

Last week, our community quietly lost a great and patriotic American. Paul Kochendorfer passed away at his home in Dana Point, CA. Born in Tacoma, WA on 16 April, 1943, he passed away on 8 July 2012. Paul was a brilliant aerospace engineer and critical thinker. He fully devoted over 46 years of his life to working in the defense and space industries. His work was his passion, and he thrived as an engineer. More than that, he was a loving husband, father and grandfather who leaves behind a close-knit family including four grandchildren.

When Paul was 5 years old, his family moved to Portland, OR, where he lived with his parents and older sister until graduating from Benson Technical High School. Paul moved to Pasadena, CA to attend the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 1965 and a Master of Science in Aeronautical Engineering in 1966.

At this point, Paul embarked on an extensive career in aerospace engineering, beginning at Philco-Ford Aeronutronic in Newport Beach. In 1972 Paul left his position there and joined three other aspiring young engineers from other large aerospace companies to form PDA Engineering. PDA specialized in defense and aerospace contracts, but the development of a finite element analysis software program served as the catalyst for PDA to go public in 1982. Eventually Paul left PDA and started a new company, Integrated Design and Analysis, Inc (IDA, Inc.) in Irvine with his wife Crystal and one of his fellow engineers. Eventually IDA became a part of Tolo Engineering. Paul then joined ATK Mission Research, from which he retired in 2010.

Paul met his wife Crystal when he was an undergraduate at Caltech and she was an undergraduate at University of Southern California. They married 3 years later and eventually had two children. In 1975 the Kochendorfers moved from Laguna Beach to Dana Point, where they continue to live in the same home to this day.

For the 37 years Paul and Crystal lived in Dana Point, Paul was active in helping their local public schools, volunteering in youth programs and in supporting issues that improved the quality of life in their community. Paul not only participated in both Indian Princesses and Indian Guides with the South Coast YMCA, he was the Scout Master for Boy Scout Troop 773 in Laguna Niguel and an involved parent in both the Music Booster and the Athletic Booster clubs of Dana Hills High School.

An unassuming, quiet and humble man with an insatiable desire to learn, Paul possessed a brilliant mind that impressed all who knew him. Even after retirement he pursued his intellectual interests in brain research, particularly in the area of autism; world and US history, with a focus on geopolitical issues; and physics, with a concentration on the comparisons of string theory vs. particle theory. Paul's interest in physics was originally sparked by Dr. Richard Feynman, Paul's physics instructor at Caltech, who was also a personal hero to Paul. Paul had transcripts of the Feynman lectures and read them on a regular basis. In the words of his son John, "Dad was playing chess while the rest of us were playing checkers." Although an accomplished engineer and scientist, Paul's interests were not limited to engineering, math and science. He was a lover and patron of the both fine and performing arts, and was one of the original season subscribers to South Coast Repertory Theater as well as the Orange County Performing Arts

Center. He could often be found at home while listening on his earphones to bluegrass, jazz, the works of Scott Joplin, or his favorite composer Leonard Bernstein while also reading a book on the brain or physics. He could spend hours on end voraciously consuming news and analyzing geopolitical developments, and was a quiet patriot who loved our great nation.

Paul's greatest joy in life came from his family. He married his first love Crystal and they were looking forward to celebrating their 46th wedding anniversary in September. Paul was extremely proud of both of his adult children. His son John and his daughter Beth live with their families in Southern California. Paul had boundless love for his four grandchildren and they all loved their Papa.

As well as being survived by his wife and two children, their spouses and the grandchildren, Paul is survived by his in-laws Raymond and Margaret Velardo of Laguna Niguel and a sister Margaret Moore of Portland, OR.

No formal services are planned but family and intimate friends will gather at the Kochendorfer residence for a private celebration of Paul's life.

To honor Paul, the family established The Kochendorfer Memorial Fund at Caltech. Contributions are tax deductible and can be made on line at <http://giving.caltech.edu/cf> Click on "ways to give" and follow the directions. For those who prefer using the mail, contributions for the Kochendorfer Memorial Fund can go directly to:

California Institute of Technology
M/C 5-32
1200 E. California Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91125