
Joe Dean Ladd



NEWPORT NEWS - Joe Dean Ladd, an aeronautical engineer whose career included work on the Apache helicopter and Tomahawk missile, died at his home in Newport News on December 26th after a long illness. He was eighty-four. Mr. Ladd was born on July 30, 1930 in Humphrey, Arkansas. During his childhood, he developed a keen interest in aviation, building and flying his own model airplanes. After high school, he entered the [U.S. Air Force](#) and served as a flight engineer, aircraft mechanic, and licensed airframe and powerplant mechanic with the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing of the 338th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron. The majority of his service was at Ramey Air Force Base in Puerto Rico working with various aircraft including the B-17, the B-29 and the B-50. He subsequently received his engineering degree from California's Northrop Aeronautical Institute, and worked in research and design positions with Boeing and

Lockheed Aircraft. He moved to Newport News, Virginia in 1963 with his family, where he worked for the U.S. [Army](#) Aviation Applied Technology Directorate at Fort Eustis, until he retired with distinction in 1988. He was a man of great intellectual curiosity, patriotism, and quiet generosity, with a distinct sense of humor. He had an innate ability to fix and create anything. An avid collector and reader, he had many interests including history, aviation, design, Art Deco, Native American art, architecture, automobiles, music and film. He designed and helped construct his home of 42 years, and enjoyed restoring vintage automobiles, aircraft and model airplanes. He taught Sunday School at Stevens Memorial Baptist Church and served on many committees there. He was a private man of great faith and conviction. Mr. Ladd is survived by his wife, Nell D. Ladd; three daughters, Suzanne Ladd LaVerriere of Centerville, OH, Jennifer Ladd Nelson of Rowayton, CT, Kelly Ladd-Kostro of Williamsburg; and four grandchildren: Huett Nelson, Augusta Nelson, Vivian Nelson, and William Kostro. He is predeceased by his parents, Ernest Ladd and Lassie Brantley Draper. A private, family-only service was held to celebrate his life. The family requests that expressions of sympathy take the form of charitable donations to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or Operation Smile in Mr. Ladd's memory. He will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him. Arrangements are by Weymouth Funeral Home.

Funeral Home

Weymouth Funeral Home

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