '03 to help me build my Rotorway 162 helicopter. He stayed with us for several weeks, slept in the basement and brought his own peanut butter! He was such a dear man and has remain a friend and consultant to me over the years. I brought my craft to Foley several years ago where we had an emergency landing and he perfectly performed an auto rotate to land us a little hard but safely! We even made the local news! I joined him last year in Osh Kosh where I met Tom. My heart is broken at this great loss but thankful for the promise of seeing him again! Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Matt 5:5
Randel Stanley



Paula Stanley - August 16, 2023 at 07:39 AM



“ We met Mark when Joe bought his helicopter. As time passed our families drew closer together and I'm so thankful for that. Joe and Mark had so many plans and so excited about being able to work together on these new projects... He was a very talented and amazing man who we will miss so very much.. He was always doing for someone else, always thinking of others. I will miss his laugh, miss listening to him and Joe playing music together with the guitar Mark built for Joe and
Miss our friendship... we will meet again, one day. My thoughts and prayers are with you Peggy,Zach and Camille

Terri Huff - August 15, 2023 at 07:28 AM



“ It is so painful to think I will never be able to ask Mark's advice on a varied range on so many subjects. I also know he has been an irreplaceable value to Rotoway and those who build and fly them. He was one of my closest friends and confidants and I will miss him. I pray we will meet again and have all eternity.

Joe & Sulley

Joseph Hopwood - August 14, 2023 at 01:37 PM

CK

“ Mark was a mentor and a friend. He has probably saved many of our lives in fixing some of the boneheaded things we did while building or maintaining our Rotorways. I am just so devastated at the irony of his passing.

May your soul soar, Mark. You remain in our hearts forever.

Our love to you all,

Chris and Angela Kneppers

Chris Kneppers - August 14, 2023 at 08:40 AM

DS

“ I considered Mark a trusted friend. He was always ready to assist me. I will miss him dearly. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Dan Sundt

Dan Sundt - August 14, 2023 at 08:26 AM

CS

“ I will never forget his patience and kindness to the helicopter community.

Craig Smythe - August 13, 2023 at 06:31 PM

JR

“ Mark was my best friend. He was one of a kind for sure. When he and Zach would come to the house my wife Terri would always fix a big meal. I mean a big meal! I think both of them stored up for the remainder of their days on the road! I will sure miss the evening on the deck listening to music, drinking a beer and taking about our greates lives, our wives of many years and flying our helicopters. I am so glad we spoke of our Savior Jesus Christ. I know without a doubt I will meet Mark again in eternity. Thank God I can say “see you later” instead of “goodbye”

jrhufrs - August 11, 2023 at 06:44 PM

KC

“ Karen and Joanna Conner purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mark Gerald Peterson.



Karen and Joanna Conner - August 11, 2023 at 06:27 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mark Gerald Peterson.

August 11, 2023 at 05:04 PM

CH

“ Carol H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mark Gerald Peterson.

Carol H. - August 11, 2023 at 04:59 PM