



## Gerald "Gerry" Milton Quilling

December 10, 2015

Gerald "Gerry" Milton Quilling

January 25th, 1928 to December 10th, 2015

Gerry Quilling was born in the river town of Mankato, Minnesota January 25th, 1928. He was the only child of Della A. (Lerdall) Quilling and Milton A. Quilling. Gerry's love of aviation developed early in life, building and flying balsa wood airplanes at 5 years old. In 1943, at the age of 15, he was recognized for the model airplanes he built for the U.S. Government to aid in wartime aircraft recognition training. He rode his bicycle to the Mankato airport to watch the planes take off and land, soloing his first aircraft by the time he was 16 years old. As soon as he got paid for his paper route he went to the airport to buy his next flying lesson.

Gerry attended Mankato State University and earned both a BS and MS degrees in Education. He joined the United States Army MN National Guard, 135th Infantry Medical Company. One of his proudest moments was marching out of the Mankato Armory with his unit after being activated during the Korean conflict. He was discharged in May of 1952 at the rank of Master Sergeant.

Gerry met the real love of his life, Shirley (Hohenstein) Quilling in the bleachers at a high school football game. They were engaged Christmas of

1950 and married at Bethlehem Lutheran church in Mankato, Minnesota July 15th 1951. Gerry initially moved to Glencoe, MN to teach his first year, followed by a move to Hopkins and then St Louis Park, MN. Gerry and Shirley had three children, Sue, John and Barb. Gerry enjoyed nothing more than spending time with his children at neighborhood picnics, football games, and band concerts. Of course, there were frequent trips to Mankato in the powder blue Studebaker convertible to see his parents, his mother-in-law Rosie, and rest of the Hohenstein and Rudenick families, not to mention frequent trips to Rapid City to visit Shirley's brother Maurice. Gerry always had a special place in his heart for Rosie.

Gerry also shared his love of travel with his family, spending every spring break on the beach in Panama City, FL. Gerry perfected his photography skills exploring the back roads and taking photos of wildlife across the country, including a rare golden eagle. Of course each trip offered many opportunities for Gerry to "teach" his children geography and history. The grandchildren were quizzed and educated on aircraft identification from an early age! He enjoyed attending their events and watching them grow up. In later years, Gerry loved receiving his great-grandsons drawings, along with their school work and being together on special occasions. Gerry and Shirley enjoyed retirement travelling the United States and Europe. They drove miles and miles in their motorhome, always stopping at airports and air museums along the way.

Gerry pursued his love of education everywhere he went. He taught math and geography at St Louis Park Junior and Senior High Schools for 37 years where he also developed the district media department, driver education program and taught photography. Summers were busy teaching St. Louis Park driver education and hosting groups of International Air Cadets from Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, England, Germany, Chile and the Netherlands building lifetime friendships along the way. Whenever

possible they were off to visit National Parks including, two favorites, Yellowstone and Glacier. Gerry was inducted into the Minnesota Aerospace Educator Hall of Fame in 2007. Aviation was always part of Gerry's life, from his early flying years, throughout his 71 years in Civil Air Patrol. Gerry held leadership positions in Minnesota Wing, North Central Region and National Headquarters Staff. However, his true love was participating in search and rescue and teaching cadets to fly. Gerry received the Gil Robb Wilson award, the highest level of distinction for senior training. He was also recognized in 2009 with the Federal Aviation Administration Wright Brother Master Pilot award for aviation safety. Over the years he received numerous other awards including multiple Meritorious service, Exceptional service and Distinguished service awards. In May of 2014, Gerry was awarded the Congressional Gold medal, honoring WWII members of Civil Air Patrol.

Tying together his love of teaching and his love of aviation Gerry taught many students to fly and in later years volunteered at EAA Oshkosh, Sun 'n Fun in Florida, the PIMA Air Museum in Tucson, AZ, Planes of Fame, in Eden Prairie, MN, and Polar Air and Golden Wings museums, in Blaine MN. The first airplane he soloed in was an Aeronca Defender and he piloted many types of aircraft his favorite being the Beachcraft T-34 Mentor, racking up over 5000 hours pilot in command. One of Gerry's highlights was taking a flight on the Concorde (supersonic transport). At the golden age of 79, he surprised his children by obtaining his commercial glider rating. He also taught Flight Clinics, focused on improving pilot safety, for 14 years. Gerry kept track of the weather from the days of looking out the window to looking it up on his iPad.

