



Donald Richard Payne

December 17, 1925 - December 13, 2020

Donald Richard Payne died December 13, 2020, four days before his ninety-fifth birthday. He was born in Mason City, Iowa to Harold and Pearl Payne. He is predeceased by his older sisters, Dorothy Troeger and Eileen (Penny) Chism and his nephew, Michael Troeger. He is survived by his nieces Susie Brooks and Emi Troeger (Mike), great nieces Ashley Brooks, Lynley Trent (Jeff), great-great niece Lydia Scout Trent and dear friend Joanne Taylor.

Don completed high school in Mason City and soon was recruited to take (and pass) the Eddy Test as a means of participating in the elite Electronics Training Program (WWII). The ETP was said to be the best, most intense and difficult technical instruction program in the Armed Forces. During that time he worked on several high level classified projects. He attended Iowa State University where he prepared for his future career as an aerospace engineer. During his career he was on the teams that designed Polaris, the Douglas X-3 Stiletto, D-558-1 and 2 Skystreak, F-100 Super Sabre, X-1, 1A, 1B, 1E, X-2, X-3, X-4, X-5, X-15 (supersonic and hypersonic flight) as well as working on the instrumentation panels of several unmanned space crafts. His family was impressed to find out that his office was next to Neil Armstrong's office, although Don considered that as no big deal. During the time he lived in California he enjoyed flying radio controlled airplanes, hiking, tennis and piloting his plane to go skiing.

After his retirement, Don left the San Francisco Bay area and moved to Tallahassee to be near his sister and her family. He was fortunate to meet his faithful friend, Joanne Taylor, in his neighborhood where he delighted in walking her dog Smudge with her. She introduced him to OLLI classes and the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. Don continued to enjoy watching tennis and following the Stanford Women's Volleyball Team long distance.

Don's curiosity about how things work and his tenacity in solving difficult problems continued throughout his life. His mantra until the end was "I have to work the problem", which he always did.

Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-193 or <http://www.bevisfh.com>) is assisting the family with their arrangements.