

David A. Bush

MESA – Lt. Colonel David A. Bush, USAF (Retired), passed away peacefully on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at the age of 94 ½ in Mesa, Arizona. He was proud to serve his country, was a long-time member of Red Mountain United Methodist Church and a resolute family man. Dave shared the following traits of the Greatest Generation: personal responsibility, integrity, humility, work ethic, friendship, and faithful commitment. “Your reputation is your most important valuable possession” was a quote Dave lived by his entire life.

Dave was born on August 19, 1927, to William and Margaret Bush in Traverse City, Michigan. As a family, including his sisters Barb and Bev, they resided in several towns in Michigan including Traverse City, Akron, Pentwater, Sebewaing and Essexville. He graduated from Sebewaing High School, class of 1945. Dave, nicknamed Fireball, participated in various sports including basketball (leading scorer his Senior year with 94 points), baseball, track and field, and football. He was also a member of various clubs including Glee, Science (as Vice President), Press and Varsity. As a Senior, he served as class Treasurer, performed in the school Operetta and was Editor of the school yearbook, The Echoes. Dave delivered newspapers, milk, and propane; was an ice cutter, a roofer, and a grave digger; picked grapes and sugar beets; and earned his first bike by selling magazines.

Upon high school graduation, Dave enlisted in the US Navy. Boot Camp was at Great Lakes NTS, Illinois. He was then assigned to BUSANDA in Cleveland, Ohio. After serving in the Navy for two years, Dave enrolled at Michigan Tech (Soo branch, now known as Lake Superior State University) in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. His major field of study was Electrical Engineering, and he was a member of Air Force ROTC.

In 1948, his second year at Soo Tech, Dave met his future wife of almost 70 years, LaVone, at a student dance. Eventually, he proposed to her in below zero temperatures, while standing in the snow overlooking the famous Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie. In 1949, Dave transferred to the main Michigan Tech campus in Houghton. Dave and LaVone were married after his junior year at her parents’ home in Detroit, Michigan.

After graduation, Dave was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the USAF. His first duty station was Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. He then attended Meteorology School at Penn State University, State College, Pennsylvania.

During Dave’s career in the Air Force as a Meteorologist, he and LaVone were stationed at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio; Lowry AFB, Denver, Colorado; Bitburg AFB, Bitburg, Germany; Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio; Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, Alabama; Willow Run AS, Ypsilanti, Michigan; Malmstrom AFB, Great Falls, Montana; Ernest Harmon AFB, Newfoundland, Canada; Larson AFB, Moses Lake, Washington; Fort Ritchie AP, Maryland (including weather forecasting for Air Force One, Two and Camp David); Richards-Gebaur AFB, Belton, Missouri; and Luke AFB, Glendale, Arizona, where he retired after 28 years of service. Between his assignments at Larson AFB and Fort Ritchie AP, he was stationed at Bien Hoa AFB, Republic of Vietnam.

After retiring from serving his country for 30 years, Dave worked as a high school substitute teacher in Glendale, Arizona. He sold solar hot water systems and worked in the ticket offices of the Arizona Wranglers/Outlaws and Phoenix Suns. In addition, Dave began volunteering for the Fiesta Bowl including the Fiesta Bowl Parade. After a few years, Dave became Assistant Ticket Manager with the Fiesta Bowl and traveled around Arizona promoting Fiesta Bowl activities. When he retired from the Fiesta Bowl, he continued



to work part-time for the Phoenix Suns. He helped open the American West Arena ticket office, where he was able to work side-by-side with his daughter, Debra.

After Dave’s second retirement, he became involved in community and church activities. As a devoted member of Red Mountain United Methodist Church in Mesa, he attended various Bible studies, served as usher, volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, helped make lunches for a men’s shelter, visited home-bound church members, helped with Produce on Wheels, attended Half-time for Men breakfasts, and participated in yearly church property clean-ups. A highlight of each week was coffee fellowship following church service.

Travel was a true passion for both Dave and LaVone. In 1961, while stationed at Malmstrom AFB in Montana, they purchased their first of many trailers, campers, fifth wheels and RVs. During the next fifty plus years, they spent their vacations and free time traveling throughout the United States and Canada, camping in national, state, and local campgrounds along the way. Dave loved every aspect of traveling via camping including planning, packing and of course, the actual trip. He and LaVone were always eager to take the “scenic” route. He was a long-time member of the Good Sam Club. In 2000, the highlight of all their years of travel was a two-week long camping trip throughout their home state of Michigan, celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Accompanying them were their son, two daughters and son-in-law, resulting in fourteen days of treasured family memories.

Dave’s all-time favorite holiday was Christmas. He loved everything about the holiday and embraced the true meaning it held. Dave always enjoyed decorating the outside of their homes. He created some spectacular Christmas light displays. This past Christmas, now as “Supervisor of Decorating,” he enthusiastically directed his kids in putting up the decorations.

Dave enjoyed listening to big band and swing music. Some of his favorite performers were Stan Kenton, Louis Prima, George Shearing and Frank Sinatra. He even bought a hat like the one worn by Frank, which he wore with great style. He was so proud of that hat! Throughout his life, Dave enjoyed playing various card games with family and friends, such as Bridge, Cribbage, Pester and Postage Stamp.

Dave was always involved in watching and supporting his favorite sports’ teams. He cheered on (and sometimes chastised) the teams from his home state of Michigan (except for those Spartans!) and his alma mater, Penn State. After moving to Arizona, he became a loyal fan of the AZ professional teams and was an avid fan of the Arizona State Sun Devils. Dave loved reading the newspaper front to back, and of course, the first section he tackled was Sports. At some point, Dave decided to learn and “perfect” his golf game. He continued this endeavor until just prior to his 94th birthday. More important than his score and his skills was the opportunity to spend time with his golfing buddies, including his son.

All-in-all, Dave enjoyed a life of family, friends, and associations. His love of exploration, travel and fellowship led him to numerous adventures, places, and lasting relationships. Dave was a dedicated father, committed to his kids’ activities and endeavors.

Dave was preceded in death by his wife, LaVone, his parents, two sisters, and his infant son. He is survived by his oldest daughter, Debra Van Dusen, his son, Daryl Bush, his youngest daughter and son-in-law, Terry and Dave Kaubisch and his brother-in-law, Keith Naramor.

Our Dad will live on forever in our hearts.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations in Dave’s name to:

Red Mountain United Methodist Church

2936 N. Power Road

Mesa, AZ 85215

Check made out to: Red Mountain United Methodist Church

On the memo line write: In memory of Dave Bush

The Wounded Warrior Project

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