



Milton Genes

December 16, 1925 - June 30, 2022

OBITUARY FOR MILTON GENES

December 16, 1925 – June 30, 2022

Milt once said that it was in honor of his nineteenth birthday that Hitler launched the Battle of the Bulge on December 16, 1944. At 25,000 feet, wearing an electric heat suit and oxygen mask, just out of high school, he was doing his part for the allies, manning the front gunner position and serving as pilotage navigator in a B24 Liberator. On his first mission, the plane in front of him was blown out of the sky. He considered going AWOL on the spot.

At the same time, his older sister, who had been visiting their grandmother in Greece, couldn't get home because of the war. She died there. Milt's father, back home in Boston, died of a heart attack. Milt's mother, a Greek immigrant and seamstress, was left alone raising Milt's two younger brothers. With only six missions left to fly of his required 30, Milt requested an early discharge to return home to help his mother. He was denied.

He flew his thirty missions. Twice he was assigned lead plane at the head of a mission. Jimmy Stewart was on one mission. He received two lead crew commendations and was one of the few bomber gunners to shoot down a German ME 262, the first combat jet. On Oct. 18, 1945, awarded the Air Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters and two battle stars, he received his discharge home.

The GI bill paid for him to attend Boston University where he earned a master's degree in geology. The USGS hired him to hike the hills and valleys of Newfoundland collecting minerals, flying him in and out of backcountry lakes. On his own, he explored Alaska and prospected for gold. Returning to Massachusetts, he was hired to determine the overburden and bedrock thickness for the construction of a highway turnpike in the Berkshires. He met the Greek family there who owned a local restaurant. One daughter in particular struck him. Helen. "My heart melted," he said.

On their third date, he proposed and she accepted. When Milt introduced Helen to his mother, it was as if the two women had always known each another. One can imagine Milt's mother felt that the daughter she had lost in the war was returned to her.

The 1950's was the Cold War. Milt took a new job in Colorado prospecting Uranium. His young wife Helen didn't like moving away from her family. Living in a small mining town was hard on her. But she and Milt persevered and made friends.

They had two sons, Jim and Dean. When Uranium mining began to shut down, Milt continued the migration westward. The family reached Fresno, California. He became a securities salesman.

In the 1960's, with the help of topography maps, Milt discovered the mountains and rivers around Fresno and taught his sons fly-fishing and an everlasting love and respect for the outdoors. Summer weekends were spent fishing on the Kings River. Winters were spent on the slopes of the China Peak ski resort. Milt encouraged his sons in all things scientific, explained the Greek roots of words, pointed out the glaciated landscape of Yosemite, and, as two-time grade school spelling champion of Boston, rolled his eyes at his sons' bad spelling.

His eldest son moved away to college. Dean was seventeen. That year, Helen died of cancer.

Milt was forty-nine years old. His wife was gone and soon both his both sons were away at college. He practically had to start over. He continued working

as a securities salesman, bought a classic MG-TD and rebuilt the engine in his apartment's garage, and joined an MG club. He took up scuba diving. He dabbled in tennis, bird watching, and photography.

Every year, his sons brought friends camping and whitewater rafting on the Kings River. As their friends began to have families, these campouts became big events. Milt would drive up to hang around the camp for a day. Everyone treated him as a celebrity: The man who discovered the Kings River.

He had no tolerance for shiftlessness or any form of criminality. He volunteered with the Fresno Police Department. When he retired from being a securities salesman, he continued to work as a driver for Enterprise Car Rentals. He worked every day of his life from age nine to ninety.

Milton was first generation United States born. The first member of the Genes family to serve in the United States Military. The first to drive a car. The first to go to college. The first to head west.

Adversity and fortune followed him his entire life. He was a devoted son, a soldier, a husband, a good father, and a widower. He persevered. He lived an American life.

To honor of our loving father we ask for our family and friends to donate a tree planted in a national forest. Our father would love this way to honor his life. In advance we thank each of you for your thoughts prays during this difficult time.

Tribute Wall



“ *Milton Genes*

September 15, 2022 at 09:34 PM