



Harold J. Birkhofer

November 21, 1933 - April 26, 2023

Harold J. 'Pete' Birkhofer was born on November 21st, 1933, on a small farm near Moscow, Iowa to Arthur and Helen Zesiger Birkhofer. He attended a one-room school in Moscow, through the eighth grade, and graduated High School from Wilton Public Schools, Wilton Jct, Iowa, in 1951. He passed away on April 26, 2023, after a brief illness.

After two years of working with the Scott County Engineers as a surveyor helper, in Davenport, Iowa, he was accepted into the Aviation Cadet program of the US Air Force in March, 1954, and graduated in May 1955, commissioned as a 2d Lieutenant with the aeronautical rating of Observer/Navigator. In 1958, he was admitted to Air Force pilot training, and graduated with the aeronautical rating of pilot in 1959. He served in the Air Force for 20 years, flying airlift missions throughout the world, accumulating more than 10,000 accident-free flying hours. He also was rated as a helicopter pilot, flew for a Special Forces Squadron in Viet Nam in 1971/72. He finished his Air Force career in 1974, at Cheyenne, WY, flying Missile Support. Pete was awarded many citations throughout his Air Force career, including the Viet Nam Service medal, the Commendation Medal, numerous Air Medals, and the Distinguished Flying Cross. He retired with the rank of Lt Col.

From 1957 to 1977, Pete was married to Pat Peterson. Five children were born of that marriage.

After retiring from the Air Force, Pete moved with his family to Fort Collins, CO. He started working for the Colorado State University Athletic Department in the fall of 1974, as assistant equipment manager. Pete became the head equipment manager in 1978, where he served until retirement in 1994. He was blessed to work with many fine athletes, coaches and administrators during his 20 years with Colorado State.

In 1978, Pete met and fell in love with Toni Thompson. They were married in 1992 and have remained husband and wife until this day.

Pete is survived by his five children, Julia (Russ) Juvan, Brian Birkhofer, Lisa Birkhofer, Rebecca Kaiser, and Brett (Heather) Birkhofer, and eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, all of whom he is quite proud. He was preceded in death by his parents, two older brothers, and an older sister.

Pete requested there be no service. A celebration of his life will be held at a date to be determined. The family asks that any memorials to Pete be made in the form of donations to the general scholarship fund at Colorado State University, Pathways Hospice or other charitable organization of your choice.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 11. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (MT)

CB & Potts Restaurant and Taproom at Collindale Golf Course
1441 E. Horsetooth Rd.
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Tribute Wall

JU

“ 3 files added to the album *Friends of Pete*



Julie - May 07, 2023 at 10:17 PM

TT

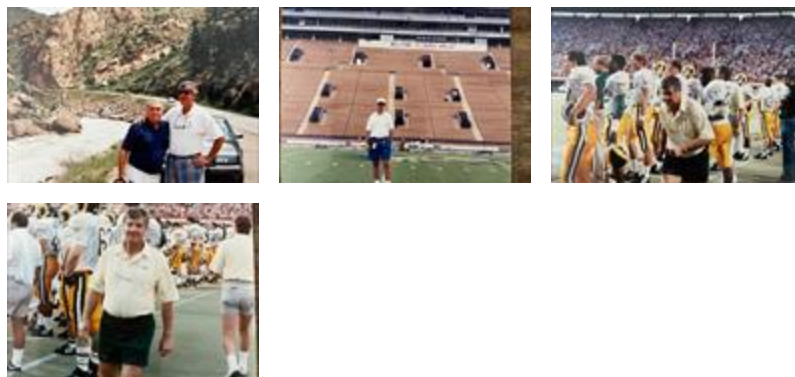
“ 2 files added to the album *Friends of Pete*



toni thompson - May 06, 2023 at 01:45 PM

SF

“ 4 files added to the album *Friends of Pete*



Stacey Bennett Ferguson - May 04, 2023 at 05:17 PM

JJ

Stacy, thank you! These are fantastic!

Julie Juvan - May 05, 2023 at 04:42 PM

JG

“ *I worked with Pete during the 1970's and 1980's when I was working in Concessions and as Concessions Director. I sure will miss Pete!!!*

Jerry Gavaldon - May 04, 2023 at 01:01 PM

NW

“ *I worked with Pete on the football staff at CSU and then we were neighbors at Southridge. I always enjoyed talking sports with him in the mornings while he was out for a walk. Rest in peace good man!*
Neal Wilson

NEAL WILSON - May 02, 2023 at 05:20 PM

MG

“ I met Pete as a freshman football player at CSU in the fall of 1975. What I will always remember about him is he operated his equipment duties detached from the coaching staff as a very unique individual. He really cared about the players on the team in an entirely different manner from the coaches. To this day I still marvel at his diligence in always getting our mesh laundry bags with those gigantic safety pins that had our locker numbers etched onto them from the morning practice of "two a days" in August back to us in record time for our afternoon practice, cleaned, dry, and smelling nice for another three hour ordeal on the practice field. If you needed something, Pete would source it for you and deliver when he promised. Whether it was for foam padding to protect our hands and forearms, or a much needed neck roll, Pete would get those items for you every time.

