



## Jack R. Suggs

December 7, 1946 - October 4, 2018

Jay Suggs is most noted for his love and commitment to family, patriotism and service to his country, devotion to his Lord, and loyalty to friends and co-workers. Jay had a love of life and lived it to the fullest every day. He did everything possible to combat his illness while making memories with family and friends. Jay embraced the joyful times and his belief in Christ supported him in times of sorrow.

### Family

Jays' daughters, Monece Appleton and Nicole Horn, held a special place in his heart and life from their birth to his death. He felt blessed by them and was so proud of the lives they developed for themselves. He treasured every minute he spent with them and only wished he had more time to spend. Jay welcomed their husbands Steve Appleton and Scott Horn into his life and longed to have a closer relationship with them. He loved his grandchildren, Jack, Boone, and Cole Appleton and made special memories with them whenever he could as his health allowed in the last years. His sister Susie Reel was his favorite sibling, of course she was his only sibling (inside family joke)!!!! Jay loved Susie and her husband Steve and we spent many wonderful times with them. Jay visited family every time he could to keep connections with his aunts, uncles, and cousins. Each Thanksgiving before he got ill, he would round them all up for a family photo so we would have memories of these events. Jay's uncle John asked him to take care of his Aunt Winn during the last years of her life and without hesitation he said, Yes!

Jay's message to his family was get an education to fulfill the dreams and goals in your life!! He set a wonderful example with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Oklahoma State (1970), Master of Science in Systems Manage from the University of Southern California (1977), and completed all the coursework for a Doctor of Engineering from Southern Methodist University. However, his love of flying caused him to quit his doctorate work and take an airline job. Jay was also a graduate of the United States Air Force (USAF) Command and Staff College and the USAF Fighter Weapons School. His intelligence and accomplishments were the main things that made me love and want to marry him!!

#### Patriotism and Service to his Country

Jay started his military career at Oklahoma State in the ROTC program while completing his engineering degree. Following graduation, he went to pilot training, which he completed in 1971 as the top pilot/officer in his class. This enabled him to select the plane of his choice, which was a fighter jet, the F-4 Phantom. At the young age of 24 he began flying missions over North and South Vietnam. Jay was a member of the Red River Rats because of his many missions flown over North Vietnam. For his service in Vietnam, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and 24 air medals. Jay is also credited as dropping the last bomb of the Vietnam war. He was part of Miller Flight that was flying a mission during the evacuation of Saigon. The helicopters taking Vietnam citizens to a waiting naval carrier started taking enemy fire and had to stop the evacuation. Jay successfully bombed the enemy site and the Saigon evacuation continued without further incidence. Jay met people during his life who were part of the evacuation of Saigon; with admiration and joy, they thanked him for saving their lives. These encounters were extremely special to Jay as he realized how his actions had affected others. Serving his country was always a joy, not a duty.

Jay served in many fighter squadrons overseas and in the US during his 13 years of active duty military. He went on to be an F-4 aircraft pilot instructor

(1970-1979), weapons and tactics specialist (1970-1979), and an expert in electronic warfare (Wild Weasel) operations (1975-1979). He retired from active duty in 1979 and because of his love of fighters and his comradery with the men who flew them, he continued to serve in the air force reserves for 13 more years. He transitioned to the F-16 fighter and he flew his last major mission, Operation Deny Flight over Bosnia. Jay's last assignment in the Air Force was as the commander of the Civil Engineering Squadron. He retired in 1992 as a Full "Bird" Colonel, O5 rank. He was so proud of his Air Force career with 24 ½ years of flying fighters and 1 ½ years in the Civil Engineering Squadrons. Even though he had numerous military accomplishments and had received several medals throughout his career, Jay was so humble that Nicole, Monece, and I had to search through his military boxes in the attic to find them.

#### Devotion to His Lord and Service to Humanity

Jay's religious journey started when he was a teenager and continued till he passed away on October 4, 2018. He started going to church on his own and found it such a wonderful, spiritually, enlightening experience that he continued for the rest of his life. No matter where he went, he was involved in religious services and activities. We attended the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) of Euless for over 22 years. During that time Jay held many church positions and conducted numerous fundraisers. Jay was an avid scholar of the Bible and attended and participated in many Bible study classes.

Jay was introduced to Emmaus (the spiritual retreat focused on faith renewal and strength) at FUMC of Euless and his walk was so special to him that he participated as a team member in many more walks. Seeing the changes in people's lives during their walks was so special to him, plus he so enjoyed being with people and hearing about their spiritual experiences. Jay started his journey in Kairos prison ministry over 25 years ago and continued the

Kairos walks until his illness would no longer allow it in 2009. He served in Kairos in the prisons at the Michael Unit in Palestine, TX, the All Red Unit in Wichita Falls, TX, and the Boyd Unit in Streetman, TX. Jay served in every capacity in Kairos from member of a team to the team leader for one walk. He also spent over 5 years working as a volunteer Chaplain in the Boyd Unit and other units in this area. He was always a humble servant of the Lord everywhere he went.

