

Jack Henderson Carnefix



Jack H. Carnefix, age 88, of Perkins, died peacefully on Monday, June 20, 2022. A visitation with family greeting friends will be 5-6:00 p.m. Friday, July 8, 2022 at Strode Funeral Home in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Services will begin 10:30 a.m. Saturday, July 9, 2022 at the Strode Funeral Home Chapel. A celebration of his life will be held immediately following in the Old Church Center at the Oklahoma Territorial Plaza in Perkins, Oklahoma.

Jack was born May 23, 1934 in Evergreen Park, Illinois, to Asher John Rufus Carnefix and Mildred Evalina (Bakehouse) Carnefix.

On August 20, 1960, he married the love of his life, Rose Marie (Gamba) Carnefix in Carson City, Nevada. Their life took them from California to Massachusetts and back, then to Oklahoma and Texas, where he retired after 21 years as a United States Naval Aviator. They moved back to Oklahoma, celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2010 before Rose Marie's passing in 2013 from cancer.

Jack lettered in golf and graduated from G.W. Brackenridge High School in San Antonio, Texas, in 1952. He also worked as a clown diver at the Lone Star Brewery in San Antonio. While attending Trinity University in San Antonio, he was a member of the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps and the Air Force Reserves.

He enlisted in the United States Navy and, after completing training and meeting the requirements, was certified as a Naval Aviator by the United States Naval Air Training Command on June 6, 1957.

Jack liked to say that he came along during one of the greatest periods in aviation history, noting that he went from "props to jets." Jack was a fighter pilot, primarily flying the Douglas A-4 Skyhawk, a single-seat subsonic carrier-capable light attack aircraft that also served as the aircraft for the Blue Angels demonstration team and the adversary aircraft in the movie Top Gun. Jack served in carrier battle groups on the USS Constellation, the USS Forrestal, the USS Bon Homme Richard, the USS Wasp and others. He was a member of multiple attack squadrons, including VT-22, the Golden Eagles; VA-125, the Rough Raiders; VA-146, the Blue Diamonds; VA-152, the Fighting Aces; VA-192, the World-Famous Golden Dragons; and VA-305, the Hackers. His call signs during his career included Cactus Jack, Scratch Jack, and Slats, resulting from a mechanical mishap on his aircraft during a mission. Jack flew two tours in the Vietnam War and also participated in the recovery of multiple Gemini Spacecraft aboard the USS Wasp. He was the commander of the Naval Reserve Center in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and retired in 1976 after serving at Naval Air Station Dallas.

Following his retirement from the Navy in 1976, Jack returned to Stillwater, Oklahoma, and enrolled at Oklahoma State University, receiving his bachelor's degree in elementary education. From 1979 to 1989 in Jennings, Oklahoma, he worked as a teacher, coach, principal and, sometimes, the bus driver. After retiring from Jennings, Jack continued to substitute teach in Stillwater - if it wasn't a good day to play golf, of course.

Jack was a member of and served as an officer with the Fraternal Order of the Eagles and the Loyal Order for the Moose. He was also a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the American Legion and the Masonic Lodge.

Jack is survived by his son, Jack Henderson Carnefix II, and his wife, Rashel, who Jack lovingly called his daughter, of Perkins, Oklahoma; and his niece, Cary Garton of Midland, Texas, to whom he will always be "UJ;" sisters-in-law Antonette Nelson and Judy Moore; and Gamba-family nieces Jackie, Kimberly, Kristina and Roxanne and nephews Anthony, Marc, Steve and Troy, their spouses and children.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Rose Marie; his parents; his sister, Yvonne Garton; in-laws Maxine Gamba and Tony Gamba; and brothers-in-law Anthony Gamba, Rodney Gamba, Tim Gamba and Don Garton.

Jack had the benefit of many compassionate healthcare providers and his family would like to thank them for the wonderful job that they all did on his behalf.

In lieu of flowers, Jack requested that donations be made in his name to the Thomas-Wilhite Memorial Library, P.O. Box 9, Perkins, OK 74059.

Checks should be made payable to City of Perkins with "In honor of Jack Carnefix" in the MEMO line. Donations can be made with a credit card at <https://bit.ly/3ncKZvS>. If you have questions, please telephone (405) 547-2445.