Pete was one of a kind and as fine an example of a caring person I've ever met. His collateral duties were undertaken with the same professionalism as he displayed in the equipment role. He coordinated travel arrangements in conjunction with the head trainer and in all the away games, flights, hotels, transportation, meals, etc., there was never a glitch. What's most notable to me though, is that today these school(s) have a staff of 20 or more people doing what Pete Birkhofer did literally all by himself and did it to perfection back in the day of the rotary telephone, yellow pages, and ingenuity. Along with a smile on his face.

I don't believe that the word "multitasking" was in existence when Pete was doing everything for the CSU Athletic Department, but in my mind his very large shoes will never be filled by anyone who could do what he accomplished in such a seamless manner. He was truly a "Swiss Army Knife" who could not only do it all, but knew the name of every player on the team. He cared about all of us to a man! The coaching staff could barely recite the players in their position groups, let alone beyond that small circle.

Most of the teams we played back in the Jurassic era still had grass

fields like CSU. But for those who installed that arm scraping nasty fake turf, Pete ordered us the best astro turf shoes in existence with a molded sole made by Adidas for those stadiums. He always wanted them back after the season, but with the extra height from the numerous rubber cleats, they were the shoe of choice for every football player when they participated in intramural basketball competition on campus. Pete knew he wasn't getting them back.

I've only met a few other individuals in my lifetime that have had an impact on me outside of my immediate family, Pete is one of those rare people who left an impression by just being himself. He didn't want any accolades, truly cared about the players well being, and was a tremendous example to emulate as a special person.

To Pete's family, I pass along my sincerest condolences as he will be greatly missed. He was one of a kind, and he left a lifelong impression on me at an age in my life when guidance was need and provided by Pete in every task that he undertook. That's his legacy in my mind as he was a rare person who cared about the young men he was protecting from harm by ordering the best equipment he could find back in the days of "grown man football." I'm proud to have known him and his memory will always be a part of me.

*Michael A. Goldfeder,
CSU Class of 1980*

Michael A. Goldfeder - May 02, 2023 at 04:18 AM

GJ

“ *Sending love and light to Toni Ann and Pete's family. What a distinguished career he had! So much to be proud of. Will continue to pray for all of you.*

Gayle Jacoby and family



Gayle Jacoby - May 01, 2023 at 07:06 PM

MB

“ Brenda and I send our deepest condolences to Harold (Pete) and Toni and his kids. I admired him very much for his military service, and our friendship. I always enjoyed our time together when he came back to Wilton/Moscow and to the Birkhofer reunions -- with my Dad passing away at an earlier age, he helped keep me updated on Birkhofer history. Plus he always wanted to go see a baseball game - the Quad City Bandits (Single A team) -- so there was always a few of us (Brenda, my kids when home, Cousin Dean) that went along with him.

We couldn't get him to stay with us --- always stayed in a hotel, but enjoyed a few meals together,,,,,

We argued who was the 'best' Birkhofer athlete at Wilton -- Harold, Dean, Dewey or me,,,,, I guess I should have included my Mom who was pretty good 6 on 6 girls basketball player.

I remember a few trips to Colorado to visit,,,,,

I know that my daughter Katie texted or emailed him at times. He was always curious how her kids or Lance's kids and asking for an update on my brother Tom and his family.

He will be greatly missed,,,, he usually was the voice of reason in our group sports texts,,,,,

Mick Birkhofer - May 01, 2023 at 06:18 PM

SB

Pete has been gone now for a few months but I know all of his family is still reconciling his passing. Thank You Toni for recently sharing this news with me; it has taken me a little time to digest. Pete was fortunate to live a long life that was filled with accomplishment and enriched by loving partners, children, and more.

I'm Steven (Steve) Birkhofer in Asheville, NC.

My relationship with Pete started in the Fall of 1992.

Irony, My Father's name is (was) Harold J. Birkhofer (the J was for John). My father was also a Light Colonel in the USAF (last air service in late 1970 as a radar navigator, B52G, etc) and ten + year's Pete's senior (WWII service, etc). Born and raised in NYC shortly after his family immigrated from Mannheim, Germany. My Mother had moved to Asheville and important correspondence for her from the 'VA' went to Pete in Fort Collins. From there we started periodically.

I was lucky enough to meet Pete and his nephew Dean (and Dean's wife) in the summer of 2003 in Charlotte, NC. This was a wonderful visit.

Pete shared a lot with me over the years and I learned a lot from Pete. We agreed and disagreed on some issues, but I always listened to and respected Pete's opinions and why? He was a very balanced man and he seemed to know how to reconcile things in life.

I'm very sorry to write this note, but there is solace in knowing that Pete experienced a long and productive life, and that I got to know Pete Birkhofer as a Friend.

Peace to Pete Birkhofer's Family.

Steve Birkhofer

Steven Birkhofer - July 24, 2023 at 12:55 PM

TT

Thank you, Steve. I believe you captured the essence of Pete perfectly in the short time you knew him.

Toni Thompson - August 16, 2023 at 06:41 PM