

David Michael Heath



Captain David Michael “Mike” Heath, United States Navy (Retired), passed away on January 13, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of service, curiosity, laughter, and deep devotion to family. Mike was preceded in death by his beloved wife and lifelong partner, Carol Joan Heath (née Ludman), the love of his life and constant companion. He is survived by three children, Michele Read (Stephen), Michael Heath Jr. (Dido), Edward Heath (Beth), eight grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren, all of whom carry forward his stories, humor, and values.

From the very beginning, Mike showed the mark of a leader. He graduated as valedictorian of his class at Conoga Park Senior High School, then went on to attend the United States Naval Academy, where he was commissioned in the Navy in 1960. Shortly after graduation, he married Carol - beginning a marriage that would span decades of adventure, sacrifice, and devotion.

Mike’s Navy career stretched over 30 years and was nothing short of remarkable. He served as a Nuclear Submarine Captain, later became the Commanding Officer of the Naval Automation Regional Data Center in Norfolk, and concluded his final tour with two years in London as the Head of Naval Activities, United Kingdom.

His service was recognized with numerous honors, including Legion of Merit; Meritorious Service Medal (2); Navy Commendation Medal (2); Overseas Service Ribbon; Navy Expeditionary Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; National Defense Service Medal; and Battle Efficiency “E” Ribbon.

Retirement from the Navy did not slow Mike down. He launched a second career at Martin Marietta, working on advanced computer systems, and continued his lifelong love of learning by earning a PhD in Computer Science from Nova Southeastern University.

Mike was fascinated by technology long before it became mainstream. He rode the wave from punch cards to modern programming, cheerfully mastering everything from C++ to Python, and never tired of telling stories about the “good old days” when computers filled rooms and required holes punched in cards just to work.

He loved swimming, computers, problem-solving, and above all, making people laugh. His humor was legendary—especially his unforgettable “eagle speech” at his change of command, where this retiring O-6 Captain insisted on giving a full cartoon-style eaglet impression being kicked out of its nest. And of course, no one who heard it will ever forget the three-legged pig joke, which surely deserves to be told again in his honor.

Mike accepted Jesus Christ into his life while he was a midshipman at the Naval Academy, through Jim Wilson, who ran a bookstore just outside the main gate. Their meeting began a lifelong friendship. Mike’s faith was of utmost importance to him, and he was deeply committed to sharing it with his children, passing it on to the next generation. Over the years, he faithfully supported many missionaries, both at home and abroad. Mike and Carol warmly

welcomed missionaries into their home whenever they were able. His belief in Christ was the center of his life, and today he is joyfully in the presence of Christ with his wife and brother. Yet, for all his accomplishments, Mike's greatest pride and joy was his family. He cherished his children, adored his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and never stopped loving Carol, whose memory remained with him always.

Captain Heath leaves behind a life rich in purpose, service, laughter, and love. His legacy lives on in the stories we tell, the lessons he taught, and the joy he brought to all who knew him. Fair winds and following seas, Captain.

Woody Funeral Home - Huguenot Chapel