



## Alan Lee Gaines

April 2, 1944 - July 14, 2024

### Alan Gaines Obituary

Alan Lee Gaines

02 April 1944 – 14 July 2024

Not, how did he die, but how did he live? Not, what did he gain, but what did he give? (Sandercox)

Born just prior to the end of World War II, Alan was the youngest of three sons born to Foster and Pauline Gaines. The family lived in Downey, California, where Alan graduated from Earl Warren High School. Summer vacations were nearly always spent in Coleman, Texas visiting extended family: “my summer parents.” He was granted a Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps scholarship at the University of Southern California and graduated with a degree in Aerospace Engineering and a commission as Ensign in the US Navy. He was then selected to join the elite ranks of Naval Aviation, beginning training in Pensacola, Florida. After earning his wings of gold he served as an instructor pilot in the F-9 Cougar. He then received orders to Miramar Naval Air Station to fly the F-8 Crusader. He completed two cruises on USS Hancock, with over 200 carrier landings, also serving as a Landing Signal Officer. He left active duty and joined Naval Reserve forces, transitioning to fly the F-4 Phantom and later to serve on a carrier group staff. He spoke often of how proud he was to have been on active duty in 1991 when Mt. Pinatubo erupted, and the carrier he was on was called into service to help families forced to leave Clark Air Base. He retired from Navy Reserve with 22 years of service.

Alan met his lifelong love, Ann Pennington Gaines on a blind date on Christmas Eve 1968, thanks to a dear mutual friend. They were married in 1970, just months before Alan was deployed on his first 10 ½ month cruise. A second cruise followed in 1971/72. Time apart convinced Alan and Ann that a career in commercial aviation would give him more time at home. He was hired by Western Airlines in 1972; a merger with Delta Air Lines took place in 1987. Alan retired as a Delta 767 Captain in 2004 after a 31 year career. He flew every Boeing aircraft at Western and Delta during his time there and served as a Line Check Airman. He was committed to safety and ethics in his career as a pilot. On many occasions he went above and beyond to spend time with anxious flyers to make them feel at ease so they wouldn't miss out on the wonders that air travel can provide. Alan and Ann welcomed their first child, Joanna Katherine in 1975, and her brother Jeffrey Parker in 1982, and eventually landed in Nevada City California to raise their children in what became their home for over 40 years. Throughout Alan's working years he fostered a love of travelling and loved fatherhood. Whether he was leading the family on a European vacation, or an extended camping trip across the United States, Alan's favorite thing was clearly spending time with his family. It was impossible to have a conversation with Alan and not see how proud he was of his family. As Alan approached retirement and beyond, he dedicated himself to volunteer work. He spent countless hours building houses for Habitat for Humanity, restoring train cars for the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Museum, and tackling every problem imaginable at Peace Lutheran Church. Alan had always loved to sing and retirement gave him the opportunity to sing in the Peace Lutheran Church choir and the Music in the Mountains Chorus. He loved camping, hiking, biking, canoeing, skiing, golf and doing all of it with friends and especially with family.

Alan's faith in God never wavered, and he demonstrated a strength of character and mindset that is not frequently seen. He survived a critical fall off a roof. He was proud to be called the "Poster Boy" for CAR T-cell transplant therapy at UC Davis Cancer Center, coming out strong once again with his

Lymphoma in remission. His family sometimes called him Mr. Friendly as he made new friends so easily. His engaging and inclusive approach made it easy for people of all backgrounds to connect with him. He was always willing to lend a hand and offer encouragement. And his pride in his family never ceased.

Alan leaves behind his adoring wife Ann, their children Joanna and her husband Andy Trygstad with their sons Grant & Gavin, and Jeff and his wife Kara with daughter Alexis. He also leaves behind his brother Dennis and his wife Judy, and sister-in-law Nancy Gaines. Sadly, Alan was predeceased by his much-loved brother, Richard. He was so proud of his nieces and nephews: Kristen, Alan, Amanda, Deni, Kelley, and Dusty. Alan has flown west one final time to greater things. His absence leaves a gaping hole in our hearts but we know he's now with the Lord, realizing his full potential and watching over his family with pride.

Alan's memorial service will be held on August 17th, 2024 at 2 PM at Peace Lutheran Church, 828 West Main Street, Grass Valley, California 95945. Burial will be at Miramar National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that you consider donations to any of the following:

Peace Lutheran Church: [www.peacelutherangv.org](http://www.peacelutherangv.org)

Nevada County Habitat for Humanity: [www.nchabitat.org](http://www.nchabitat.org)

UC Davis Cancer Center: <https://give.ucdavis.edu/Donate/YourGift/CC48317/>

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# Tribute Wall

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“ *A Memorial Tree was planted for Alan Lee Gaines  
We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ the staff at All Faith Cremation  
Join in honoring their life - plant a memorial tree*

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**A Memorial Tree was planted for Alan Lee Gaines - May 15 at 01:29 PM**