

SHARPE, Donald

April 16, 1928 - July 1, 2010

Donald Sharpe (82) passed away peacefully at the Santa Ynez Valley Recovery Residence in Solvang, CA on July 1st, 2010. Don was born in Birmingham, England in 1928 to Edgar and Dora Sharpe. He was trained as a Radar and Millimeter/Microwave Engineer, eventually leading to General Manager of Honeywell Inc., Santa Barbara Microwave Center - a career spanning more than 50 years. He was proud of his family and most especially his wife of 58 years, Audrey.



After working in the printing field and radio repair, Don entered the Royal Air Force in 1946 working on Ground Based Radar systems. This set the stage for a long career in electronics. He received an electrical engineering degree from the City of Guilds, London, England while working at Decca Radar Ltd. At Decca, Don designed and developed the first millimeterwave airport surface detection radar for the primary British airport at Heathrow near London, England. In 1956 Don took the bold move of taking his young family to America after being offered a career with Raytheon Company in Massachusetts, ultimately leading a team developing air defense radar systems for the US Department of Defense during the Cold War. Becoming a citizen in 1962, his very successful 13 years in New England led to a promotion and transfer to Santa Barbara, CA in 1969. Don held high level positions during his career at Raytheon, including Program Manager, Section Manager for Advanced Systems and Manager of Raytheon's Micro-Electronics Lab. Retiring from Raytheon in 1983, Don took on roles as Director of Engineering, Director of Contract Marketing, and General Manager at several high technology companies in the Santa Barbara area before retiring from employment in 1994 to spend time with his family and on personal projects.



Don received his Pilot's license in 1974 and enjoyed sharing his love for flying his Cessna 172 Skyhawk with his daughter, Beverley. He was also a graceful dancer, a skilled swimmer with diving awards, and was fond of instrumental jazz music. He was held in high esteem amongst his peers, neighbors and friends and prided himself on having high ethical standards. His strong electronic and mechanical technical abilities meant Don could and would fix anything and everything. Never daunted, he taught the same skills to his children, which have proven invaluable in their development and success.

Don and Audrey moved from Santa Barbara to the Santa Ynez Valley in 2007 to be closer to family. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Audrey Sharpe, and their two dogs, Jasper and Maggie; four children, Graham (Sally) of Rocklin, CA, Martin (Libby) of Lompoc, CA, Andrew (Day Yeager) of Solvang, CA and Beverley (Gordon Gibbons) of Ojai, CA; five grandchildren, Brian, Alec, Roger, Sarah and Christina; sister, Gillian Zobel (Brian) of Lincolnshire, England and nephew, Malcolm (Katy) and niece, Daphne also of England. He is pre-deceased by his older brother Cyril of Lympne, Kent, England in 2010 and his older sister Edna of Birmingham, England in 1925.

Don's family and friends will always remember his sparkling blue eyes, ready smile and gentle sense of humor. His personal charisma, bright face and English accent charmed every new acquaintance. And his pride in & devotion to his family came naturally to him and are matched by their love for him. He will be missed dearly.

Services will be held on Saturday, July 10th at 2pm at St. Mark's-in-the-Valley Episcopal Church in Los Olivos, CA (688-4454).

The family has asked that in lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Santa Ynez Valley Recovery Residence, Solvang, CA.