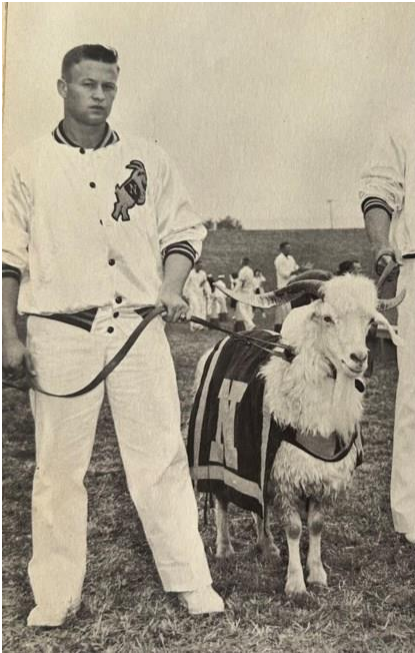


Howard Donald Delude



Born in Rawlins, Wyoming, in 1936, Don's indomitable spirit shone brightly from an early age. As captain of the Rawlins Outlaws football team, he led his team to two state championships and was a member of the state championship 4x100-yard relay team. In 1953, while participating in a regional track meet, he ran the fourth-fastest 100-yard dash in the nation for a high school athlete, clocking in at an impressive 9.98 seconds.

During his formative years, Don had summer jobs on a sheep ranch, lifeguarded, and was a quality inspector at the Sinclair oil refinery in Rawlins. In 1955, after a year at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah, he was accepted into the United States Naval Academy. Though a knee injury prevented him from playing football, he embraced his unique role as the team's goat keeper, gaining prominence in promotional materials for the academy. He

graduated in the class of 1960, proud of his accomplishments and the friendships he forged during those years.

Shortly after graduation, Don married Virginia Smith Whitehead, a devoted partner who brought her son, Brad Whitehead, into the family. Together, they welcomed a son, Jeffrey, and celebrated nearly 60 years of marriage before Virginia's passing. Don's love for his family was evident in every aspect of his life.

Don served honorably on the USS Waller, a Fletcher-class destroyer, and the USS Hugh Purvis, a Sumner-class destroyer, and later contributed to the development of military technology through the D.A.S.H. program in Dam Neck, Virginia. His work there resulted in the first military drones. In 1968, after being awarded a graduate degree from George Washington University, he accepted a commission as the first Nuclear Officer to the USS New Orleans, a ship that played a crucial role in astronaut retrieval for manned space missions. After retiring from active duty in 1972, he continued to serve in the naval reserve while working on groundbreaking defense programs, including the Harrier vertical takeoff aircraft and the Osprey.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Don was deeply involved in the Annapolis community, serving as a member of the Annapolis Chamber of Commerce and chairing both the Annapolis Arts Festival and the Annapolis Seafood Festival.

On September 11, 2001, while working near the Pentagon, Don witnessed and provided assistance immediately following the attack until first responders could arrive. Faced with the gridlocked roads and communication breakdowns that followed, and knowing his wife Virginia would not want to be alone, Don walked 36 miles home to Annapolis, only being able to catch a ride for the last five miles.

In retirement, Don cherished his time spent with his beloved dog, Gigi, enjoyed stringing pearls for local jewelry stores, and hunting for antiques with Virginia. His dedication to fitness was evident as he continued to walk and work out daily until the end of his life.

Commander Howard Donald Delude will be remembered not only for his achievements and service but also for his kindness, humility, and love for family and friends. Howard loved his family, friends, his country, and Navy Football. His spirit will forever remain a guiding light in the lives of those who knew him.

John M. Taylor Funeral Home