Gerry belonged to Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Hopkins, MN for over 50 years. He was a member of the Air Force Association, Aircraft Owners and Pilot Association and Experimental Aircraft Association. He was also a member of the West Suburban Shrine Club, the Zurah Flyers, the Scottish

Right, Masons, and the Richfield American Legion Post.

Gerry is survived by his wife of 64 years Shirley (Hohenstein.) Children: Sue Decker (Warren Decker) Kansas City, Sue's daughter, Jennifer Coleman (Craig) sons Brady & Carson, Warren's daughters, Emily Steele (John) sons Garrett & Adam and Amy Brandvik (Reed) daughters Lilly & Annie. John Quilling (Kirsty McCracken) Burnsville, John's sons, Jeremy and Justin, Kirsty's son, Kyle Thomas. Barb Decker (Rob Decker) Eden Prairie, sons Kyle (Julie) and Ryan.

Gerry had a true love of life, always learning something new and sharing his new found knowledge with others. Music always played from transistor radio, record player, hi fi stereo, cassette tapes, and CD's. Gerry was a patriot in the truest sense of the word; he quietly served others in every part of his life.

Fly In Peace Dad, We Love You

# Tribute Wall

DC

“ *My sincere condolences to Gerry's Family. I volunteered with him at the Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson AZ for many years. He was a friend, a fine man with tremendous enthusiasm for aviation and its history. -- Dick Casey*

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**Dick Casey** - February 06, 2016 at 02:07 PM

JE

“ *I miss you Grandpa. You were the best...A+.*



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**jen** - January 22, 2016 at 07:01 AM

JF

“ *Jay and Beth Gunderson and Family purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Gerald "Gerry" Milton Quilling.*



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**Jay and Beth Gunderson and Family** - December 15, 2015 at 10:41 AM

PA

“ Col. Quilling always had a smile, a kind word and a positive attitude about him at all times. Upon meeting him for the first time, when I joined MNWG back in 2006, I immediately felt welcomed and a part of the team. His desire for excellence and the continual advancement of MNWG CAP will remain with us far into the future. Thank you sir. God bless.

*Paul Adams  
Col. USMC Ret.  
Lt.Col. CAP*

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**Paul Adams** - December 15, 2015 at 09:34 AM

YP

“ Your CAP-USAF Family, Paul, Jeff, Sheri, Matt, Ray & Pernell purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Gerald "Gerry" Milton Quilling.



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**Your CAP-USAF Family, Paul, Jeff, Sheri, Matt, Ray & Pernell**  
- December 14, 2015 at 11:45 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Gerald "Gerry" Milton Quilling.



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December 13, 2015 at 08:51 PM



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Gerald "Gerry" Milton Quilling.*



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December 13, 2015 at 05:44 PM



“ *I only had the pleasure of flying with Gerry Quilling once in CAP, but I still remember the lessons he taught me on that flight? Col. Quilling was a true gentleman and a class act. RIP, sir*

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**David Yost** - December 13, 2015 at 05:06 PM



“ *The McCracken family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Gerald "Gerry" Milton Quilling.*



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**The McCracken family** - December 13, 2015 at 04:41 PM



“ I worked with Gerry at Polar Air Museum for a year before I found out we were both in Civil Air Patrol. I was low on the totem pole he was High!

He was the greatest when it came to aircraft knowledge. I learned much from him. Whenever one of the CAP cadets would come in to the Museum, I'd send them to Gerry, I'd say "tell him you're a cadet" they got the best personal tour. He loved the cadets!

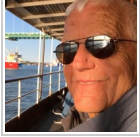
I got to work with Gerry several times, on different projects. Always fun and I always learned a lot. The last event we were at was the dedication of a Memorial at Comfry MN. Gerry was the guest speaker.

A great man that we will all miss

Don Sorenson Lt Col CAP

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**Don Sorenson** - December 13, 2015 at 03:14 PM



“ *High Flight*

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds, — and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air... .*

*Up, up the long, delirious burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew —  
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.*

— *John Gillespie Magee, Jr*

*In fond memory  
Roger Brogren*

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**Roger Brogren** - December 13, 2015 at 01:43 PM

MC

“ *MICKEY AND CAROLYN purchased the Peaceful  
White Lilies Basket for the family of Gerald  
"Gerry" Milton Quilling.*



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**MICKEY AND CAROLYN** - December 13, 2015 at 12:55 PM