

## Paul Whitney Sparks



Captain Paul Whitney Sparks, USN Ret. passed away peacefully on Jan. 20, 2021 at the age of 82 in Green Valley, Arizona, surrounded by his family. Paul had been battling health problems for years, but despite his pain, he consistently showed courage and faced his life challenges with a smile. Paul is a hero and stayed strong until the end.

Paul was born in Alton, Illinois in 1938 to Warren and Lileth (Dalton) Sparks. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1960; earned a Ph.D. in Physics from Iowa State University in 1966. While in Iowa, he met Penny, the love of his life. As a naval officer, Paul served as an engineer on nuclear surface ships, eventually shifting to planning and new construction of nuclear submarines until retirement from the Navy in 1984. After working in the private

sector he was diagnosed with cancer in 1991; developing other medical issues he retired fully in 1994 to enjoy life with his family. Always a musician, he found new loves in painting, poetry, and fossil hunting. Most of his time was spent with his partner Penny, his growing family, and doing things he never thought he would do, like publishing his poetry.

Paul is survived by Penny (Jones), his wife of 55 years; daughters Pamela (Sparks) Frame and her husband Eric, Piper (Sparks) Ragland and her husband Wade, Pindi Sparks; son Dr. Peter Sparks and his wife Kelly (Gates); his sister Eloise (Sparks) Allen and her husband Dr. Ronald Allen, along with 13 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. A loving husband and father, Paul taught us to take on this life with humor and intelligence. He will be missed beyond measure.

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