

# David Owen Henderson

OCT 18, 1948 - JAN 30, 2021



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## David Owen Henderson

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**D**OVER – David O. Henderson, 72, passed away at home January 30, 2021 after a long and courageous battle with ALS (Lou Gehrig’s) disease. Dave was born on October 18, 1948 in Conway, S.C. to Donald O. Henderson and Ellen Henderson. Dave’s father was in the U.S. Air Force and transferred to Dover in the early 1960’s. He attended Caesar Rodney high school, graduating with the class of 1967. When Dave was 10 years old a family friend introduced him to the world of flight by taking him up in a lightweight 1940’s era Piper Cub to experience some “gentle” aerobatics. From that first flight, David knew aviation would not only be his career path, but an integral part of his life. After high school Dave’s formal training started when he joined the U.S. Air Force, serving in Vietnam as an electronics expert crew chief for a variety of aircraft including the AC-130 Gunship, F-4 Phantom and F-105 Wild Weasel. Later he served with the Delaware Army National Guard working on helicopters and in April 1980 took part in Operation Eagle Claw during the Iranian hostage crisis in an attempt to free 52 American embassy personnel. After returning from Vietnam, Dave earned his private and commercial pilot’s license then purchased an 80-acre airport near Felton. He became an FAA certified airframe and engine mechanic, eventually being granted aircraft inspection authorization. His true passion of restoring Piper Cubs was soon realized. His business became a booming enterprise, with over 150 high-quality restorations that extended to customers worldwide. Dave’s craftsmanship caught the attention of Thailand Prince Veerayuth Didyasarin who eventually came to Delaware to meet Dave and purchase one of his restored J-3 Piper Cubs. A strong friendship developed and Dave was frequently invited to Thailand as a guest of the Prince to help develop a civil aviation program there. Here in Delaware, David single-handedly introduced a bill that was passed into law forbidding any construction in the flight path of any airport that could hinder the safety of aircraft taking off and landing. He was selected by Delaware Today



## Obituary

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magazine as one of the 50 people to watch in Delaware. Dave was also a member of the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary Civil Air Patrol for over 45 years, achieving the rank of Major and serving as a search and rescue pilot and incident commander. In recognition of Dave's many achievements in aviation, he was inducted to the Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame in 2018. Dave earned a master's degree in information technology from Wilmington University and served the city of Rehoboth as IT manager for about 10 years beginning about 2000. In addition, He was also a master gunsmith, firearms collector and an expert in restoring WW II era Norden bombsights. Dave was preceded in death by his mother Ellen in 1988 and sister Nancy in 2011. He is survived by his wife Gail, father Donald, brother Robert Henderson and sister-in-law Kelley, of Oklahoma, son Scott White and two grandchildren. Friends who know David Henderson well feel he is undoubtedly in heaven right now checking the airworthiness of other angel's wings. Memorial service will be Sat Feb. 13, at 1 PM at Trader Funeral Home 12 Lotus Street Dover and friends may call one hour before. In consideration of protecting the family and friends health, public health guidelines enacted for the prevention of the spread of covid-19 virus, limitations on gatherings, physical distancing, use of hand sanitation and masks are in place.



# Tribute Wall

**David Owen Henderson**

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**Paul Parsons** posted:

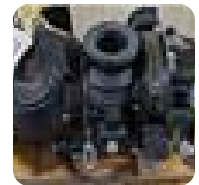
Gail, My condolences to you and the rest of the family. I was very lucky to have had Dave as a friend and mentor over the past 20 so years. I at least know that he is in peace at this time. Please let me know if there is anything that I can do to help you. Paul Parsons

March 7 at 11:42 AM



**Tom Bohner** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I never met Dave in person but we were kindred spirits in our mutual interest of the Norden Bombsight. Dave would spend many hours over the last few years talking on the phone or by email telling me interesting history about the Bombsight and the ones that he had. I got to know Dave the person and understood his terrible disease and his struggle to deal with it. I will miss our talks but Dave is free of his constant pain and telling the man upstairs about how the stabilizer works in conjunction with the bombsight.



February 13 at 5:23 AM



**Tom Bohner** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

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February 12 at 3:20 PM



**Paul Parsons** March 7 at 11:38 AM

Truly one of Dave's Passions!



**Roseann** posted:

I had the pleasure of taking care Of David, and at each visit he would regale me with stories from his travels and military service. He faced ALS with the same dignity he lived his life. He was a wonderful person and will be missed.

February 11 at 8:30 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**David Henderson** posted:

Dave and I were once neighbors, del tech alumni, AF veterans and avid gun collectors. Dave was a past alumni to LF School Board and I to CR School Board. Through the years I would refer to him as David O because I don't have a middle initial. Always enjoyed running into Dave and catching up on laughs. RIP Dave until we meet again. David Henderson

February 10 at 3:25 AM



**Tom Bohner** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

February 13 at 5:23 AM





**Tom Bohner** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

February 12 at 3:20 PM



**Paul Parsons** March 7 at 11:38 AM

Truly one of Dave's Passions!



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring David by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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