In 2007, we moved to Lake Richland Chambers in the Cape Estes subdivision. Jay always wanted to live on the water so this was a dream come true for him. He loved boating with friends and family and swimming in the lake. The daughters, their families, especially the grandchildren, loved the lake and so did their dogs!!! We joined Lakeside United Methodist Church and have attended there for the last 11 years. He loved the church, the pastors, and the members and participated in many church committees and activities. He also sang in the choir for as long as he could and would arrange for the choir to go into the Boyd unit during Christmas and Easter.

We have made such wonderful friends here at the lake and they have been so supportive and helpful during the years that Jay was ill. I want to say thank you to you all but I want to say a special word of thanks to Joe Kempf who helped me care for Jay during those last difficult months. Joe enabled me to keep Jay at home till he passed. God brought the right people to us at the right time. Jay had a rare, terminal neurological disease that no one has ever heard of called multi-systems atrophy (MSA) that basically caused most of the nerves in his body to deteriorate. To the very end Jay loved the Lord and knew he was going to heaven. I felt this myself and know that when God met Jay he said well-done faithful servant.

#### Airline Career

Jay loved flying so he was pleased when he retired from active duty military that he got an airline job. He flew for American Airlines for over 28 years and retired December 6, 2006 right before his 60th birthday. He flew the Super 80 and the Triple 7 (777) and ended his career as a captain on the Super 80. He

flew mainly in the US, Canada, and Mexico but also many international trips on the 777. We both loved to travel; fortunately, we did not wait to do this. Through American Airlines, we were able to make so many international and national trips during our 33 years together. Some of my greatest pleasures were to just jump on a plane and fly trips with him. When we traveled on our own, Jay would plan our trips and I just had to pack and get on the plane. The airline was a wonderful career but he was ready to retire and move on with the next phase of his life.

I wanted to share a few neat things about Jay. He was the general contractor for our lake home and it is the best house ever!! But he hated that experience and he said no more new houses ever!! He loved the Rolling Stones and the Beach Boys and he has attended more of their concerts than I can remember. He also loved square dancing and we did that for several years, making even more friends. When he was passing, Jay was able to say goodbye to many of his wonderful friends. He was so happy you were in his life!!!

In conclusion, I want to thank God for bringing Jay and his family into my life. He was the love of my life, my best friend, my greatest champion, and my companion in all aspects of our life. We would often say to each other that we were blessed to have each other in our lives because it made both of us better people!! Not a day went by that we did not say I love you to each other. Thank you God for giving me 33 years with my husband Jay, but I will miss him so much. I know he is with God and he will continue to watch over his daughters, grandchildren, myself, and our many friends.

Take care of him Lord and I will be with him in the future.

Visitation will be Thursday, October 11th from 1:00 - 2:00pm at Lakeside United Methodist Church, Streetman with funeral service following at 2:00pm. Burial will be at DFW National Cemetery with Military Honors on Friday, October 12, 2018 at 1pm.

In lieu of flowers send memorial gifts designated for the parking lot

improvements to Lakeside United Methodist Church, 515 FM 416, Streetman,  
TX 75859.

# Cemetery Details

## Dallas / Fort Worth National Cemetery

2000 Mountain Creek Parkway  
Dallas, TX 75211  
(214) 467-3374  
<http://dallasfortworthcemetery.com>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT 11. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Lakeside United Methodist Church  
515 Farm to Market 416  
Streetman (St Elmo), TX 75859-3264  
(903) 599-3080

## Service

OCT 11. 2:00 PM (CT)

Lakeside United Methodist Church  
515 Farm to Market 416  
Streetman (St Elmo), TX 75859-3264  
(903) 599-3080

## Graveside Funeral Service

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OCT **12**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Dallas / Fort Worth National Cemetery  
2000 Mountain Creek Parkway  
Dallas, TX 75211  
(214) 467-3374  
<http://dallasfortworthcemetery.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Jack R. Suggs*

October 08, 2023 at 12:04 PM



“ *I did not know Jay at NWC highschool. However, I had the opportunity to work with him when he was an F4 pilot at Tinker AFB. He was such a nice and considerate person. He even wrote a recommendation letter for me. He will be missed by many!*

*Susan Douville*



Susan Douville - October 23, 2018 at 05:32 PM



“ *I remember Jay with great fondness. We were weasels together. He was a natural leader full of LIFE and ENTHUSIASM. He was a JOY to be around.*

Greg Brewer - October 20, 2018 at 06:51 AM



“ *I grew up living back to back with Jay from our first year of life. We went to grade school, high school, and were roommates our freshman year at OSU. Our sophomore year, I pledged KA and then talked Jay into joining me. I probably know Jay (Jack Rhea as kids) about as good as anyone and I can honestly say that he was the most intelligent and talented individual that I have known in my lifetime. He was superior at EVERYTHING he tried—from tennis to piloting jets! He also had a pretty big ornery streak, but I will keep those interesting memories to myself. GOODBYE OLD FRIEND!*

Pat Dorr - October 19, 2018 at 09:48 AM

PM

“ Jay was my pledge brother and friend at Kappa Alpha at Oklahoma State 1966-69. We had many good times together for a few years before we went our separate ways. He was a respected member of the fraternity. I was fortunate and pleased to see him again at a KA reunion in 2013, where we shared a memories of those great times back in the 1960's. Rest in peace Jay. I am manager of his memorial at Find A Grave #193749090 and will be working on his biography with the information his companion (need a name!) posted here.

