



Captain Bill Hays at retirement in 1981

William (Bill) Hays was born in Buford, Georgia on June 4, 1921 and passed away on October 7, 2021 in Vail, Arizona. He is survived by his wife of 73 years, Delores, and his three sons and daughter.

Growing up on a farm in North Carolina, Bill worked the fields for his dad with a plow drawn by a team of mules. Later in life he continued to work the soil in the large organic gardens he planted at the various houses he lived with his family, a few of which he built himself.

As a boy he had a route delivering *The Grit*, a newspaper distributed in small towns and rural areas, riding a donkey on his route. He loved that old donkey but he liked to tell the story of how one day his donkey sat down and nothing he could do would get that donkey up and moving again. The paper was late that day.

Bill fished with his dad growing up and continued to enjoy fishing throughout his life. He took fishing trips to Rocky Point in Mexico with his family fishing from a fiberglass boat he built himself, trolled for salmon while sailing the Puget Sound and fished the bottom for cod near his home in Sequim, Washington. He and Delores liked to drive out to the coast of the Olympic Peninsula to camp and surf fish.

Playing high school football, his coach was able to get him and fellow teammates football scholarships to North Carolina State College. After college, he joined the Army Air Corps in 1942 and flew a C46 cargo plane through the Himalayan Mountains from India to China, referred to as "flying The Hump", to bring supplies to the Chinese in their battle with Japan. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service and left the military in 1945.

After leaving the military, he first flew commercially for Pennsylvania Central Airlines, then Slick, Monarch and finally Frontier Airlines retiring as a captain in June, 1981 after more than thirty-five years of service.

Having an adventurous nature, he and Delores traveled extensively with trips to other countries: Hawaii, Alaska, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Japan, China, New Zealand, Australia, England, Portugal, Spain, India, Nairobi, Panama Canal and some South American countries, Thailand, and also sailed with his family in the Virgin Islands. His adventurous spirit also led him and Delores trekking in Nepal at the age of 68.

Being inquisitive and self reliant in nature, he wanted to learn about and do many things. He enjoyed reading and developed his skills in skiing, sailing, tennis, construction and other pursuits by reading books. He once rebuilt a 1968 VW Squareback engine by reading the classic vintage VW book *How to Keep Your Volkswagen Alive for the Complete Idiot*.

In January 2019 at age 98, Bill was admitted to the hospital to be treated for a cranial subdural hematoma resulting from a fall. A neurosurgeon making rounds entered his room with five women who were interns in the teaching hospital. The surgeon was asking routine questions to assess his cognitive ability after the surgery. The doctor asked questions like what's the date, what city are you in, who's the president, none of which Bill could answer because those things were no longer important to him. However, he knew what really mattered. He looked at the surgeon and pointed at the five interns saying, "Well, what I want to know is, how did you manage to attract all these pretty women?"

After being released from the hospital, Bill lived an active life with his son until passing at the age of 100 on October 7, 2021. He often said that he would live to be 100 years old. Well, he made it!