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**Pat Murphy** - October 18, 2018 at 10:09 AM

BC

“ I worked with Jay at Nellis and GAFB during development of the APR-38 Advanced Wild Weasel. I never realized that Jay was a few years behind me at OSU. He gave me my only ground ride in an F4G while troubleshooting an intermittent display problem. I do remember that we both enjoyed Red Man chewing tobacco. He was definitely a good ol country boy. I knew that he went on to fly for American but didn't realize that he lived in the DFW area. My favorite memory was when he flew a blind bombing sortie at Nellis using the ApR-38 info and the WRCS. He had an unbelievable number of shacks with the heavy bombs and when he returned he said something to the effect: “This thing is SH—it did better than I can do and I am good!”

*Bernie Conway F4G System Engineer -Mcdonnell Douglas*

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**Bernie Conway** - October 16, 2018 at 05:04 PM

CJ

“ I knew Jay in Okinawa, when his F-4 unit transferred there. Then we worked together at Texas Instruments. Jay designed a unit called the Aircraft Launcher Interface Computer (ALIC) which allowed aircraft other than the special mission Wild Weasel to carry the AGM-88 High Speed Anti Radar Missile (HARM).

Jay left TI for the Airline, but flew the F-4 with the reserve unit at Carswell AFB. Just before my 51st birthday another member of the unit invited me to ride in the F-4, which I had never done.

When I arrived at the squadron, I was assigned to fly in Jay's back seat. As soon as we got airborne, he turned over control of the aircraft to me, and held up his hands to show the flight leader that I was flying formation.

Jay was a good pilot, a good engineer, and always unselfish. He was too young to die, but the Lord will welcome another saint to Heaven.

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**Curt James** - October 16, 2018 at 12:54 PM

JH

“ Jay was one of my instructors at George Air Base in the 70s. He was a terrific pilot and a very charismatic leader.

He will be missed by every Wild Weasel who knew him.

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**Jim Howard** - October 16, 2018 at 11:49 AM

SS

“ Oh my goodness. I was so saddened to read of Jay's passing. He and I flew the F-4 together as pilots for many years and were neighbors at George AFB, CA. I am so proud to remember him as a joy filled and wonderful friend. With lots of love for Jay and you and your family. Stu Stegenga, Lt Col, USAF Retired

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**Stu Stegenga** - October 16, 2018 at 08:52 AM

D(

“ I was airborne with Ron Moore flying across the delta in Vietnam on the evacuation day when we heard Jay with John Dewey in the pit and Major Billy Boles on the wing trying to find the 57mm AAA site that was firing. They found it and killed the gun. These were the last Shrike (AGM-45) and CBUs dropped in South Vietnam. Dave Grindle

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**Dave Grindle (WW1262)** - October 16, 2018 at 12:52 AM

TC

“ I had the pleasure of flying with Jay in the F-4 and F-16. He was a good pilot, a great friend, and a true patriot. The thing that I will always remember when I think about Jay, is his positive spirit. He always seemed to enjoy himself in whatever he did... and he always had a smile. Jay will be missed.  
"TC" Coon

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**TC Coon** - October 11, 2018 at 09:50 AM

NH

“ Dad, I'm so proud of you and I will miss you so much. You will always be with me.



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**Nicole Horn** - October 09, 2018 at 11:14 PM

YI

“ Your friends and colleagues at Elsevier Inc. purchased the Sweet Liberty for the family of Jack R. Suggs.



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Your friends and colleagues at Elsevier Inc. - October 08, 2018 at 12:58 PM

SH

“ Jay and Susan are both some of the kindest folks you will ever be blessed to know. Our thoughts and prayers are the Suggs family. We also thank Jay for his Air Force military service, his patriotic, wartime deployment and missions and his contributions to our country.



*RIP Captain Suggs*

*Melanie Hardy & Shayne Johnson*

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Shayne - October 08, 2018 at 12:26 PM

JA

*I, too, flew the F-4 in the WW Mission over the skies of Nam. Ton Son Hut. Very dangerous mission. Search and destroy. We were determined. CAVE PUTORUM!  
Thank you, my brother. Rest In Peace  
Harry F Armstrong,III*

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Judy and Harry F Armstrong,III - October 16, 2018 at 05:03 PM

JU

“ A true American hero. We are honored to have known you. Rest in peace, Jaybird.  
*Judy and Steve*

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judy - October 06, 2018 at 05:46 PM